PHIL 2200  WAYS OF KNOWING  FALL 2011

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TEXTS:  Passion of the Western Mind (Tarnas), Tao te Ching (trans. Wu), Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Nietzsche, trans. Kaufmann).  The Tarnas volume is our primary “textbook.”  It’s a narrative – a story – that tells the history of Western philosophy.  I found his writing to be rich, clear and enjoyable and hopefully you will as well.  The other two texts are translations that I feel are greatly superior to the free versions you can find online.  Wu’s translation in particular is very different than much of what’s presented on the Tao.  The remainder of our reading assignments are available through the course website.

OBJECTIVES:  As part of the General Education Program at Kennesaw State, this course we will survey many of the great ideas and thinkers from both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions.  Although the principal aim of this course is to provide perspective on the history of philosophy, and thus the history of civilization, philosophical thinking cannot help but to be relevant to contemporary society and our present issues and questions.  It is in this context and from this perspective that we will approach this subject.

COURSE STRATEGY:  Studying philosophy is not about learning facts.  Understanding others’ arguments and crafting one’s own are far more important than dates, people, places and terms.  So although we will cover a great deal of the history of philosophy and encounter many facts, they are always secondary to understanding.

COURSE FORMAT:  Aside from the due dates for each assignment and discussion board section, this course is in an asynchronous format.  Instead of having class meetings, you will see all of the relevant course readings, lectures and assignments for each week in the learning module(s) labeled for that week.  In attempt to simulate the face-to-face learning environment of a classroom, I have recorded audio (MP3) versions of the lectures, corresponding roughly to the number and duration (minus discussion) of class meetings that you would expect from a course that meets in person twice per week.  To ask questions about the lecture or reading material, simply post your questions in that week’s discussion board.  When I have a sufficient number of questions that would benefit from a longer discussion, I will make audio recordings of my responses and post those for the class in addition to the normal, written responses on the boards themselves.  Also in effort to recreate the classroom environment, I have created a PowerPoint file for each lecture that corresponds to the kind of outline material and key terms that I normally write on the board during class.  It is important to note that the PowerPoint files are designed to supplement the lecture, not to summarize or replace them.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY:  Since this is an entirely online course, the minimum for computer proficiency is naturally somewhat higher than it might be for a traditional course.  I expect that you will have consistent access to an internet connection with a computer and browser capable of displaying the GeorgiaView Vista website for this class.  You will also need software that is capable of playing the audio lectures in MP3 format (e.g., windows media player).  Some familiarity with discussion boards and threads is also assumed.

GRADERS AND EXAMINATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Aug 28 - Oct 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Due every Sunday by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board after Oct 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Due every Sunday by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory Essay</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Friday September 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophical Essay</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Friday November 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Test – topics 1-11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>September 26th-30th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Test (Final Exam) – topics 12-26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>December 4th – December 10th</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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Due to previous student requests for assignments early in the semester to get a feel for how they are doing in the class, you will notice that the discussion boards will be graded in two parts: before October 1st and after.  So, by October 1st, having completed the discussions, the introductory essay and the first test, you will already have 45% of your class grade before the final withdrawal period.
DISCUSSION BOARDS: Each week, you will be graded on your participation on the class’ discussion board. You will be expected to contribute at least four separate substantive commentaries per week of at least a paragraph each in response to either my posted discussion questions or other students’ postings. Irrelevant or weak responses will be given less or no credit. You are expected to cite some specific bit of information from either the readings or a relevant outside source at least once per week. This interchange can be fun and does not need to be intimidating or difficult. It must, however, be done consistently and on time to receive credit. Late submissions may receive up to half credit. This is a pass/fail assignment for each post. As long as your post is relevant and has some substance, you will receive credit. Each post will therefore not be graded. If there is a problem with your posts then I will contact you by email and tell you. Otherwise, you may assume that your posts are adequate for the assignment.

In summary:
1) Post on the topics we are covering that week in class
2) Four posts per week
3) At least one of your posts must contain a new reference (book, article, or quotation)
4) Your posts for that week are due by Sunday night at midnight
   - the first due date is the 2nd week of class, September 4th

Discussion Board Etiquette: Please remember that these discussion boards are part of a university course and that the other people posting are your fellow students. In other words, you should interact with them with the courtesy and consideration that you would if you were sitting next to them in class. This does not mean that you shouldn’t disagree – this is philosophy, after all. If you do disagree with someone, simply remember to do so in a respectful manner.

