

Syllabus
Fall 2011

Introduction to Philosophy
PHL 103 ID 01940

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Course Description:

The purpose of this course is, as the title suggests, to introduce students to the discipline of philosophy. In order to accomplish this task, we will look at historically significant texts, written by mayor figures from various time periods (Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes, Hume). We will discuss issues, concerning the nature of reality and the possibility of knowledge. Students will be encouraged to think critically and carefully about these difficult topics and to voice their thoughts in class discussions.

Course objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be capable of:

1. Reading and understanding a primary texts in philosophy
2. Recognizing, analyzing and responding to a philosophical argument
3. Explaining in their own words the positions held and argued for by philosophers from various historical periods
4. Engaging in philosophical dialogue with their peers.

Required Texts:

Classics of Western Philosophy (1995) Edited by Steven M. Cahn, 4th Ed., Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Indiana.

All required texts are available via e-course system. Use the following steps to have an access to electronic materials:

1. Open web browser and type in address – <http://e-course.auca.kg> ;
2. Log in to the e-Course System using the same username and password as you use when you log in to AUCA’s computer network;
3. On the System main page the list of the ‘Available courses’ is presented. Locate the course Introduction to Philosophy (Alieva) in eReserve section at Sociology Department;
4. Once you have located the course, click on the course name. The system will ask you to give an ‘enrollment key’, which should be provided to you by the teacher of the course;
5. Fill in the key and click the button.

Additional Literature

- Ed. L. Miller “Questions that Matter”, Shorter Edition, New York, 1993
- W.Lawhead “The Philosophical journey”, Boston, 2000.

Course grades:

Attendance and participation	40 %	80 p.
Essay	20 %	40 p.
Presentation	20 %	40 p.
Final Exam	20 %	40 p.
Total:	100%	200 p.

170 >	A -	A	
150 - 169	B-	B	B+
130 - 149	C-	C	C+
110 - 129	D	D+	
110 <	F		

1. Doing the Readings.

If you have not read philosophy before you may find the readings harder and stranger, than most things you've read. Don't take these difficulties personally: everyone finds philosophy hard to read at first, and a lot of it is very strange.

On the other hand, once you get past the difficulties, the material may seem familiar. Philosophy deals with questions that people all over the world, adults and children, have been asking ever since there have been people. You have undoubtedly asked some of them yourself. What makes philosophy difficult is the rigor with which philosophers approach these common questions.

2. Course requirements.

a. This course depends on **participation** and will succeed to the extent that students are prepared and actively engaged.

Discussions – every class session will involve some form of discussion, usually of an assigned reading. Students should arrive in class not only having done the reading but also with notes and ideas for discussion questions and comments. I welcome insights that draw connections between course topics and the contemporary world as long as conversations remain grounded in the readings.

The quality of your participation in discussion in seminar (and, to a lesser degree, in lecture) will account for 40 % of your grade.

b. Two essays are required (one – 2 pages in length, the other – 3 pages). The topics for these essays will be announced. The first will be worth 5 % of your grade; the second - 15 %. Essays must be handed at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Papers will not be accepted in electronic format. Late papers will be graded down ½ of grade.

c. Presentation. Each student will have an opportunity you choose one topic from the writings (Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes, Hume), to make a presentation for seminar discussions. The length of presentations should be around 10 minutes and should include the topic of the writings (for instance: Plato's dialogue "Phaedo"). Students should also prepare at least 2 questions for other students and be ready to moderate discussion during the seminar.

3. Academic misconduct.

I will rigorously enforce the University's policies on academic misconduct as set forth in the Student Handbook. In your written work you must cite all the sources you consult. In the closed-book exam you may not consult any material while you write and of course you may not copy from another student.

Academic integrity and honesty is expected in all forms of course work. Any dishonesty or creating may result in the student failing the assignment or the course. The primary forms of academic dishonesty to be avoided are

- a) Plagiarism – taking the ideas or words of another without giving due credit to the source and
- b) Cheating – giving or taking information during an examination.

Plagiarism.

Every now and then, someone hands me work that's not their own, as if it were their own. Don't do this. You deprive yourself of the learning and you guarantee yourself a bad grade.

On all of your written academic work you are absolutely required to say where you got your information and ideas, unless they are your very own original words and thoughts or they are common knowledge. If the words are not your own, you must put them in quotes and say whose words they are. If the ideas are not your own, you must tell your reader where you got them. Not giving your sources is considered plagiarism (copying).

Tentative Schedule:

- Week 1.** Introduction.
- Week 2.** Plato's Apology (*Socrates arguments against his accusers. The task of philosophy and the fear of death.*)
- Week 3.** Plato's Phaedo. (*Philosophy as practice for death. Argument for immortality from opposites.*)
- Week 4.** Plato's Phaedo. (*Argument for immortality from recollection. Arg. for immortality from indissolubility.*)
- Week 5.** Phaedo. (*Cebes' objection and the Forms as causes. Arg. for immortality from the Form of the Soul.*)

Augustine's on Free Choice of the Will:

- Week 6.** Book I, Chapters 1 – 5 (*What is evil?*)
Book I, Chapters 6 – 9 (*Perfect order in human beings*)
- Week 7.** Book I, Chapter 10 – 12 (*How does somebody become disordered?*)
Book I, Chapter 13 – 16 (*The source of evil-doing lies in the will*)
- Week 8.** Book II, Chapter 1 – 2 (*Why did God give us free will?*)
Book II, Chapter 3 – 6 (*Argument for God's Existence*)
Book II, Chapter 7 – 15 (*Argument for God's Existence*)
- Week 9.** Book II, Chapter 16 – 20 (*Is God the Source of everything good. 'Is free will one of those goods?'*)
- Week 10.** Book III, Chapter 2-4 (*God's foreknowledge and free Will*)
Book III, Chapter 5, 9 (*God's foreknowledge and free Will*)

Descartes Meditations on First Philosophy :

- Week 11.** Meditation 1 (*Dream and Doubt*)
Meditation 2 (*Certainty at last: "I think, therefore I am"*)
- Week 12.** Meditation 3 (*God's Existence; the Cartesian Circle*)
Meditation 4, 5 (*Error, Freedom, and Knowledge*)
- Week 13.** Meditation 6 (*Mind and Body*)
Meditation 5, 6 (*The nature and existence of the external world*)

Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion :

- Week 14.** Prologue and Part I (*Skepticism*)
Part II (*Arg. for God's existence from design in the world*)
- Week 15.** Part II (*Philo's criticism*)
Part III (*Cleanthes' irregular argument from design*)