PHIL 2200: Ways of Knowing
Semester: Spring 2016
Location: online
Meeting Time: asynchronous – no set meeting times

Instructor: D. Clint Johnson
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 7-9PM
Office Phone: 770-578-6294
Email: djohn151@kennesaw.edu

Course Communication – For questions about the course, I am always available by email at djohn151@kennesaw.edu. Please use this email address instead of the D2L client as I can check it more frequently. You may also contact me via AOL instant messenger (look me up by my email address: djohn151@kennesaw.edu) to chat during office hours or outside of office hours if we make arrangements to do so by email.

Electronic Communications. The University provides all KSU students with an “official” email account with the address “students.kennesaw.edu.” As a result of federal laws protecting educational information and other data, this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other University officials.

Course Description:
From Catalog at: http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2024

Learning Objectives:

PHIL 2200 satisfies one of Kennesaw State University’s general education program requirements. It addresses the CRITICAL THINKING general education learning outcome(s). The learning outcome states: Students articulate a position on an issue and support it by evaluating evidence relevant to the position, considering opposing positions or evidence, and evaluating the implications and/or consequences of the issue. For more information about KSU’s General Education program requirements and associated learning outcomes, please visit http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=24&poid=2668

Required Reading:
Passion of the Western Mind (Tarnas), The Republic of Plato (trans. Bloom), Schopenhauer: Essays and Aphorisms (trans. Hollingdale), Tao te Ching (trans. Wu). The Tarnas volume is our primary “textbook.” It’s a narrative – a story – of Western philosophy’s history. The other texts are translations that I feel are greatly superior to the free versions you can find online. Our other reading assignments are available on the course website.

The materials in this course were selected to aid in its overall aim: giving you the tools you need to understand the philosophical ideas we will cover. For each module in the course, you will find a combination of 1) original texts that describe the ideas, 2) commentary (mostly from Tarnas) that describe the context of the ideas and their place in philosophical history, and 3) my notes
and diagrams. The lectures are then designed to build from all of these elements and to tie them together. With all of the resources that you have in each module, you should have a sound foundation from which you can understand the philosophical ideas.

**Prerequisites:**
Although this course has no prerequisites, experience with philosophical ideas and skill in writing (such as you might gain through a composition class) will be helpful.

**Attendance Policy:**
Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal. If you do not complete a graded assignment, you will be assigned a grade of NA (Never attended).

Since this is an asynchronous, fully online course, we have no fixed meeting times. However, you are still responsible for weekly discussion board posts. To adequately complete this assignment, you will need to keep up with the weekly lectures and readings.

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. These lectures are being supplemented and, in some cases, replaced by videos. Also in effort to recreate the classroom environment, I have created a PDF file for each lecture that corresponds to the kind of outline material and key terms that I normally write on the board during class. The PDF files are designed to supplement the lectures, not to summarize or replace them.

**Electronic Devices Policy:**
Aside from the computer that you use to access the course, no other electronic devices are allowed while you take the exams. The only online material you should have open during an exam is the exam on the course website. This corresponds with the general policy that no electronic devices are allowed during the exams for the traditional version of this course.

**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 course 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.

**Technological Support:**
If you are having technical difficulties with the course, please let me know. I will help with any issues you have if possible. For technical issues with D2L itself, please refer to the Kennesaw State Help Desk at [http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/resources/tech.php](http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/resources/tech.php). When students tell me
that they are having trouble loading the videos, MP3 audio files or other course content, my first recommendation is always to try a different web browser and then a different computer.

Course Assessments/Assignments:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due by 11:59PM on …</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Each Sunday, January 24— May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm (topics 1-11)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Open from February 22-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophical Analysis</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>April 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (topics 12-25)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Open from May 3-9</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**DISCUSSION BOARDS:**
Each week, you will be graded on your participation on the class’ discussion board. For each discussion board, you will be expected to do the following:

1. **Cite a particular passage** which contains an idea that you found thought provoking.
2. **Explain the idea**: explain what you think the author meant and back it up with a discussion. Citing other passages may be necessary to do this. A brief summary of its context will also be beneficial.
3. **Reflect on the idea and offer a critique**: is the claim the author makes reasonable? If you disagree with it, how might you object to it? Or if you agree with it, how might you support it?

