Instructor: D. Clint Johnson, M.A., M.B.A.
E-Mail: djohn151@kennesaw.edu

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.

GRADES AND EXAMINATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Due every Sunday by midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Reading #1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunday, September 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Reading #2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunday, September 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Reading #3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sunday, November 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Test</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Open from October 1 – October 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Essay</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>November 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Test (Final Exam) – topics 12-26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Open from December 3 – December 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION BOARDS: Each week, you will be graded on your participation on the class’ discussion board. You will be expected to contribute at least two separate substantive comments 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 no credit. 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) Two posts per week
3) 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.

STRUCTURED READINGS: At three times during the semester, you will be asked to submit (in the class website’s assignment dropbox) a "Structured Reading" write-up. These are basically notes that you might make for yourself if you were researching a topic and reading a lot of articles and books on that topic. The assignment consists of three basic sections:

1) A few sentences summarizing the entire work. Why was it written? What was the author trying to accomplish/prove/disprove? Philosophical papers and books typically try to achieve some kind of movement on a topic. This can come in the form of novel ideas, modifications of existing ideas, objections or new support for existing ideas, etc.

2) In as brief a summary as possible, take notes on what the main ideas were and how they work. Then, comment on each of the ideas - what do you think about them? These notes exist so that you can easily come back, perhaps years from now, and bring yourself up to speed quickly on what the main ideas were and what you thought about them. So, ideally, they should contain concise descriptions of the main ideas. Your commentary can be longer (for me, this is frequently several pages long). If you see a particularly impressive (or distressing) quotation that you think you might use in a paper later, write that down as well.

   You will be expected to have at least a couple of quotations from the text in your structured reading assignment. Once you have these, I encourage you to make use of the quotes in your final papers - after all, that’s what they’re there for!

3) Once you finish reading the work, include a paragraph reaction to the work as a whole. Was it enlightening? Confusing? Hopelessly misguided? Be honest and be thorough. I do not care what conclusions you draw about the validity of the ideas - I just want you to dig into them and think about them. I find that it is much easier to think through a philosophical idea when I am writing about it at the same time. As such, these assignments do not need to be finely polished masterpieces of prose. What they should show, however, is the process of your digesting and wrestling with the ideas. If you don’t understand an idea, that’s fine - just say so! Write down why it’s confusing. You may find that in the process of trying to explain to yourself why an idea was confusing... that you’ve figured it out. This is no accident since the process of thinking is often much easier when writing at the same time (the same applies to conversation). Again, I am not looking for consistency of expression and a central thesis (we’ll leave that for the final paper). This assignment is to help you methodically work through the text and, in doing so, create a resource that you can go back to when you write the paper and quickly come up to speed on the ideas.

This assignment reflects a strategy that I have found successful for years. I have a significant library of these notes, complete with quotations, citations and discussion for every academic article and book that I have read in the past ten years. Because it’s electronic (and, in my case, exists on Evernote in the cloud, sorted by keywords), it is a searchable database. When I go to write a paper and I need a particular idea on Kant, let’s say, I can quickly search my notes for "Kant" or "Kant critique" and find comments that I made when the ideas were fresh in my head. Often times, I do not even need to go back to the original sources themselves since I have the quotes and material that I need in my notes. This makes researching a topic much faster than it would be without this resource.

When each class that you take at the university seems like an island to itself, covering material that you may never use again, it is easy to get in the habit of treating your ideas about that material and the quotations from it as disposable - something you’ll look to use once and then never again. But once you become involved in researching a topic for a senior thesis, master’s thesis, dissertation, academic articles or books, etc., you will need a better strategy for dealing with the mass of research and reading that you will be doing. It takes a few minutes to write things down, especially when you’re copying quotations and citations. But it’s a great way to work through the ideas... and after you do it once, you will have it forever.
I have included a sample structured reading assignment on Plato's *Meno* for you to look over. I encourage you to use it as a template for your own structured reading assignments. It should also provide you with a clear idea of what I expect from you for this assignment. This assignment does not need to be difficult. If you list each of the major ideas, summarize them and comment on them for at least one full page in total, then there is no reason why you shouldn't have receive full credit for each of these assignments. This assignment is not a test of knowledge - it is a tool to help you organize your thoughts, work through the ideas, and create a resource that you can use when writing your final paper.

Please note: if you do not cover all of the major ideas in the reading for your structured reading write-up, your grade will reflect this. So, if you only read the first few pages and read a Cliff’s notes or Wikipedia-style summary online, it will be apparent. There are no shortcuts to thinking about the ideas yourself.

**Philosophical Essay:** The essay assignment, though not a traditional research paper, 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 essay will be about four to five pages in length. These are approximations. The actual length will be determined by word count of the body of the paper.

You must submit your essays on [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)

Class ID and password are on the class website's homepage

The assignment 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.

