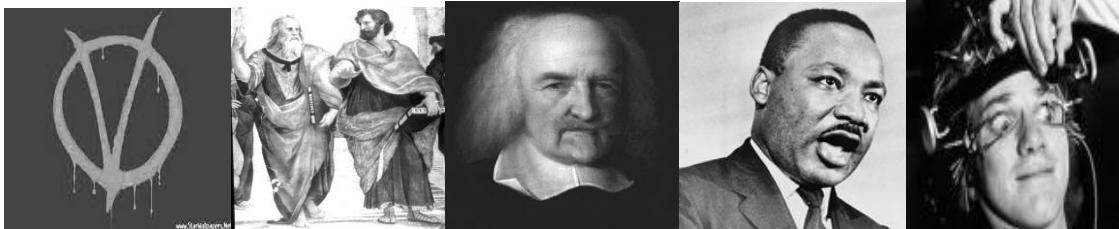


Syllabus: Phil 002
Introduction to Philosophy: Morals and Politics
De Anza College
Spring Quarter, 2012
Instructor: Toño Ramirez
Email: ramireztono@fhda.edu
Office Hours: M-Th 7:30-8:30 AM, or by appointment
Office Location: Forum Building, room 2D



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 moral and political thought. 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 moral obligation, the legitimacy of political authority, and the relationship between political freedom and responsibility.

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 earned according to the following criteria:

- Homework journal:
 - In order to promote reading comprehension and improve the quality of class discussions, students will keep a journal documenting responses to all course readings. These responses are to address each of the questions for each of the assigned readings as found [here](#). It is expected that all students will have this journal with them, *completed and up-to-date*, at the *beginning of every* class meeting. I will collect small groups of journals at random throughout the course to check for completion, and occasionally offer comments on journal entries.
 - Failure to provide an-up-to-date journal available on request will be handled as follows:
 - First instance: Student will be given an opportunity to provide the up-to-date journal at the beginning of the next class meeting
 - Second instance: Student will lose the 10 percentage points allotted to "HW Journal" in the calculation of the final grade
 - Third instance: Student will be dropped from the course
 - If a student is absent on a date when his/her journal is requested, the journal will be due for submission upon the student's return to class
- Paper assignments:
 - All students will submit one short essay, and one longer essay.
 - 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. I will spend time in class discussing plagiarism, and will take measures to help students avoid accidental plagiarism. **Any** plagiarized paper submitted to me 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 [review this tutorial](#), and 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.**
- Paper Assignments turned in on time will be graded and returned with comments within one week of the due date. Students may submit assignments up to one week 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 paper 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.
 - Students who miss two or fewer classes will automatically keep an “attendance buffer”, which will be used in calculating the final grade. The buffer is lost upon a third absence, and will not be restored. Final grades will be calculated as follows

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

- Argument Paper: 2 pts extra credit (OPTIONAL)
 - Students may earn up to 2 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.

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+

Course Reading Schedule

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

Introduction and Overview

- 4/9: Introduction to course
- 4/10: Read Plato, *Apology* (in reader, or [here](#))
- 4/11: Read Plato, *Apology* (in reader, or [here](#))
- 4/12: In-class assignment and discussion

Moral Action and Evaluation

- 4/16: Instructor led discussion
- 4/17: Class Plato, “The Myth of Gyges” (in reader)
 - Read Cahn/Murphy, “Happiness and Immorality” (in reader)
- 4/18: Instructor led discussion
- 4/19: In-class assignment and discussion
- 4/23: Review of first two weeks
- 4/24: Read Rachels, “Cultural Relativism” (in reader, or [here](#))
- 4/25: Read Nietzsche, “Master Morality and Slave Morality” (in reader)
- 4/26: Nietzsche continued
 - **Argument paper assigned and explained**
- 4/30: Read Mill, “Utilitarianism” (in reader)
- 5/1: Read Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (in reader)
- 5/2: Read Kant, “The Categorical Imperative” (in reader)
- 5/3: Kant continued
 - Discussion on writing a philosophy essay—no reading required
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNED**
- 5/7: In class film: *Gone Baby Gone*
- 5/8: Film cont.
- 5/9: Class discussion of film (film journal due)
- 5/10: Read Plato, *Crito* (in reader)
 - Read Brecher & Smith, “Watada’s War” (in reader—no journal questions required)
 - **Argument Paper Date**

Authority and Political Legitimacy

- 5/14: In-class film and discussion: *Balance*
 - Read Wolff, pgs. 1-17
- 5/15: Read Wolff, pgs. 17-23
- 5/16: Read Wolff, pgs. 24-29
- 5/17: Read Wolff, pgs. 29-33
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **MID-TERM EXAM**
 - **FIRST ESSAY DUE**
- 5/21: Begin in class film: *V for Vendetta*
- 5/22: Film cont.
- 5/23: Film cont.
- 5/24: Class discussion of film (film journal due)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 - **Final paper assigned**

- 5/28: NO CLASS MEETING
- 5/29: Read Wolff, pgs. 34-46
- 5/30: Read Wolff, pgs. 46-55
- 5/31: Read Wolff, pgs. 55-61
 - **Argument Paper Date**

Freedom, Punishment, and Force

- 5/4: Read Wolff, pgs. 104-114
- 5/5: Read Wolff, pgs. 114-125
- 5/6: Read Wolff, pgs. 125-131
- 5/7: Read Singer, "Video Crime vs. Virtual Pedophilia" (in reader)
 - **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ARGUMENT PAPER**
- 5/11: In class film: *A Clockwork Orange*
- 5/12: Film cont.
- 5/13: Film cont.
- 5/14: Class discussion of film (film journal due)
- 5/18: Read Rachels, "Kant and Respect for Persons" (in reader)
- 5/19: Read van den Haag, "In Defense of the Death Penalty" (in reader)
 - Read Bedau, "Capital Punishment" (in reader)
- 5/20: Read King, "Letter from a Birmingham County Jail" (in reader)
- 5/21: Course Review
 - **FINAL PAPER DUE**
- 5/25: **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/phil-02>