One sentence on parts 2 and 3 will *not* suffice. A substantive paragraph for each is expected. I am looking for a philosophical analysis of the ideas, not just your opinions. If you simply say that you disagree with the author because you have a different opinion, you will not be given full credit. You must say *why* you agree or disagree. What is it specifically about the idea (and its place in the author’s argument) that you agree or disagree with?

Though your grade for this assignment will come from your post, you are also encouraged to respond to other students’ posts. I track discussion board activity (time spent and posts made) carefully because it is a good indication that students are putting in the needed time and effort into the course. If I see that you are responding to others’ posts in a thoughtful way, *I take this into consideration when rounding grades at the end of the course*. I have rounded course grades up several points in the past when I saw that students were truly putting in a lot of effort into the discussion boards. You can think of this like an *extra credit* assignment for the course.

Since these posts are designed to facilitate your thinking about the material we cover and take the place of class discussion, they must be done *on time*. Late submissions may receive up to half credit. Posts will not be graded until the end of the semester. I do this so that you can go back at any time during the semester and add to your posts, respond to other students’ posts, and so on and still receive at least some credit (or extra credit!).
In summary:

1) Post on the modules we are covering that week in class
2) One post per module – so, one post per discussion board
   25 total for the whole course = 25 modules ∙ 1 post each
3) Your posts for that week are due by Sunday night by 11:59pm

Example:
For January 25-31, we are covering Aristotle Part I (module 5) and Aristotle Part II (module 6). This means that you need to have at least two total posts by 11:59pm on Sunday January 31: one on the discussion board for module 5 and one on the discussion board for module 6.

For the first week and a half, since people will still be shuffling their schedules, the post for module 1 is not due until January 24.

Rubric: Solid, substantive posts will be given full credit. Posts which fulfill the parameters of the assignment, but are weak and lack detailed explanation and analysis sections will be given 80% of the value of the assignment. Posts that are significantly weak and do not meet the criteria for the assignment will be given 60%. You will receive grades for the discussion board posts each month: February, March and April so that you can gauge your progress in the course. Consequently, no late posts will be accepted once a grade has been received. So, once you receive a grade at the end of February, no more late posts will be accepted for the modules covered in January and February.

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.

Philosophical Analysis:
This is not a traditional essay assignment, though the commentary section should resemble a traditional essay. Find a brief argument made by a philosopher on a topic of your choice. Ideally, the argument should be given in a page or less of text. Do a step by step, line by line analysis of the argument. You should show how each line of the argument works. Next, you will need to think about what assumptions are necessary (but are likely not stated in the text) for the argument to succeed. Finally, provide several paragraphs of commentary on the topic. In this commentary, I am looking for pointed, sharply targeted statements about the arguments presented – avoid overly general statements and fluff at all costs! The assignment should be long enough to cover all of the arguments in detail, probably 5-10 pages – when in doubt, more detail about the steps of the arguments is better. The challenge in this assignment is in being able to distill an argument from a text in a very structured fashion. If you have questions about what I am looking for in this assignment, please email me and consider using my draft policy (see below). A sample papers is also available on the course website. Though there is a temptation to only use the original text itself when writing this paper, it is often very beneficial to read what others have had to say about the text. For this, I recommend searching for articles and books through the KSU library.
(many of which are available online). You can also get assistance by visiting the library and talking with the staff directly. For philosophy: http://libguides.kennesaw.edu/philosophy. The librarians can be very helpful in finding material that is relevant to what you are researching.

Final due: April 18
Last day for drafts (optional): April 11

The structure of the assignment should be as follows:
1) Title
2) Text of the original passage you will be analyzing
3) Bullet points describing each step of the argument, line by line
4) At the end of the bullet points, include a bullet that sums up the entire argument
5) Bullet points describing the assumptions necessary for the argument
6) Several paragraphs of targeted commentary

**Rubric for the Philosophical Analysis:** Papers that have quality versions of all of the sections listed above will receive an A for the assignment. To achieve that level, it must be clear that you have understood how the argument works that you are analyzing and your presentation of the argument must likewise be clear and succinct. In discussing the assumptions and in doing the commentary, insightful and well researched (reading commentary from outside sources is highly recommended), clearly presented writing will achieve the highest marks. As one or more sections shows some weakness or incompleteness, the grade falls from an A. An A- to B+ level paper is one that is likely complete, but lacking in minor ways in one or more areas. A B- to B level paper is one that is lacking in significant ways, possibly including an incomplete understanding of how the argument works. A C to C+ level paper has significant problems, either with sections missing, the argument substantially misunderstood and/or the thinker misrepresented in the commentary. A C- and below level paper is one that is significantly deficient in a number of areas.

