



2019 Summer Program

PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy

Course Syllabus

Term: June 3 – July 5, 2019

Class Hours: 14:00-15:50 (Monday through Friday)

Course Code: PHIL 101

Instructor: Spencer Case

Home Institution: University of Colorado Boulder

Office Hours: TBA

Email: casesj@colorado.edu

Credit: 4

Class hours:

This course will have 72 class hours, including 40 lecture hours, professor 10 office hours, 10-hour TA discussion sessions, 2-hour review sessions, 10-hour extra classes.

Course Description:

This course introduces philosophy through the investigation of fundamental philosophical issues. We will explore knowledge and skepticism, the nature of mind and the self (including skepticism about whether these things exist), and the existence of God. Students will also learn basic argumentative skills – for example, how to recognize valid and sound arguments. We will also look at some foundational philosophical texts, such as Plato’s Meno and Descartes’ Meditations.



Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Learn to attentively, and actively read difficult texts and analyze them.
- Become familiar with key ideas and thinkers in the history of philosophy.
- Practice discussing philosophical issues and engaging in dialectic.
- Understand basic logic, including formal and informal fallacies.
- Write a properly cited 5-10 page paper defending a philosophical thesis.

Required Textbooks:

Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy by Brian W. Van Norden (Hackett, 2011).

A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues translated by C.D.C. Reeve (Hackett, 2012).

All other readings will be accessible online.

Course Requirements:

Each class session will be a combination of lecture and student discussion. Students are expected to attend class, complete the assigned readings in advance of the class meetings and participate in discussion.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on two short papers, a midterm exam, and a final exam, and on attendance.

Paper 1: 10%

Paper 2: 10%

Midterm exam: 35%

Final exam: 35%

Attendance: 10%

A+ 97-100 A 94-96 A- 90-93 B+ 87-89 B 84-86 B- 80-83 C+ 77-79

C 74-76 C- 70-73 D+ 67-69 D 64-66 D- 60-63 F <60 0



Classroom Policies

Electronic Devices in the Classroom: There have been many studies that show: (1) students who use electronic devices (like smartphones) in the classroom have lower grades than students who do not. Not only do smartphones distract you, they also distract people around you, and they distract me, the teacher. For further information, see the following:

<http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html>

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2F978-1-4020-9408-52>

<https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/teaching-talk/class-multitasking-how-laptops-hurt-learning>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-wealth/201402/gray-matters-too-much-screen-time-damages-the-brain>

Cheating:

Cheating will not be tolerated. If you cheat, I will catch you. If I catch you cheating, you will fail the class. If you plan to cheat, there is no point in taking the class. Do not waste my time, do not waste your time, do not waste your money.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Monday: Course overview and introduction to basic logic. For next class, read Van Norden chapter 1, "The Historical Context."

Tuesday: Overview of history of Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy class and discussion of the differences between Western and Chinese philosophy. For next class read Plato's *Euthyphro*.

Wednesday: Discuss *Euthyphro*, *Euthyphro* dilemma and obligations to family members. For next class, read Plato's *Meno*.

Thursday: Discuss *Meno* and the *Meno* problem. For next week, read Van Norden Chapter 2 and 3 on Kungzi.

Friday: Review section.

Week 2

Monday: Discuss Zhuangzi. For Tuesday, read Van Norden chapter 5 on Yang Zhu and Egoism



Tuesday: Overview of Confucianism. For next class, read Plato's *Crito* and "The Allegory of the Cave" from Plato's *Republic*. **Paper 1 due.**

Wednesday: Discuss *Crito* and the Allegory of the Cave. For next week, read Van Norden chapter 8 on Daoism.

Thursday: Mid-term exam.

Friday: Review section.

Week 3

Monday: Discuss Laozi and Daoism. For Tuesday, read Van Norden chapter 9 on Zhuangzi and online selections of Zhuangzi.

Tuesday: Discuss Zhuangzi. For Wednesday, read Van Norden chapter 5 on Yang Zhu.

Wednesday: Discuss Yang Zhu and Egoism. For Thursday, Read Plato's *Republic* Book 1.

Thursday: Begin discussing Plato's *Republic* book 1. For next week, continue reading Plato's *Republic* Book 1 and Book 2.

Friday: Review section.

Week 4

Monday: Thrasymachus and egoism. For Thursday, read "the Ring of Gyges" from Plato's *Republic* Book 2.

Tuesday: Discuss *Republic* Book 2, especially the "Ring of Gyges" story.

Wednesday: For next week, read Van Norden chapter 7 on the school of names.

Thursday: Discuss the school of names. For next week, read a book chapter on Zeno's paradoxes (available online).

Friday: Review section.

Week 5

Monday: Discuss Zeno's paradoxes. For Wednesday, read excerpt from Sextus Empiricus (available online).

Wednesday: Discuss Pyrrhonian skepticism.

Thursday: Final Exam and Paper 1 due.

Friday: Review section.