
Introduction to Philosophy

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Phil 251-514
TR 9:35–10:50
O&M 103
Fall 2007

Purpose of Course

This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop their interpretive, critical, and analytical abilities by reading, discussing and writing about difficult primary texts in philosophy. The course will also provide students with exposure to several central ideas in the history of western philosophy, as well as an opportunity to examine their own goals and worldview.

Required Texts

The following texts are required for this course, listed in the order that they will be read. They may be purchased at the campus bookstore. In addition to these books, students may from time to time be expected to consult materials on reserve in the library or to read handouts provided by me.

Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Plato. *Five Dialogues*. Trans. G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1981.

Augustine. *On the Free Choice of the Will*. Trans. Thomas Williams. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1993.

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method and Meditations*. Trans. Donald Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Fourth Edition, 1998.

Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. Trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983.

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton, 1989.

Course Structure and Expectations

The emphasis of this course is on understanding and assessing several of the central ideas occasioned by the texts we will be reading this semester. Readings will generally be short but quite difficult. Since we will focus on in-class discussion, students should plan on reading the material very carefully before coming to class.

In addition to coming to class prepared to discuss the reading, there are a number of other expectations as well:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Mid-term examination	20 %
Mid-term paper (3–4 pp.)	20 %
Final examination	30 %
Final paper (4–6 pp.)	30 %

Exemplary attendance and participation in class discussion can raise borderline grades at the end of the semester.

Students are expected to carry out all work in this course in accord with university standards for academic integrity, and so to follow the “Aggie Code of Honor,” which states, “an Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For information about this and other items see Texas A&M University’s web sites on the Aggie Honor System Office (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>) and on student rules (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu>).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Room 126 of the Koldus Building or call 845-1637.

Office Hours, Appointments, and Correspondence

It is important that students participating in this course feel comfortable to meet with me outside of class time about any matters pertaining to their studies. The simplest way for students to arrange a meeting with me is to let me know after class of plans to visit me during office hours. Of course, students may also just stop by my office during office hours. If students wish to meet with me, but the office hours I offer pose a schedule conflict, students should see me after class to arrange an appointment. Students are also welcome to call me at the office or to send me an e-mail. Should students choose to contact me by e-mail, they are asked to remember to use appropriate etiquette.

Grading policy

It is also as important that students feel comfortable asking questions about the grades I assign to their work. However, when graded materials are returned, students should not come to discuss their grades with me immediately. Rather, students are asked to take their assignments home, and then to read them and my comments carefully. If students still have questions or need further clarification of their grades, they are encouraged to make arrangements to meet with me.

Copies of work

Students are responsible for insuring that everything turned in to me includes their names and the date. Students are also responsible for keeping copies of all written work submitted, including copies of tests on which they seek further clarification, in case I need an additional copy.

Class Schedule

Below is a schedule of assignments for the semester. This schedule, including exam dates, is tentative, and I will announce modifications in class as necessary.

Week 1	T	Aug. 28	Introduction to course Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i> , pp. 160-187
	R	Aug. 30	
Week 2	T	Sep. 4	<i>Oedipus</i> , lns. 1-572, pp. 188-209 <i>Oedipus</i> , lns. 573-1350, pp. 209-234
	R	Sep. 6	
Week 3	T	Sep. 11	<i>Oedipus</i> , lns. 1351-1684, pp. 235-251 Plato, <i>Apology</i> , 17a-28b, pp. 24-33
	R	Sep. 13	
Week 4	T	Sep. 18	<i>Apology</i> , 28b-42a, pp. 33-44 Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> esp. 57a-69e, pp. 93-106
	R	Sep. 20	
Week 5	T	Sep. 25	<i>Phaedo</i> esp. 69e-85b, pp. 107-124 and 95e-100e, pp. 135-139 <i>Phaedo</i> esp. 107c-118a, pp. 146-155
	R	Sep. 27	
Week 6	T	Oct. 2	Augustine, <i>Free Choice of the Will</i> I, esp. chs. 1-4. Mid-term paper due <i>Free Choice</i> I, esp. chs. 7-8, 10-12
	R	Oct. 4	
Week 7	T	Oct. 9	<i>Free Choice</i> I, esp. ch. 16; II, esp. chs 18-20 <i>Free Choice</i> III, 18-19, "Reconsiderations"
	R	Oct. 11	
Week 8	T	Oct. 16	Mid-term exam Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i> 1, <i>Meditations</i> 1
	R	Oct. 18	
Week 9	T	Oct. 23	<i>Meditations</i> 2 <i>Meditations</i> 3-4
	R	Oct. 25	
Week 10	T	Oct. 30	<i>Meditations</i> 5-6 Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
	R	Nov. 1	
Week 11	T	Nov. 6	"What is Enlightenment?" Kant, "Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent"
	R	Nov. 8	
Week 12	T	Nov. 13	"Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent" Freud, <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>
	R	Nov. 15	
Week 13	T	Nov. 20	<i>Discontents</i> Thanksgiving holiday. No classes.
	R	Nov. 22	
Week 14	T	Nov. 27	<i>Discontents</i> <i>Discontents</i>
	R	Nov. 29	
Week 15	T	Dec. 4	Review for exam. Final papers due.

Final exam is scheduled for Friday, December 7, 2007, 12:30–2:30