**Important Note:** Personal opinions on a philosophical topic will not be graded as right or wrong. The written assignments 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. For this class, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is much better and more reliable.

**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.

Use of outside sources: aside from the source material for the structured readings and the source material for your philosophical analysis, you are not required to use any other outside sources,
though you may cite additional sources in your commentary if it helps to elucidate a point that you are making.

**SUBMITTING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**
You must submit your essays on the Desire2Learn course website in the assignment dropbox. Writing will be automatically checked for plagiarism by the Turnitin.com service. 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 by email will not be graded unless this has already been discussed with the instructor.** For more detail on the written assignments, see the rubrics 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, during office hours and other times by appointment 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. Yes, this policy is very generous – it rewards students who are willing to put the time in. I will go back and forth with you on email as many times as you like to perfect your assignments. This doesn’t result in all of my students getting an A simply because people (for some reason) choose not to do it! In addition to submitting drafts, working with the writing center on campus is a great way to improve your writing and chances of success with the paper: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/)

**MIDTERM AND FINAL TESTS:**
The tests are to ensure that you are doing the readings and understanding the material covered. 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. One of the advantages in taking this class in an online format 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 D2L and take the test in the quizzes 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 with full knowledge 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.

**Grading Scale**
Students are evaluated on the following scale:

- A – greater than or equal to 90
- B – greater than or equal to 80 and less than 90
C – greater than or equal to 70 and less than 80
D – greater than or equal to 60 and less than 70
F – less than 60

I—Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

Makeup Exams and Late Assignments: An assignment is late if it is turned in after the day that it is due. Except for the discussion board posts (which can only receive up to half credit – see above), late assignments will be penalized 10% of the point value of the assignment for each week that the assignment is late, up to 20% for being two weeks late. No assignments that are more than two weeks late will be accepted for credit. 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. Makeup assignments will take the form of research papers with topics that are assigned on an individual basis. A makeup is not automatically given. Arrangements for a makeup must be made prior to the exam date.

Grading:

Grade Calculations

The total discussion board grade, midterm, philosophical analysis and final exam are equally weighted. Since there are 25 discussion boards and the discussion board assignment is worth 25% in all, this means that each discussion board is worth 1% of your course grade. The exams and the paper are each worth 25% of the course grade.

Tracking your progress in the course

Throughout the semester, you have access to your grades to date on the course website. You will notice that grades will not be assigned for the discussion boards until the end of the semester. This is to allow students to make up discussion board posts for partial credit according to the late policy. You should still know exactly where you stand with this assignment, however, since I will contact you if there is a problem with the quality of your discussion board posts. Consequently, you can simply tally your posts that were done on time to date and calculate your discussion board grade from there. The graded papers will be returned with comments within ten days of the due date.

Grading Scale
Students are evaluated on the following scale:

A - (90-100%)
B - (80-89%)
C - (70-79%)
D - (60-69%)
F – (below 60%)

I - Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

Academic Integrity Statement: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5. C 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 Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), 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. See also https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct.

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.

See the following websites for more information on plagiarism:

http://plagiarism.org/
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml
http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html
ADA Compliance:

Students with qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who require “reasonable accommodation(s)” to complete the course may request those from Department of Student Success Services. Students requiring such accommodations are required to work with the University’s Department of Student Success Services rather than engaging in this discussion with individual faculty members or academic departments. If, after reviewing the course syllabus, a student anticipates or should have anticipated a need for accommodation, he or she must submit documentation requesting an accommodation and permitting time for a determination prior to submitting assignments or taking course quizzes or exams. Students may not request retroactive accommodation for needs that were or should have been foreseeable. Students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. For more information please visit their website, sss.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Contact information is as follows:
SDS Email: sds@kennesaw.edu
Primary number for Kennesaw campus: 470-578-2666
Primary number for Marietta campus: 678-915-7244

Accessibility of technologies used in the course

As with philosophy generally, learning is primarily facilitated by reading and writing. As text, the course website and online readings are all capable of being translated for use in different forms (large print, text-to-speech, etc.). Electronic copies of the books or different translations of the same original texts are also available.