INTRODUCTORY AND PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS: The writing assignments, though not traditional research papers, will require the use of sources (the textbook, original philosophical texts, other books or articles). Each paper should contain a discussion that demonstrates the student’s understanding of the philosophers, the texts and arguments covered as appropriate, as well as the student’s own thoughts on the topic. A list of potential topics will be provided for each paper, though the student may write on any topic with the approval of the instructor. The paper in this class has a word count requirement. Consequently, details such as margins, typeface, font size, et al will not affect the word length of the paper. At about 275 words per page, the first essay will be about three pages and the second will be about four. These are approximations. The actual length will be determined by word count of the body of the paper.

You must submit each assignment on www.turnitin.com
Class ID and password are on the class website’s homepage

The assignments will be marked and returned via the website so that both the student and the instructor have dated copies of the assignment. You must log back into the website to see your graded paper and comments. Assignments submitted on Vista or by email will not be graded unless this has already been discussed with the instructor. For more detail on the papers, see the assignment descriptions at the end of this document.

FIRST AND SECOND TESTS: The tests are to ensure that you are doing the readings and understanding the material covered. As the principle focus of this class is (and should be) the papers, the tests are gap-fillers to cover the material that we cover in class but you do not include in your papers. The tests are multiple choice. So are the self-tests online. Notice this. The suggested discussion board questions and summary notes for each week would also be excellent resources in studying for the tests (if you missed the hints, read this paragraph again). One thing that is wonderful about doing an online class is that each test has a window rather than a particular time slot. So you are expected to at any one hour period during the window to sign on to Vista and take the test in the assessments tab. Be very sure that you are starting the test at a time that you will not be interrupted and you can finish it. You may only start the test once. Grades will be released at the end of the test window. Be advised that the test questions were written knowing that some unscrupulous students will have Wikipedia open in another window. You are far better off studying by traditional means as described above.

DRAFT POLICY: Up to one week before a paper is due, the student may elect to submit a draft of the paper to the instructor. Comments will be returned with the paper. I am available via email and a few minutes before and after each class to go over the comments and answer additional questions. If you have concerns about your writing ability, organization, understanding of the topic or are interested in sharpening your paper to get the best grade possible, turning in a draft and revising your paper before it is due is an excellent way to improve your grade.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY: An assignment is late if it is turned in after the day that it is due. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the point value of the assignment for each week that the assignment is late. If a student has a circumstance that they feel...
warrants additional time for an assignment, contact with the instructor must occur well in advance. This does not mean the day before the assignment is due. Exceptions will only be given for appropriately documented medical emergencies.

PLAGIARISM POLICY: It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is. Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Plagiarism includes copying material from websites, books, or any other source and presenting it as your own work without a citation or quotation. I am aware of the online resources available and have the knowledge and ability to search these sources. If you copy entire sentences or paragraphs from an online source or book without a citation, that is plagiarizing. Anyone caught plagiarizing will immediately receive a grade of F for the course.

