

PHILOSOPHY 101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

COURSE SYLLABUS



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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the oldest of academic disciplines, Philosophy 101 (formerly Philosophy 100) explores the discipline's basic issues and traditional tools: the nature of reality, the limits of knowledge, the meaning of human value, and, as its primary tool, the rigorous employment of rational argument. Satisfies humanities distribution area D requirement or specified elective for the AA degree. 5 credits. Recommended preparation: READ 090 or placement in READ 120; ENGL 095 or placement in ENGL& 101.

COURSE GOALS

The goals of Philosophy 101 are as follows (letters cited after the individual outcomes refer to Grays Harbor College's five desired student abilities. D-Disciplinary Learning; L-Literacy; C-Critical Thinking; S-Social & Personal Responsibility; I-Information Use):

- To introduce students to the discipline of philosophy and its history in the West (D, L, I).
- To improve students' ability to construct rational written (and spoken) arguments (D, L, C, I).
- To explore important philosophical problems and the ways in which some thinkers have tried to resolve them (D, L, C, I).
- To encourage students to think critically about these problems and discuss them with others (D, C, S, I).

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Every night, you will be assigned to read 2-3 brief excerpts from important philosophical texts (in your course anthology). Although these passages are brief, they are extremely challenging. If you find yourself struggling with

them, this is not necessarily an indication that you should withdraw from the class. Philosophy is notoriously difficult (but also really fun!) to read. But, as a classmate one said to me, easy reading is like easy-listening music: it goes down well, but if it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't really improve you either. I don't expect you to come to class every day with full mastery of every text I assign; all I expect is that you come to class having read each piece thoroughly and ready to discuss it or at least ask questions about it.

IN CLASS

Class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Philosophy is meant to be discussed, so it is extremely important that you come to class having read the assigned material. So that you know what to read each night, a course schedule has been attached to this syllabus. Reading assignments are listed on the day we will discuss them in class, not on the day you should read them. (In other words, you should come to class every day having already read the assignment listed for that day.)

REQUIRED TEXT:

John Cottingham, *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, 2nd edition (2007, Blackwell, ISBN: 978-1-4051-2478-2) COST: APPROX. \$48

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy: The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy Made Lighter*, 4th edition (2006, McGraw-Hill, ISBN: 0-07-282895-1) COST: APPROX. \$40

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS POSSIBLE
Midterm exam	250 points
Two 3-5 page papers	400 points (200 points each)
Final exam	250 points
In-class participation*	100 points
Total	1000 points

GRADING SCALE:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D
1000-940	939-900	899-880	879-830	829-800	799-780	779-740	739-700	699-640

* **In-class participation** consists of not only engaging actively in class discussions, but also coming to class prepared and listening attentively when your classmates or the instructor is talking. Attendance and participation are not the same thing; however, attendance is obviously a prerequisite for participation. Attend class every day, come to class prepared, contribute to our discussions, and you'll earn the maximum points in this category.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE & MISSED CLASSES

If you miss class, it is your business, but class will go on without you and you will still be held responsible for understanding the material covered in your absence. The material in this class is challenging, so catching up on your own may be difficult (even if you have a friend in the class who takes great notes). Therefore, you should plan to attend class every day.

I do not accept late work under any circumstances. If you know that you will not be able to make it to class on the day when a paper is due, you must email the paper to me by the time class begins on that day or I will not accept it.

As a general rule, I do not allow students to make up missed tests. If you must miss a test, contact me in advance of the test day to enquire as to whether other arrangements can be made. By the time the test has happened, it is too late to ask.

CELL PHONES AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

If you cannot give this class your undivided attention, then do not attend. Coming to class only to text message, whisper to the student next to you, or do that whole writing-notes-on-the-paper thing is a complete waste of your time, not to mention a distraction to everyone else in the class including me. Therefore, students who disrupt the class in any of the ways just mentioned (or in any of the multitude of other ways not mentioned), will be asked to leave class immediately. Additionally, students whose phones are seen or heard (yes, that vibrating noise counts; just turn it off) will have 50 points deducted from their final grades.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All forms of cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are against the rules of this course and of Grays Harbor College. Students who are unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty are responsible for asking the instructor for clarification. Instances of academic dishonesty will be dealt with severely.

DISABILITIES

Students who have documented disabilities that require accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Disability Support Services coordinator as well as the instructor of the course in order to ensure that together we create an optimal environment for educational achievement.