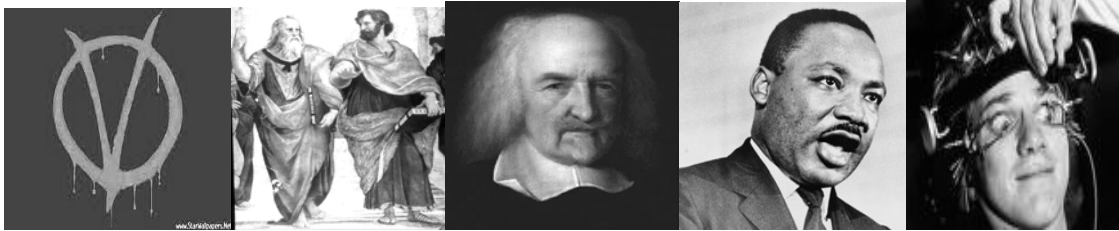


Syllabus: Phil 002
Introduction to Philosophy: Morals and Politics
De Anza College
Winter Quarter, 2011
Instructor: Toño Ramirez
Email: ramireztono@fhda.edu
Office Hours: M/T/W/Th 9-10 AM, or by appointment
Office Location: Forum Building, room 2D



Course Description

This course introduces students to the methods and practices of philosophy through a rigorous investigation of central topics pertaining to traditional themes in epistemology and metaphysics. Students will engage key readings and ideas from the history of philosophy, and will find that the themes encountered bear heavily on current issues, events and popular culture. The course will focus on three primary topics: The nature and scope of knowledge, understandings of reality, and the nature of personhood. Our discussions will culminate in an investigation of the relevance of these topics to the possibility of a meaningful life.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully engage with the course and its content will be able to:

- Identify and analyze the philosophical problems pertaining to social and political philosophy
- Analyze and assess solutions to these problems from a variety of philosophical traditions
- Articulate and defend an original position on at least one issue in social and political philosophy
- Identify applications of philosophical tools to real-world actions and decisions

Course Expectations and Requirements

- Students who are considering dropping the course for personal reasons are encouraged to meet with me first—I'm happy to do what I can to help you succeed in this class! To this end, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of office hours.
- Students may miss a total of *four* class meetings without penalty during the term. A fifth absence will result in the loss of the "attendance buffer" (explained below) when final grades are calculated. A seventh absence will result in dismissal from the course.
- Students are *not* required to provide the instructor with a reason for absence, nor are apologies necessary. I assume that absences will only occur under legitimate circumstances.
- Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining any information or assignments they may have missed.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
- Students are expected to come to class *on time*. Three late arrivals will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- Reading assignments are *required* in this course. I understand that some of the reading will be challenging, and that it may not be fully understood without subsequent in-class explanation. Nevertheless, I expect that students will read the texts assigned.

- As a significant portion of the course will involve class discussion of texts, it is expected that students will have completed assigned readings *before* the corresponding class meeting.
- Participation in discussions will be evaluated according to the *quality* of student comments, and not quantity. Students who demonstrate excellence in discussions will attend closely to the comments of other students, and offer remarks that are of relevance to the discussion at hand. It is expected that students will engage one another's ideas in discussion, and that this will be done in a respectful manner. Neither disparaging remarks nor personal attacks will be tolerated in any way.
- Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups.
- Cell phones must be turned off during class. Students who need to leave a phone on for emergency purposes should let me know at the beginning of the class session. Text messaging is incompatible with active participation in class activities, and will not be permitted during class time.

Student Assessment:

Evaluations will be based upon the quality of individual student participation in discussions and written work. The final grade will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Written work:
 - Written work will consist of a series of homework assignments one short essay, and one longer essay.
 - Homework assignments will be based upon course readings. For each assigned reading, questions will be posted on the course website (explained below) pertaining to the text. Questions highlighted in **bold** should be answered for the homework assignment. You do not need to submit written responses for questions that are not highlighted in bold. Responses may be brief and informal, but *must reflect that the reading has been done*. I will collect responses at the *beginning* of class. Students who are late will be expected to submit homework responses upon arrival. Students who are absent will be expected to submit responses via email *prior to returning to class on the following day*. Late responses will not be accepted.
 - Homework assignments account for 20% of your final grade in this course. The number of percentage points you earn toward the homework portion of your grade will correspond to the percentage of satisfactory homework assignments you submit (i.e. if you submit 10 satisfactory assignments out 20 assigned, you will earn 10 of the 20 possible points toward the final grade). Assignments will not be handed back to you, but I will read them. If your response is satisfactory (i.e. it demonstrates that you have both read and understood the assigned reading), it will be reflected as "x" on the course grade tracker (which I will update on the course website on a regular basis). If your response is not satisfactory, it will be reflected as "-" in the grade tracker. You may email me or meet me at my office to correct unsatisfactory responses. If this is done **within one week** of the original question date, you will be given full credit for the response. Corrections submitted beyond this one week period will not be accepted. **You may correct a maximum of three responses in this manner.**
 - Essays will be evaluated according to standards provided with assignment prompts. Standards for each paper will also be addressed verbally in class at the time of assignment. It is expected that students who remain unclear as to the standards of excellent written work will meet with the instructor *before* the assignment is due. "Re-writes" are not accepted for paper assignments. I am happy to review advance drafts of papers with you **in person**, but not via email.
 - Academic honesty is imperative in written work. Any plagiarized paper will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the course, and will be reported to the

Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should consult with me. In short, **any uncited material, presented as your own original work**, constitutes plagiarism. This includes uncited quotes from internet and print sources. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**

- Assignments turned in on time will be graded and returned with comments within one week of the due date. Students may submit assignments the Monday after the due date at no penalty, but I make no guarantees for a prompt return. I will not accept **any** papers that are turned in after this time.
- I practice blind grading to ensure impartiality in evaluating student work. Students **should not** write their names on the front of any written assignment. Rather, the name should be written lightly in pencil on the back of the last page.
- Mid-Term and Final Exams:
 - A make-up exam will only be available under certifiable emergency circumstances, as determined by the instructor. Students who miss either exam for non-emergency reasons will not have the option for a make-up.
- Argument Paper: 3 pts extra credit (OPTIONAL)
 - Students may earn up to 3 extra percentage points in the course by submitting an argument paper. Argument papers are described in detail on the “Assignments” page of the course website, and will be explained verbally in class. Only one argument paper may be submitted for the course.
- Attendance Buffer and Grade Calculation:
 - Students who miss four or fewer classes will automatically keep an attendance buffer, which will be used in calculating the final grade. Final grades will be calculated as follows

	With attendance buffer	Without attendance buffer
HW Assignments	20	20
Short Essay	20	20
Longer Essay	25	30
Midterm Exam	10	15
Final Exam	10	15
Attendance Buffer	15	0

GRADE SCALE: A+ (100-97), A (96-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), D+ (73-70), D (69-67), D- (66-63), F (62-0)

Course Reading Schedule

(n.b.: The schedule is subject to change at my discretion)

Introduction and Overview

- 1/3: Introduction to course
- 1/4: Read Plato, *Apology* (in reader)
- 1/5: Read Plato, *Apology* (in reader)
- 1/6: In-class assignment and discussion
 - **Argument paper assigned and explained**

Moral Action and Evaluation

- 1/10: Read Rachels, "Cultural Relativism" (in reader)
- 1/11: Class Plato, "The Myth of Gyges" (in reader)
 - Read Cahn/Murphy, "Happiness and Immorality" (in reader)
- 1/12: Read Nietzsche, "Master Morality and Slave Morality" (in reader)
- 1/13: In-class assignment and discussion
 - **Argument Paper Date**
- 1/17: NO CLASS Mtg.
- 1/18: Read Mill, "Utilitarianism" (in reader)
- 1/19: Read Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (in reader)
- 1/20: Read Kant, "The Categorical Imperative" (in reader)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **First essay assigned**
- 1/24: In class film: *Gone Baby Gone*
- 1/25: Film cont.
- 1/26: Film cont.
- 1/27: Class discussion of film (film journal due)

Authority and Political Legitimacy

- 1/31: Read Plato, *Crito* (in reader)
- 2/1: Read Brecher & Smith, "Watada's War" (in reader)
- 2/2: Read Rachels, "Psychological Egoism" (in reader)
- 2/3: In-class film and discussion: *Balance*
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **FIRST ESSAY DUE**
- 2/7: Read Wolff, pgs. 1-17
- 2/8: Read Wolff, pgs. 17-23
- 2/9: Read Wolff, pgs. 24-29
- 2/10: Read Wolff, pgs. 29-33
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **MID-TERM EXAM**
- 2/14: In class film: *V for Vendetta*
- 2/15: Film cont.
- 2/16: Film cont.
- 2/17: Class discussion of film (film journal due)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **Final paper assigned**

- 2/21: NO CLASS
- 2/22: Read Wolff , pgs. 34-46
- 2/23: Read Wolff, pgs. 46-55
- 2/24: Read Wolff, pgs. 55-61
 - **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ARGUMENT PAPER**

Freedom, Punishment, and Force

- 2/28: Read Wolff, pgs. 104-114
- 3/1: Read Wolff, pgs. 114-125
- 3/2: Read Wolff, pgs. 125-131
- 3/3 Read Singer, “Video Crime vs. Virtual Pedophilia” (in reader)

- 3/7: In class film: *A Clockwork Orange*
- 3/8: Film cont.
- 3/9 Film cont.
- 3/10: Class discussion of film (film journal due)

- 3/14: Read Rachels, “Kant and Respect for Persons” (in reader)
- 3/15: Read van den Haag, “In Defense of the Death Penalty” (in reader)
 - Read Bedau, “Capital Punishment” (in reader)
- 3/16: Please read [this article](#) and respond to the following questions in your journal:
 - *According to Singer, exactly how much of my money/wealth am I supposed to give to relieve world poverty?*
 - *Do YOU think that Singer’s central argument contains any flaws/mistakes? If so, what are these mistakes? If not, how would you respond to the objection that his demands are too strong?*
- 3/17: Read King, “Letter from a Birmingham County Jail” (in reader)
 - Course Review
 - **FINAL PAPER DUE**

- 3/21: **FINAL EXAM**

Texts

The majority of readings will come from the following books, which are available for purchase at the bookstore:

- Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Course Reader

Additional course readings will be distributed on the course website.

Course Website

Announcements, grade trackers, and electronic versions of most class materials will be available at <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/phil02>