For accessibility information on AOL instant messenger, please see https://help.aol.com/articles/about-accessibility

Transcriptions and closed captioning of the course lectures are currently being worked through the Distance Learning Center at Kennesaw State and should be available soon. For accessibility information on D2L Brightspace, please see:

http://www.brightspace.com/about/accessibility/standards/

Privacy Policies of Technology used in the course

D2L Brightspace: http://www.brightspace.com/legal/privacy/

AOL instant messenger: http://privacy.aol.com/privacy-policy/

Student Support Services
For information on the writing lab, tutoring and other student support services at Kennesaw State, please visit: [http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/resources/tutoring_academic_support.php](http://learnonline.kennesaw.edu/resources/tutoring_academic_support.php)

**Course Schedule:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Textbook Reading</th>
<th>Online Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 11-17</td>
<td>Course Introduction: What is Philosophy and why should you study it?</td>
<td>Russell: Problems of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 18-24</td>
<td>Socrates, Plato's Meno (2,3,4)</td>
<td>Plato: <em>Meno, Republic</em> Book VII</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 25-31</td>
<td>Aristotle &amp; The Nicomachean Ethics (5,6)</td>
<td>Aristotle: <em>Nicomachean Ethics</em> Book I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1-7</td>
<td>The Stoics and Epictetus (7,8)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.55-69, 73-89</td>
<td>Epictetus: <em>Enchiridion</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15-21</td>
<td>Thales, Heraditus &amp; other Presocratics (10,11)</td>
<td>Thales: <em>Fragments</em>, Heraditus: <em>Fragments</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 22-28</td>
<td>Buddhism (12,13)</td>
<td>First Test available in the assessments tab from Monday February 22 – Friday February 26 only. Grades released after the end of the test availability window. Test covers topics 1-11.</td>
<td>Dhammapadda</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 29 –</td>
<td>Zen &amp; Meditation (14)</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
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<td>March 2nd is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty</td>
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<td>March 7-13</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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<tr>
<td>March 14-20</td>
<td>Aquinas, the Problem of Evil &amp; Occam’s Razor (17,18)</td>
<td>Tarnas pp.91-222</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21-27</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>April 4-10</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 11-17</td>
<td>Nietzsche (22,23)</td>
<td>Nietzsche: <em>Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Prologue &amp; Book 1</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18-24</td>
<td>Philosophy of Science, Artificial Intelligence (24,25)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Philosophical Analysis due April 18</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25 – May 2</td>
<td>Bonus: Wittgenstein (26)</td>
<td><em>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</em> (items numbered 1.* and 6.*)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3-9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam available in the assessments tab during this time only. Test covers topics 12-25. 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.
Learning Objectives:

Since it is not as easy to simply raise your hand and ask a question in an online course, the learning objectives are here to clearly lay out the expectations for what you will get out of each element of the course, what the purpose is in each assignment and what the overall goals of the course are. This detail can be very useful to you in preparing for the exams and doing the other assignments in the course. I recommend wrapping up your course activities each week by going through the learning objectives to ensure that you’ve accomplished the goals set out for that week.

Relationship between the instructional materials and the learning objectives:
The learning objectives center around the arguments presented by different thinkers and a comprehension of the historical circumstances of those arguments, including what preceded them and what followed them (and what they may have influenced). The Tarnas volume will be principally used as an historical narrative that facilitates historical contextualization of the ideas. The other required readings for the course are original works of philosophy. We will be examining the arguments and ideas from those works in detail. The course lectures bring the historical material and the arguments together. I also try to provide you with some perspective on how the arguments are generally understood and discussed among philosophers to round out your perspective on the ideas.

Relationship between learning objectives and course activities:
Conversation is a living and vital part of learning philosophy. By ‘conversation,’ I mean to also include the act of writing (since it may have an audience and thereby become part of a conversation). When we write, we are often able to think through ideas more easily than we would by merely thinking. This is doubly true for conversation with others. The discussion board posts attempt to capture both of these situations. This kind of assignment is useful for philosophy at all levels of study. Similarly, the self-tests and learning objectives allow you to check your understanding at the end of each week. These may serve to ensure that you do not miss essential material or walk away with incorrect or incomplete understandings of the most important points.

