

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Carl Albert State College

Course Number and Section: PHIL 1113 2260

Semester: Fall 2012; MWF 1:00-1:50

Contact Information

Instructor: Nathan Billy

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Note: All e-mail communications should be restricted to CASC e-mail accounts. Please write the word "Philosophy" in the subject line, regardless of the issue.

Campus Box: 480

Office: OC 1108

Office Hours: Posted on office window; or, by appointment

Course Description

Introduction to Philosophy introduces you to various schools of Western thought, prominent philosophers throughout history, pertinent terminology, and a basic understanding of the main branches of philosophy.

Required Texts

Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder. FSG Classics. ISBN 9780374530716.

Course Objectives

After completing Introduction to Philosophy, you will

- ❖ have gained an appreciation for a sense of wonder and curiosity
- ❖ know relevant terminology in order to discuss philosophy intelligently and effectively
- ❖ be able to communicate more logically and effectively
- ❖ know major figures in the history of philosophy
- ❖ be able to synthesize philosophies and apply your own criticism
- ❖ have grasped the general sweep of philosophy from its beginnings to the present
- ❖ have gained an appreciation for critical thinking through in-class discussion

Course Content

Though course content is always subject to change due to a number of factors, what follows is a tentative planned outline for the course. Your commitment to reading the text is essential for success in the course.

UNIT ONE : Introduction; Logical Fallacies; Pre-Socratic Philosophy; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; Metaphysics and Epistemology

From *Sophie's World*...

The Garden of Eden (3-11)
The Top Hat (12-22)
The Myths (23-29)
The Natural Philosophers (30-42)
Democritus (43-48)
Fate (49-57)
Socrates (58-72)
Athens (73-78)
Plato (79-93)
The Major's Cabin (94-103)
Aristotle (104-119)

UNIT TWO : Hellenistic Philosophy; Hebraic Philosophy; Medieval Philosophy; Morals and Ethics; Religion and God

From *Sophie's World*...

Hellenism (120-137)
The Postcards (138-146)
Two Cultures (147-161)
The Middle Ages (162-184)

UNIT THREE : The Birth of the Modern World; Renaissance, Baroque, and Enlightenment; Politics

From *Sophie's World*...

The Renaissance (185-212)
The Baroque (213-229)

Descartes (230-243)
Spinoza (244-252)
Locke (253-262)
Hume (263-277)
Berkeley (278-282)
Bjerkely (283-298)
The Enlightenment (299-317)
Kant (318-337)

UNIT FOUR : The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; Existentialism; Feminism; Self-Identity

From *Sophie's World*...

Romanticism (338-355)
Hegel (356-367)
Kierkegaard (368-380)
Marx (381-398)
Darwin (399-422)
Freud (423-440)
Our Own Time (441-464)
The Garden Party (465-478)
Counterpoint (479-497)
The Big Bang (498-508)

Evaluation

Each content Unit covered will culminate in an assessment/evaluation. These assessments will vary in form; the form of each assessment will be discussed as the semester progresses and the appropriate unit is covered.

In addition, you will be completing two written (typed) responses. Both responses will consist of a two-to-three page summary, evaluation, and critique of a short, primary text of philosophy (details are included in this syllabus).

Several times throughout the semester, I will give you brief questions to consider for which you will write a brief (about one required page) hand-written response (you may type the responses if you prefer). These are to be placed in a folder in the order they are assigned. You may use a three-ring binder, but a pronged folder is preferable. I will grade these folders approximately three times during the semester. You may also submit them electronically.

You will complete a Final Exam that is mandatory. It will be held Wednesday, December 12 from 1:00-2:30. You are responsible for ensuring that you are available to take the exam during that time.

Your attendance and class participation is also factored into the total points possible. In summary, your course grade will consist of

1. Four unit assessments
2. Two written responses to a philosophical primary text
3. Brief, written responses to various questions
3. Attendance, in-class activities, and participation
4. Final Exam

The grading scale for this course is standard.

Blackboard Component

While this course is held entirely on-campus, many assignments will be made available on the course's Blackboard site. Many of these same assignments can also be completed and turned in electronically through the site. It is also possible that one exam will be completed using Blackboard. In addition, you may access your grades and check your progress at any time by logging into the Blackboard section and selecting "My Grades." You may access Blackboard at <http://www.web.carlalbert.edu> or by visiting CASC's main website (www.carlalbert.edu) and following the listed links; use the same log-in credentials as you do for e-mail and enrollment. All students must be able to access this Blackboard component.

Late Work and Make-Up Assessments

All assignments are due at the beginning of a given class period. **No late work will be accepted for any reason.**

In the case of major Unit Assessments, one assessment only may be completed if missed. The Unit Assessment must be made up within one calendar week of the student's return to class.

