

**PHIL 2010: Introduction to Philosophy**  
University of West Georgia, Spring 2011

Common Syllabus for:

Section 03 (12189): T/Th 2:00 - 3:15 PM, Pafford 102

Section 04 (12190): T/Th 3:30 - 4:45 PM, Pafford 102

Dr. Thomas J. Brommage  
Email: [brommage@westga.edu](mailto:brommage@westga.edu)  
Website: <http://brommage.freeshell.org>

Office: TLC 2238  
Office Phone: (678) 839-5487  
Office Hours: M/T/Th 11 AM – 1 PM  
& by appt

**Course Description:** This course will survey some of the most important figures in Western philosophy, from the ancient Greeks all the way through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Emphasis will be placed on understanding each thinker within historical context. The student will develop an understanding of the historical tradition of Western philosophy, as well as a grasp of the basics of each figured covered. The course will trace the dialogue concerning epistemological and metaphysical problems through the ancient, medieval and modern periods, theories of ethics (including virtue ethics, deontology and utilitarianism), and end by surveying recent trends such as pragmatism, continental and analytic philosophy

**Learning Objectives:** Throughout this course, the student will learn to:

- define and distinguish among the philosophical terms and concepts used in the course;
- describe the views of at least three major philosophers from the Western tradition;
- contrast the competing views of major philosophers on some of the philosophical issues explored in the course;
- explain and critically assess the philosophical issues and theories explored in the course; and
- discuss in both oral and written discourse the philosophical theories and issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students to better:

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy;
- discuss three major historical figures of philosophy;
- ask philosophical questions and differentiate their types;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues; and
- exhibit critical thinking skills.

**Required Text:** Steven Cahn, *Classics of Western Philosophy* 7<sup>th</sup> ed, (Hackett, 2006).  
ISBN: 978-0872208599; \$44

**Course Schedule:**

All dates and content scheduled is tentative, and subject to change by the Instructor! Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers refer to the Cahn reader. There will be additional readings available for download at my website, each of which are marked with an '[E].'

DATE	ASSIGNMENT	TOPIC
6 Jan:	Introduction to Course	What is Philosophy?
11 Jan:	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> (pp. 20-29)	Definitions & Examples
13 Jan:	Plato, <i>Meno</i> (pp. 3-19)	The Paradox of Knowledge
18 Jan:	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (pp. 49-81)	Forms and the Soul
20 Jan:	Plato, Republic VI-VII (pp. 154-163)	Allegory of the Cave and The Divided Line
25 Jan:	Aristotle, "Categories" and <i>De Anima</i> (pp. 180-183, 214-227)	Hylomorphism
27 Jan:	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I & II (pp. 260-275)	The Origins of Moral Goodness
1 Feb:	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI, X (285-291, 303-312)	Intellectual and Moral Virtues
3 Feb:	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book XI (pp. 373-385)	The Nature of Time
8 Feb:	Anselm, <i>Proslogion</i> and Guanilo's reply (pp. 413-433)	The Ontological Argument
10 Feb:	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I – III (pp. 484-503)	Hyperbolic Doubt and the <i>cogito</i>
15 Feb:	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> IV – VI (pp. 503-516)	Proof of the External World
17 Feb:	Review for Midterm	--
22 Feb:	Midterm Exam	--
24 Feb:	Leibniz, "Discourse on Metaphysics" §§8, 9, 13 (pp. 598-618)	The Problem of Evil
1 Mar:	Leibniz, "Monadology" (pp. 619-626)	Monads are cool
3 Mar:	Leibniz, "Monadology" (c'td)	
8-10 Mar:	Spring Break: No Class!!	--
15 Mar:	Locke, <i>Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Book I.i and II.i-iii,viii, xi-xii, xxiii-xxiv (pp. 629-633, 637-640, 642-645, 653-662)	Empiricism 101
17 Mar:	Hume, <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , 1-5 (pp. 763-783)	The Problem of Induction
22 Mar:	Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> I - III 856-875)	The Argument from Design
24 Mar:	Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> III - VII 856-875)	Order and Chaos

