

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (FALL 2007)

PHIL-110-01 – Class Number 3108 ♦ 519 Smith Hall ♦ MWF 1:00-1:50pm

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Course Description

Aristotle once said that Philosophy begins in wonder. In this course we will wonder about the exact formulation and the responses to four questions: “What life is worth to be lived?”, “What is right or wrong?”, “How much do I owe to others, and how much do others owe to me?”, and “What is there in front of me really, and to what extent can I know it?” In order to help us formulate and contemplate the responses, we will read some of the most distinguished classics in the western philosophical tradition, written by such authors as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and Kant.

This is an introductory course, and no previous knowledge of philosophical texts and issues is required to enroll. The course is structured as a series of lectures during which students’ participation is highly encouraged. New readings are assigned for each class.

Structure and Course Requirements:

Readings and Participation: You will be expected to complete the assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned, to bring the texts under discussion with you to class, and to come to class prepared to discuss them.

Attendance: You are expected to attend each class. If you will be absent, please e-mail me in advance (aborghin@holycross.edu). The only grounds for which absences will be excused are religious holidays, family crises, illness, or athletic competitions (which does not include athletic training); absences due to the last three reasons must be explained by a note from a dean or a doctor. For each class, I keep track of students who are late. Accumulating several late arrivals will incur in a grade reduction of one third of a grade. If you have scheduling conflicts, please come see me.

In class examination: Midterm (on 10.19.07) and Final (date, time, and location TBA)

Papers: 1200 to 1600 words each. The first paper is due in class on Friday, September 28; the second paper is due in class on Friday, November 16. Papers should be typed in Times New Roman, size 12 font, double-spaced, and all the page margins should measure one inch. You can use any citation system you prefer. Paper topics will be distributed one week to ten days in advance.

Required Texts:

The following texts are required:

Plato: *Republic* (Hackett), ISBN: 978-0872201361

Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* (Hackett), 2nd ed., ISBN: 978-0-87220-464-5

Marcus Aurelius: *Meditations* (Penguin), ISBN: 978-0140449334

Epicurus: *Letters* (Prometheus Books), ISBN: 978-0879758103

Augustine: *City of God* (Penguin), ISBN: 978-0140448948

Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett), ISBN: 978-0872201927

Hobbes: *Leviathan* (Oxford), ISBN: 978-0192834980

Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, available at:

<http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm>
Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge), ISBN: 978-0521626958
Rousseau: *The Basic Political Writings* (Hackett), ISBN: 978-0872200470
Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality", available at:
<http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/1972----.htm>
Singer: "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?", available at:
<http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/20061217.htm>

Grade Breakdown:

Paper I: 20%

Paper II: 25%

Midterm and Final: 25%

Participation: 10%

Please be advised: In order to pass the class you are required to do *all* the coursework (e.g. completing one out of two papers will result in failing the class). Late papers incur in a penalty of one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A to A-). Finally, plagiarism, cheating, and collusion, in any form, will not be tolerated, in accordance with the *Student Handbook*, p. 35.

Office Hours:

My office hours are M-W from 2 to 4 in Smith 519. I am also on campus at other times, and you can make an appointment to see me by e-mail (aborghin@holycross.edu). Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me about any aspect of the course.

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1

8.29 (W) Introduction

TOPIC 1: "EQUALITIES AND INEQUALITIES"

8.31 (F) Rousseau: *Discourse*, Part I, pp. 37-60

Week 2

9.3 (M) Rousseau, *Discourse*, Part II, pp. 60-81

9.5 (W) Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

9.7 (F) Singer: "What Should a Billionaire Give – and What Should You?"

TOPIC 2: "THE GOOD LIFE"

Week 3

9.10 (M) Plato, *Republic*, Book I

9.12 (W) Plato, *Republic*, Book II

9.14 (F) Plato, *Republic*, Book IV: 434-444 and Book V

Week 4

9.17 (M) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book I, pp. 1-17

9.19 (W) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book I, pp. 1-17

9.21 (F) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book III: Chapters 1-5

Week 5

9.24 (M) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book VII, pp. 99-114

PAPER #1 TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

9.26 (W) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: Book VII, pp. 99-114

9.28 (F) Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Books 2, 3, 4, 12

Week 6

10.1 (M) Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Books 2, 3, 4, 12

10.3 (W) Epicurus, *Letters*, Letter to Menoeceus and Principal Doctrines

10.5 (F) Epicurus, *Letters*, Letter to Menoeceus and Principal Doctrines
PAPER #1 DUE

TOPIC 3: “GOOD AND EVIL, RIGHT AND WRONG”**Week 7**

- 10.8 (M) **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**
- 10.10 (W) Augustine, *City of God*, Book XII: 1-9
- 10.12 (F) Augustine, *City of God*, Book I

Week 8

- 10.15 (M) Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters VI and X
- 10.17 (W) Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters VI and X

10.19 (F) **MIDTERM**

Week 9

- 10.22 (M) Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*
- 10.24 (W) Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*
- 10.26 (F) Kant, *Groundwork*, Preface

Week 10

- 10.29 (M) Kant, *Groundwork*, Section I
- 10.31 (W) Kant, *Groundwork*, Section II
- 11.2 (F) Kant, *Groundwork*, Section III

PAPER #2 TOPICS DISTRIBUTED

TOPIC 4: “ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY”**Week 11**

- 11.5 (M) Plato, *Republic*, Book VI: 507-511
- 11.7 (W) Plato, *Republic*, Book VII 514-520
- 11.9 (F) Lucretius, *Letters*, Letter to Herodotus and Letter to Pythocles
DUE PAPER #2

Week 12

- 11.12 (M) Lucretius *Letters*, Letter to Herodotus and Letter to Pythocles
- 11.14 (W) Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditations I and II

11.16 (F) Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation III

Week 13

11.19 (M) [NO CLASS. SUBSTITUTIVE CLASS TBA]]

11.21 (W) **THANKSGIVING, ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

11.23 (F) **THANKSGIVING, ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

Week 14

11.26 (M) Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditations V and VI

11.28 (W) Lewis & Lewis, "Holes" (Blackboard)

11.30 (F) Varzi, "From Language to Ontology: Beware of the Traps" (Blackboard)

Week 15

12.3 (M) Conclusions

12.8-15 **FINAL** Date, time, and location TBA