Relationship between module learning objectives and course learning objectives:
Each module attempts to go through and discuss in detail the ideas of a particular thinker and the historical context of those ideas. The module-level objectives often concern specific ideas or arguments. Most of these arguments are canonical in philosophy and will be useful for you to know when working with other philosophers or indeed other disciplines that were influenced by those same thinkers. In each case, the module-level objectives concern specific arguments in their contexts, which relates directly to the first several course-level learning objectives. Further, when putting all of the modules together, the big picture of how philosophy has evolved over time will coalesce. This relates to the course learning objective that asks you to be able to discuss the way philosophy changed between historical epochs.
Course level learning objectives:
- Recognize and explain ideas that are characteristic of the philosophical thinkers that we cover.
- Discuss and describe what the place is of each major thinker in philosophical history that we cover.
- Be able to apply the principles of the different ethical and epistemological systems we cover to common philosophical questions (e.g., What is knowledge? What is the divine? What is right action?)
- Be able to discuss the way that philosophy changed as it moved from one historical epoch to the next in terms of changing perspectives on what counts as knowledge, what God is, how we understand ethics, how inquiry should be conducted, and so on.
- For the material we cover, describe how the philosophical arguments work step by step, what their assumptions are and what people commonly say are their strengths and weaknesses.

Module-level learning objectives:
1) Introduction – What is philosophy?
   a. Describe what kinds of questions and subject areas philosophy has dealt with historically and what it deals with now.
   b. Discuss the problems associated with defining the terms ‘philosophy’ and ‘wisdom’
2) Introduction to Plato & Socrates
   a. Describe the historical philosophical environment in which Socrates and Plato lived and to which they responded.
   b. Recall and arrange the steps in the method of Socratic dialectic
   c. Explain the popular metaphors for Socrates
   d. Describe the main principles in Socratic ethics
   e. Explain Socratic irony and its significance for the Platonic dialogues
3) Plato & Socrates – Major Ideas
   a. Explain anamnesis and its relation to epistemology and the immortality of the soul
   b. Explain Plato’s doctrine of the Forms and its relation to the ‘divided line’ in the Republic
4) Plato and the Meno
   a. Describe the progression of the steps of the argumentation in the Meno
   b. Explain the geometry example in the Meno and its relation to anamnesis
   c. Explain the arguments for and against the idea that virtue can be taught as they appear in the Meno
5) Aristotle
   a. Describe the historical philosophical environment in which Aristotle lived and to which he responded.
b. Recall and explain the primary differences between Plato and Aristotle

c. Explain what was unusual about Aristotle and how his thought and work influenced Western thought

d. Recall Aristotle’s four causes (‘explanations’) and explain how they work together to comprise his scientific approach

6) Aristotle – *Nicomachean Ethics*

   a. Explain how Aristotle departs from Plato in his ethical theory
   b. Describe the *ergon* argument
   c. Discuss what *eudaimonia* is and explain the role it plays in his ethics
   d. Explain the role of habit in Aristotle’s ethics

7) Greek Philosophy after Aristotle

   a. Describe the main principles of Epicureanism
   b. Explain Epicurean ethics and their modification of hedonism
   c. Describe the Stoic movement and its influence
   d. Explain how Stoic ethics functions, how it responds to the hedonists and how its psychological approach differs from Plato and Aristotle

8) Epictetus’ *Enchiridion*

   a. Describe Epictetus’ argument for how we are in control of our actions and what implications this has for his ethics
   b. Explain Epictetus’ stance on fate and what is within our control
   c. Describe how Epictetus’ ethics is similar to and different from Aristotle’s ethics

9) The Origins of Philosophy & Comparative Mythology

   a. Describe how philosophy differed from the mythic age that preceded it.
   b. Describe in outline the main ideas that were forwarded in the late 19th and early 20th century in comparative mythology
   c. Explain the significance of Sir James Frazer’s book on Western culture and religion.
   d. Recall some of the reasons why people have argued for and against the idea that myths have a common psychological heritage.

10) Thales and Heraclitus

   a. Describe what was unusual about Thales’ thought and explain why these factors were significant for Western philosophical history
   b. Explain how Thales was and was not a proto-scientist
   c. Explain several different common ways of interpreting his statement, “All is water”
   d. Explain Heraclitus’ claim that all is in flux
   e. Explain the significance of his claim that all is one.
   f. Describe the significance of the idea of *logos* in his thought

11) Other Presocratics
a. Describe Anaximander’s *apeiron* and what significance this idea had for Greek culture
b. Describe the significance of Parmenides’ idea of change being change in appearance only
c. Describe Democritus’ atomism