**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.

**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 even though this is forbidden. You are far better off studying by traditional means as described above.

**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.**

From Section II A of the KSU Student Code of Conduct: No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

The Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI) is here to assist you in dealing with any student academic honesty issues you may have. In this role, we gather and centralize reports of student misconduct (we are the office to which you should send reports of academic dishonesty), but we also want you to know that we work to assist you in preventing misconduct in the first place. Academic dishonesty at KSU, and elsewhere is a serious problem, and tolerance of it undercuts the purpose of the university to educate. Our website can be found at https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/ (and it contains information specifically designed for both faculty members, https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/general-information-0 and students, https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/general-information).

**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”.
## Schedule of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Textbook Reading</th>
<th>Online Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 17-26</td>
<td>Course Introduction: What is Philosophy and why should you study it? (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 27 -</td>
<td>Socrates, Plato's Meno (2,3,4)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.1-54</td>
<td>Plato: <em>Meno, Republic</em> Book VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 3-9</td>
<td>Aristotle &amp; The Nicomachean Ethics (5,6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics Book I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10-16</td>
<td>The Stoics and Epictetus (7,8)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.55-69, 73-89</td>
<td>Epictetus: <em>Enchiridion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 24-30</td>
<td>Thales, Heraclitus &amp; other Presocratics (10,11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thales: <em>Fragments</em>, Heraclitus: <em>Fragments</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1-7</td>
<td>Buddhism (12,13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Test available in the assessments tab during this week only. Grades released after the end of the test availability window. Test covers topics 1-11.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8-14</td>
<td>Zen &amp; Meditation (14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15-21</td>
<td>Taoism &amp; Confucianism (15,16)</td>
<td><em>Tao te Ching</em></td>
<td>Confucius: <em>Analects</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22-28</td>
<td>Aquinas, the Problem of Evil &amp; Occam's Razor (17,18)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.91-222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29-</td>
<td>Descartes &amp; Kant (19)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.223-350</td>
<td>Descartes: <em>Meditations Ch.1</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5-11</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12-18</td>
<td>Nietzsche (22,23)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nietzsche: <em>Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Prologue &amp; Book I</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19-25</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26-</td>
<td>Philosophy of Science, Artificial Intelligence &amp; (24,25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam available in the assessments tab during this week only. Test covers topics 12-25. Grades will be released at the end of this week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Philosophical Essay

Final due: April 20
Last day for drafts (this is optional): April 13

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.

Though you will find sample topics on the course website, 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!

Guidelines for paper grades (from the History and Philosophy Department)

A = Excellent. Your essay will:
• Have a strong thesis (main point) that is clearly supported by an organized essay/letter/speech where appropriate.
• Provide excellent examples to support your thesis.
• Show thorough comprehension of the ideas presented in class and in the reading.
• Demonstrate innovative ideas and approaches.
• Have strong analyses of material and arguments found in lecture, reading, and research.
• Contextualize ideas and arguments to the overall historical period.
• Have proper citations as per syllabus.
• Be written clearly, with few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage.

B = Good. Your essay will:
• Have a valid thesis that is supported by a mostly well organized essay/letter/speech where appropriate.
• Provide appropriate examples to support your thesis.
• Demonstrate comprehension of the ideas presented in class and in the reading.
• Analyze material and arguments found in lecture, reading, and research.
• Connect ideas and arguments to the overall historical period.
• Have proper citations with few mistakes as per syllabus.
• Be written clearly, with minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage.

C = Satisfactory/Average. Your essay will:
• Have a thesis, perhaps flawed, or one that is incompletely supported by the essay/letter/speech where appropriate.
• Organized.
• Provide examples to support your thesis.
• Demonstrate basic comprehension of the ideas presented in class and in the reading.
• Reveal some incompleteness in the research.
• Incompletely analyze material and arguments found in lecture, reading, and research.
• Incompletely connect ideas and arguments to the overall historical period.
• Improper use of citations, or incorrect format as per syllabus.
• Be written clearly, with some errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage.

D = Below Average/Barely passing. Your essay will have one or more major problems:
• A weak thesis; or one that is incompletely supported by the essay/letter/speech where appropriate.
• Incomplete or weak organization.
• Weak examples or neglect to include textual examples.
• Show minimal comprehension of the ideas presented in class and in the reading.
• Show incomplete research.
• Partially analyze material and arguments found in lecture, reading, and research.
• Missing, or use incorrect citation format as per syllabus.
• Show lack of coherence, or many errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage.

F = Failing. Your essay will receive an “F” if it meets ANY of the criteria below:
• Does not meet the minimum requirements for a D.
• Shows evidence of plagiarism.
• Does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.
• Contains unacceptable number of compositional errors.
• Written in stream of consciousness or incoherent argumentation (babbling).
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.