Any daily quizzes, group work, activities, etc. may not be made up.

Attendance

Your attendance is vital to successfully completing this course and will be factored into the total points possible. Attendance will be taken by a daily written response to a song that contains a

philosophical message in its lyrics. This song will be playing as soon as class begins. The written responses will be collected when the song ends. Attendance points will then be added to the grade book based on the responses (all or nothing for each day's points). There is no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences, except in the case of school-sponsored activities, which require confirmation from an appropriate authority.

If you miss the written response to the song, you will not receive full attendance points for the day. If you arrive to class late, you may write your name and the date on a piece of paper and turn it in at the end of class for partial credit. If you leave class before it is formally dismissed, you will not receive full credit for the day.

Understand that you are responsible for obtaining any notes, handouts or other information when you miss class. Do not expect the instructor to provide this information without asking.

Administrative Withdrawal

The student may be administratively withdrawn under special circumstances only. An AW will not be granted for purposes of non-attendance or excessive absences. If a student stops attending class, then a grade of "F" will be given at the end of the semester. Any student who wishes to withdraw from the class must do so on their own initiative by the appropriate deadline.

Classroom Behavior

All students are expected to exhibit professional behavior in the classroom. Inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to

- ❖ Any form of cheating or plagiarism. Cheating and/or plagiarism will—at minimum—result in failure on the assignment. It may also result in automatic failure of the course. Academic integrity is of utmost importance; all suspected instances of cheating will be investigated and dealt with appropriately.
- ❖ Talking to classmates while instruction is occurring. Courtesy toward other students and the instructor is expected from you. If you have information to share, share it with the entire class. Private, ongoing conversations should wait until after class is dismissed.
- ❖ Using profane, sexist, and/or discriminatory language. Your freedom of expression—both verbal and written—is highly valued by the instructor. In your quest to exercise that right, please act considerately toward those around you. Potentially offensive content is to be expected in an open, academic atmosphere; abusive language, however, is not tolerated.
- ❖ The use of cell phones in class. You may not—at any time—have your cell phone displayed during class. It is to be out of sight while class is in session. Please get into the

habit of turning your cell phone off. You may think that setting it to silent is enough, but interference from incoming calls can be heard over the sound system. Please make sure to notify friends and family that you will be unavailable for contact while class is in session. Do not accept calls during class. If an emergency situation arises, you must contact the instructor for permission to be on call.

- ❖ Using any device to record visual or auditory media. Please be aware that much of what we study is protected by copyright law. Academic fair use allows us to view images and hear recordings during class time only. You are not allowed to capture, store, or distribute any media that we encounter during class time. This includes media intended for private use only.
- ❖ Preparing to leave before class is dismissed. Please be aware that class is dismissed by the instructor, not by any student's clock or even a clock in the room. You are to remain seated with all appropriate classroom materials displayed until the instructor formally dismisses class. Do not begin putting away materials before the formal dismissal.

Students With Disabilities

Carl Albert State College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations should make their request in the following way:

Talk with your instructor after class or during hours about your disability or special needs related to work in class.

AND

Complete the Request for Special Accommodations Form with the ADA Coordinator located in the Student Disability/Student Counseling Services office in the Ollie Center in office OC1203.

PHILOSOPHY PRIMARY TEXT RESPONSE

When it comes to studying philosophy, it is important that you have some experience dealing with primary texts. In other words, it is not enough to hear other people tell you *about* philosophy; it is good practice to deal with a philosopher in his or her own words.

To accomplish this, you will be selecting two primary texts of philosophy and responding in written form. Don't panic when you start looking for primary texts—there's no need to read an entire book of any particular philosopher's work (you can thank me if you stumble across St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*).

A short section or stand-alone chapter will suffice for these two projects. You may choose any philosopher that appears in your book—or, you are free to move beyond the confines of those listed in the book if you find a philosopher more appealing to you.

After you read the particular text, do the following in a two-to-three page written response, typed in a non-script, 12-point font:

1. Summarize the text in no more than one page.
2. Evaluate and critique the text in one to two more pages. In your evaluation, consider such questions as
 - ❖ What do you think of the writer's style? Is the piece easy to read and understand? Unnecessarily difficult? Difficult, but well-written?
 - ❖ What do you think of the writer's ideas? Do you agree or disagree, and why?
 - ❖ Would you recommend the piece to others, or are you sorry you read it in the first place? Who could benefit from reading the piece?

Remember that you will be completing two of these. Due dates for each will be announced during class.

Please read the following statement; print your name in the blank, then sign and date below. This signed form must be completed in order to remain enrolled in the Introduction to Philosophy course.

“I, _____, have read the course syllabus for Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 1113 2260, Fall 2012). I understand all course policies and procedures and agree to abide by them for the semester. “

Signature

Date