12) Buddhism part I – Introduction
   a. Describe how Buddhism is different from other religions and is more like a philosophy in many ways
   b. Explain what is meant by the idea that everything in Buddhism is a ‘tool’ and how this relates to the parable of the raft
   c. Explain the roles of experience and knowledge in Buddhism

13) Buddhism part II – history
   a. Describe the historical environment in which Buddhism arose
   b. Explain the idea of karma and how this differs from the popular conception of it
   c. Recall and discuss the eightfold path
   d. Recall and discuss the four noble truths

14) Buddhism part III – Zen and Meditation
   a. Explain what a koan is and discuss their use and meaning
   b. Explain the basic principles of Buddhist meditation
   c. Discuss how modern psychology has taken notice of meditation and used its techniques
   d. Recall the steps in vipassana (breathing/insight) meditation

15) Taoism
   a. Explain why the *Tao te Ching* is difficult to translate into English
   b. Explain the significance of contradictions in the *Tao te Ching*
   c. Recall and explain the five major themes we discussed in the *Tao te Ching*

16) Confucianism
   a. Describe the place and significance of propriety in Confucian thought
   b. Explain what the Golden Mean is
   c. Recall five important themes in Confucian thought

17) Aquinas & the Existence of God
   a. Describe the transition from classical to medieval thought
   b. Explain how medieval philosophy differs from modern philosophy
   c. Explain Anselm’s ontological argument for the existence of God
   d. Explain each of Aquinas’ ‘five ways’

18) Occam and the Problem of Evil
   a. Describe the historical philosophical environment in which Ockham lived and to which he responded.
   b. Explain the significance of Ockham’s ideas in laying the groundwork for modern science and modern thought.
c. Explain the problem of evil argument
d. Discuss several ways the problem of evil argument has been responded to historically

19) Descartes, Kant & Berkeley
   a. Describe the influence that Descartes had on the philosophy and science that followed him.
   b. Explain Descartes’ idea of the “natural light of reason”
   c. Explain Descartes’ hyperbolic doubt and why it was historically significant
   d. Explain the progression of Descartes’ argument in the *Meditations*
   e. Describe Berkeley’s brand of skepticism and why it was unusual
   f. Describe Kant’s “Copernican revolution”
   g. Explain Kant’s categorical imperative and its place in his ethics

20) Schopenhauer
   a. Describe the similarities between Schopenhauer and Buddhism on suffering
   b. Describe what is peculiarly modern about Schopenhauer’s pessimism
   c. Explain the notion of the *will* for Schopenhauer

21) Nietzsche part I
   a. Explain Nietzsche’s historical significance and describe his historical context
   b. Describe Nietzsche’s view on objectivity
   c. Discuss to what extent Nietzsche was a relativist
   d. Explain the idea of the “will to power”
   e. Discuss Nietzsche’s take on the history of ethics and his own stance on morality
   f. Explain Nietzsche’s notion of the “overman”

22) Nietzsche part II
   a. Explain the meaning and significance of his claim that “God is dead”
   b. Explain what he means when he says he does philosophy “with a hammer”
   c. Describe Nietzsche’s view of modernity
   d. Describe the idea of eternal recurrence

23) Utilitarianism
   a. Describe the historical context of utilitarian thought and why it arose when it did and not earlier
   b. Explain the basic ethical principles of utilitarianism
   c. Discuss several common arguments for and objections to utilitarianism
   d. Describe the elements of the hedonic calculus
   e. Describe the difference between Bentham’s and Mill’s versions of utilitarianism

24) Philosophy of Science & Mathematics
   a. Explain the historical context of Thomas Kuhn’s work
   b. Explain the idea of the “paradigm” for Kuhn
   c. Explain the incommensurability thesis
   d. Explain why some have said that Kuhn’s work makes science irrational.
e. Describe the common topics discussed in the philosophy of mathematics

25) Artificial Intelligence and Consciousness
   a. Describe and discuss the significant philosophical problems in A.I.
   b. Describe the Turing test and discuss its significance
   c. Discuss some of the philosophical problems involved in the study of consciousness

26) Wittgenstein
   a. Describe the historical context of Wittgenstein’s work and how his work has influenced other thinkers
   b. Describe Wittgenstein’s view on what logic is and the place that it has in his metaphysics
   c. Explain what Wittgenstein means by what can be “said” versus “shown”
   d. Describe Wittgenstein’s view on what words are. Explain this using the example of what a “game” is and how the word can or cannot be defined

Guidelines for paper grades: please consider these guidelines for your written assignments.

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.


