

Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 1000
Spring 2008
Syllabus

Professor Edward Halper
Office: Peabody Hall #128
Hours: 12:00- 12:30 M,W
Other times by appointment
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Description and Objective: There is no real introduction to philosophy: it is a discipline one comes to understand by practice. We practice by reading and thinking about philosophical works. Many introductory courses make one of two mistakes: either they use a text that tells you *about* philosophy without actually teaching you how to do it or they try to cover the discipline by giving you samples from too many different areas. In the latter case you do not learn enough about each area to be able to think about it. This course aims to introduce you to philosophy by exploring a problem. We will examine several philosophers' accounts of the emotions. We are concerned with what the emotions are, whether and why they should be moderated or controlled, how they can be controlled, and what role they should play in human life. To pursue these issues, we must consider many others and touch on different areas of philosophy. Usually, we will need to strive to understand someone's overall philosophy before we can make sense of her view on emotion. The philosophers we will read were chosen because they *disagree*. My aim is not to instill a doctrine but to provoke you to do your own thinking. This is much harder than you might suppose. It is something that needs to be learned.

The way we will learn it is by looking closely at the course texts. This will require careful reading on your part. It is important to understand that without this careful reading, you will get little or nothing from the course. (Ask yourself what you could expect to get from a lecture course on playing a guitar if you do not practice the guitar.) One important thing you can carry away from the course is an improved grasp of how to read and engage a book.

In general, the tool of philosophical analysis is the argument. We will be looking for arguments in texts, and we will be trying to think of counter arguments that undermine them. Then, we will think about how the author of the argument might defend it. This process is difficult, but it is also fun. Importantly, finding and assessing arguments is a skill that you can carry away from the class and use in other courses and elsewhere. As you read the course texts, you should be looking for arguments. It will help you to write these arguments down as you read. As you try to write out arguments, you will often find obvious holes in arguments that seemed clear and compelling in your mind. The uncovering of difficulties in arguments is what philosophers do in papers. Hence, another skill you can carry away from the class is how to write an argument paper. Although you may not realize it, this skill will also be helpful for other courses and whenever you must express yourself. Posted at the course web site is a worksheet on arguments that you will find it useful to work through. It contains two groups of exercises that consist of passages containing arguments.

We will be encountering some of the great ideas of human civilization. A state, a society, or a mode of life is always based on some ideas of human nature, the world, and the good. We do not often think of these ideas when we pursue our goals not because they are not present but because they really permeate our thinking. Confronting several very different ways of thinking helps us to see the ideas that are at work in everyday choices, and it also helps us to reflect on our ideas. To make clear the presence of philosophical ideas in everyday life, I will show two feature films during the semester. They will be shown in early evening and followed by a brief discussion. I will refer to the films in class, and you are expected to have seen them.

The philosophers we will read have their own distinctive ideas and, indeed, ways of thinking. One of the aims of this course is introduce you to their philosophies in such a way that you can enter into their ways of thinking. This means more than merely learning the different conclusions that they draw. It means understanding how they arrive at those conclusions and how they would answer objections. Learning a way of thinking requires an active engagement with a text. You will not get it from listening to me. You need to ask questions of the text as you read and to formulate your objections, but then you need to go back to the text on subsequent readings to see from the text how the author would answer your questions and disable your objections. This way of engaging a text is difficult, but it will expand your thinking and may even transform you.

Readings: Plato, *Republic*, trans. Joe Sachs, Focus Publishing, 2007
 Daniel Gardner, trans. and ed., *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition*, Hackett Publishing, 2007
 Seneca, *On Anger in Moral and Political Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 2006
 John Dewey, "The Theory of Emotion: (1) Emotional Attitudes," "The Theory of Emotion: (2) The Significance of Emotions," "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology,"
http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey_1894a.html
http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey_1895.html
http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey_1896.html

Films: TBA January 23, 6:30 PM, April 16, 6:30 PM

Study: Most of the work for this course will lie in the preparation of the reading assignments. You will get much more out of the lectures if you have prepared the material **before** class. Reading philosophy is not like reading other material. You will need to read the assignment more than once. As a minimum, I suggest **three readings**. Begin by reading a large portion of text quickly; then, carefully prepare the section that will be discussed in class; third, read the material again after class. As you read, look for the author's arguments and ask yourself the sort of questions that I might ask about the text. Remember, knowing **what** the author says is not enough! You should understand **why** the author takes this position: you should understand his arguments.

Grading:	Quiz	January 16	2.5%
	First Paper (3-6 pages)	February 11	25%
	Mid-Term	February 20	15%
	Quiz	March 19	2.5%
	Second Paper (3-6 pages)	April 9	25%
	Final Exam (cumulative)	May 2 (requested)	30%

Paper topics will be assigned. They will not require outside reading.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend lectures and discussions. If you miss more than 10% of the classes, without approval of the professor, you are subject to losing ½ letter grade, and you will be penalized for ½ letter grade for each additional 10% of the classes you miss.

Assignments: Study the assigned material before the lectures. Though we may not cover all of the assignment in the lecture, try to stick to this schedule. You are not responsible for the prefatory and explanatory material included by the editors, but you are responsible for any prefaces and introductions by the philosophers. **This schedule is subject to modification.**

January	7	Introduction, Argument, <i>Republic</i> I, 327a-331d
	9	<i>Republic</i> I, 331d-348b
	14	<i>Republic</i> I 348b- II, 368c
	16	<i>Republic</i> II, 368c-383c Quiz
	23	<i>Republic</i> III
	28	<i>Republic</i> IV, 419a-434c
February	30	<i>Republic</i> IV, 434c-445e
	4	<i>Republic</i> V, 449a-472b
	6	<i>Republic</i> V, 472b- VI, 485d
	11	<i>Republic</i> VI, 485d-504d Paper Assignment I Due
	13	<i>Republic</i> VI, 504d-VII 518a
	18	<i>Republic</i> VII 518a-541b
	20	Mid-Term
March	25	<i>Republic</i> VIII, 543a-555b
	27	<i>Republic</i> VIII 555b-569c
	3	<i>Republic</i> IX, 571a-583b

April

- 5 *Republic IX*,583b-592b
- 17 *Republic X*, 595a-614b
- 19 *Republic X* 614b-621d **Quiz**
- 24 *The Great Learning, The Analects*
- 26 *Mencius*, up to §26
- 31 *Mencius*, §27-end
- 2 *Maintaining Perfect Balance*
- 7 Seneca, *On Anger*, Book I
- 9 Seneca, *On Anger*, Book II **Paper Assignment II Due**
- 14 Seneca, *On Anger*, Book III
- 16 Seneca, complete *On Anger*
- 21 Dewey, “The Theory of Emotion: (1)”
- 23 Dewey, “The Theory of Emotion: (2),” “The Reflex Arc”
- 28 Review and Conclusion