INCOMPLETE POLICY: A grade of Incomplete or “I” will not be given unless the student contacts the instructor and makes special arrangements for making up the required work. Only emergency situations that prohibit a student from completing the course will warrant a grade of “I”. Therefore, it will not be given automatically. Incomplete grades not corrected in accordance with the college catalog will be changed to a letter grade of “F”. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Textbook Reading</th>
<th>Online Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 17-28</td>
<td>Course Introduction: What is Philosophy and why should you study it? (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 29 -</td>
<td>Socrates, Plato’s Meno (2,3,4)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.1-54</td>
<td>Plato: <em>Meno</em>, <em>Republic</em> Book VII</td>
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<td>September 4</td>
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<td>September 5-11</td>
<td>Aristotle &amp; The Nicomachean Ethics (5,6)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.55-69,</td>
<td>Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book I</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 12-18</td>
<td>The Stoics and Epictetus (7,8)</td>
<td>73-89</td>
<td>Epictetus: <em>Enchiridion</em></td>
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<td>September 26 –</td>
<td>Thales, Heraclitus &amp; other Presocratics (10,11)</td>
<td>End of first Discussion Board Assignment</td>
<td>Thales: <em>Fragments</em>, Heraclitus: <em>Fragments</em></td>
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<td>October 2</td>
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<td>October 3-9</td>
<td>Buddhism (12,13)</td>
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<td><em>Dhammapadda</em></td>
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<td>October 10-16</td>
<td>Zen &amp; Meditation (14)</td>
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<td>October 17-23</td>
<td>Taoism &amp; Confucianism (15,16)</td>
<td><em>Tao te Ching</em></td>
<td>Confucius: <em>Analects</em></td>
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<td>October 24-30</td>
<td>Aquinas, the Problem of Evil &amp; Occam’s Razor (17,18)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.91-222</td>
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<td>October 31-</td>
<td>Descartes &amp; Kant (19)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.223-350</td>
<td>Descartes: <em>Meditations Ch.1</em></td>
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<td>November 6</td>
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<td>November 7-13</td>
<td>Schopenhauer, Aesthetics &amp; Utilitarianism (20,21)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.351-394</td>
<td>Schopenhauer: *Essays on Pessimism, sections 1 and 2, J.S. Mill: <em>Utilitarianism (abridged)</em></td>
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<td>November 14-20</td>
<td>Nietzsche (22,23)</td>
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<td>Nietzsche: <em>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</em>, <em>Prologue &amp; Book I</em></td>
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<td>November 21-27</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
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<td>November 28 -</td>
<td>Philosophy of Science, Artificial Intelligence &amp; Wittgenstein (24,25,26)</td>
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<td>December 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam available in the assessments tab during this week only. Test covers topics 12-26. Grades will be released at the end of this week.</td>
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All of the original texts that are listed in the **Online Reading** column are not included in the required textbooks for the course and will be posted to the class’ website.
General Essay Information:

**Grading Criteria**
Papers will be graded for **content** and **clarity**. Content includes the reasoning of your argument (how your argument advances your thesis) and your display of understanding of the philosophers covered by the paper. So, **you must have a well-reasoned argument and show an understanding of the philosophers we covered in order to do well on content**. Though grammar is a part of clarity, my principal interest here is how smooth your argument is, how nicely your sentences fit together and how clearly stated your ideas are. The result will be a grade of the form content / clarity, such as B+/A-. Content receives more weight than clarity.

**Important Note**: The personal opinions on a philosophical topic will not be graded as right or wrong. The papers are not such that you must “agree with the professor” to do well. This does not, however, mean that “anything goes.” For each side of every topic we will cover, an eloquent and sophisticated argument is possible. If you are giving serious thought to the topic and can express your ideas with reason and clarity, you will do well.

**DO NOT QUOTE WIKIPEDIA** – Wikipedia is a great resource to start with if you know nothing about a topic. It is **not**, however, good as a formal academic resource.

**DO NOT QUOTE THE DICTIONARY** – The dictionary is not an authority on anything other than the **common usage of words**. No philosophical debate of any substance has ever been resolved by looking in the dictionary.

Papers that are too short will be penalized at least 10% of the point value of the assignment. Papers that are late will be penalized 10% per week.

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**Introductory Essay**

**Due** September 16  
**800** words minimum

**Assignment Description**
Take a stance on a philosophical topic of your choice. Then imagine Socrates interrogating you as he does in the Platonic dialogues:

1) Describe your stance on the topic and why you think it’s valid.  
2) Articulate any objections to your stance that you think he might propose.  
3) Answer those objections.

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**Philosophical Essay**

**Final due**: November 18  
**Last day for drafts (this is optional)**: November 11  
**1000** words minimum

**Assignment Description**
Write an essay on a philosophical topic of your choice.  
1) describe the philosophical issue so that it is clear that you understand it  
2) describe its context in the history of philosophy, highlighting one or two major figures who have discussed it  
3) discuss specific details of your thoughts on the topic.

Use at least **three outside resources** for this paper.

I very much encourage you to think of your own topic for the paper. Since you may choose any topic in the history of philosophy, you should be able to find an issue to write on that you are interested in. Discussing any of the bullet points in the notes, any of the discussion questions or most any comparison between two thinkers will be approved. **Choose something you are interested in**. You will learn more, enjoy it more and do better on the assignment!
Bibliography


Carter, Elizabeth. (1758). *All the Works of Epictetus, Which Are Now Extant; Consisting of His Discourses, preserved by Arrian, In Four Books, the Enchiridion, and Fragments. Translated from the Original Greek*. Meredith: S. Richardson, Printer.