28 Mar:	Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> V, VIII-XI	Arguments <i>A Priori</i>
31 Mar:	Kant, B Introduction and selections from the Transcendental Analytic, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (pp. 918-927)	Kant's Model of the Mind
5 Apr:	Kant, <i>Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (pp. 981-991)	The Duty to Act Morally
7 Apr:	Kant, <i>Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (pp. 991-1011)	The Categorical Imperative
12 Apr:	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (pp. 1058-1075)	The Principle of Utility
14 Apr:	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (pp. 1075-1090)	Utility, Justice and Rights
19 Apr:	Nietzsche, <i>Twilight of the Idols</i> (pp. 1100-1115)	How To Philosophize With a Hammer
21 Apr:	Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (pp. 1126-1136)	The Pragmatic Theory of Truth
26 Apr:	Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" [E]	Language Games
28 Apr:	Review for Final	--
3-5 May:	Final Exam	--

*Note on the Indeterminacy of Time:* Rarely is there enough time in the semester to cover everything an ideal course in philosophy should cover. Although everything on the list is important, I reserve the right to change the reading to correspond with the pace of the class.

**Evaluation:** There will be about four quizzes that will be given throughout the semester on the assigned readings, some or all of which will be unannounced. The lowest one score on these quizzes will not be counted into calculating your final grade. *There will be NO "make up" opportunities on any quiz.*

In addition, there will be an in-class midterm and cumulative final exam. The final exam will be held in accordance with the University's scheduled final exam time. Anyone who cannot take the final exam must make arrangements to make it up at least one week prior to the scheduled exam date. Failure to do so will result in a grade of "F" for that exam.

The final exam schedule is as follows:

Section 03: Tuesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 - 4 PM  
Section 04: Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2 - 4 PM

The following weighting will be used to calculate your grade:

Quizzes (10% x 3)	30%
Attendance and participation	20%
Midterm Exam (in class)	20%
Final Exam (in class)	30%

*Note on Attendance:* Your attendance in class and participation in the classroom are a sizeable chunk of your final grade. For the purposes of this grade, there is no difference between an “excused” and “unexcused” absence. *If you do not show up, read the assigned material, and participate in discussion of the issues covered, you will **not** do well in this class.*

*Students with Disabilities:* I will be happy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Feel free to self-disclose to me privately any disability that may present challenges for you in the course. I request that you contact the Office of Disability Services (678-839-6428) before you request special accommodations.

### **Expectations, Suggestions and Mandates for an efficient class:**

1. Please arrive to class on time and expect to stay the entire duration of the class. If this is an impossibility, please make every attempt to notify me in advance of tardiness or absence.
2. Especially true in philosophy more than most other subjects, diligence is important. Some of the reading will be difficult, since these are some of the most profound texts in the history of the world. The difficulty of the subject is indirectly proportional to the amount of work put into the course. Expect to have up to ten hours a week of reading and thinking in order to get an "A" for the course. Additionally, for these reasons, attendance is of vital importance.
3. Please come to class prepared (i.e., any reading assigned read, any questions concerning readings or lectures prepared, etc.)
4. Please be respectful of each other in the class. There will be times when students disagree about a topic discussed in class. This is a didactic process, not a combative one.
5. Due to the great excess of material and limited time in which we must cover ground, please do not create a disruption for those people who are attempting to learn. Disruptions include blurting out answers, name calling, chiding each other, snoring, etc. Laughing at the Instructor's jokes is obviously exempted from this policy. In addition, personal audio devices (except those in use to record lectures) and loud crunching snack foods are prohibited from the classroom. ***PLEASE TURN OFF your cellphones in class.***
6. Please feel free to make mistakes. We all will from time to time, even your omniscient instructor.
7. Please feel free to make use of my office hours. Waiting until the last moment in the semester to catch up is not advisable. I am excellent at fixing small problems, but horrendous at fixing large ones. The only difference between small and large problems is time.
8. Have fun! The material is only as dry as you make it out to be. Sharpening one's mind can be an exhilarating process.