Philosophy 2010-05 – Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2016
Callaway 205
TTh 12:30-1:45pm

CRN: 82207

Instructor Information:
Lecturer: Josh Dohmen
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Office: Technology-enhanced Learning Center (TLC) 3130
Office Hours: M&W 9am-12pm, T&Th 8-9am and 2-3pm. Also by appointment.

Course Description
A historically framed introduction to philosophy, high-lighting major developments that have defined Western philosophical inquiry. Required for the major in Philosophy.

Specifically, my aim is to introduce you to some main areas of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, social and political philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and the philosophy of religion), by studying six major figures whose thought encompasses many of these fields. By doing so, we will see the ways in which our different philosophical beliefs are intimately connected.

We will begin by briefly considering the question, “Why study philosophy?” Then we will get into the main material for the course. First, we will read two of Plato’s dialogues to investigate what philosophy is, why we should practice it, and other related questions like “What is piety?” and “Should we fear death?” Second, we’ll move on to discuss René Descartes’s Meditations, in which he questions what we are, what we can know, and whether or not we are justified in believing in God(s). Third, we will consider Karl Marx’s writings. Looking at parts of The Communist Manifesto, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, and The German Ideology, we will see the ways in which, for Marx, our understandings of humans, of history, and of politics are importantly related. The fourth figure we will consider is W.E.B. du Bois who considers knowledge, identity, and history throughout his writings. We will focus on The Souls of Black Folks and Black Reconstruction in America. Fifth, we will read selections from Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex. Here, we will see that her existentialist views and her appeals to history and biology are inseparable from her political ideal of women’s liberation. Finally, we will read selections from Michel Foucault’s History of Sexuality. Foucault will challenge us to understand the nature of power, and the historical nature of sex and sexuality. By thinking about the connections between these thinkers and the aspects of their thought, we will be better able to understand our own lives and ideas in relation to the various questions philosophers ask.

Prerequisite: None
Course Objectives
This course fulfills the area C of the Core Curriculum. As such, it will:
1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the foundational concepts of artistic, intellectual, or literary achievement.
2. Students will recognize and make informed judgments about the fine, literary, or performing arts from various cultures.

In addition, this course seeks:
1. to introduce students to various philosophical questions, methods, and figures;
2. to improve students’ written and oral communication skills;
3. to improve students’ critical reasoning skills;
4. to engage philosophical questions in ways that are meaningful to students’ lives.

Course Readings
Textbooks (available at the University Bookstore):

   ISBN: 978-0872206335
   *This is for the 2nd edition. Older editions will also work for this class.

   ISBN: 978-0872207981
   *Other editions of the text will work as long as they are not abridged.

   ISBN: 978-0679724698

Essays and excerpts (available on CourseDen):

1. Selections from the writings of Karl Marx.
   ISBN: 978-0140150964

   ISBN: 978-1593081713
   *(An inexpensive Dover Thrift Edition is widely available. ISBN: 978-0486280417.)*


   ISBN: 978-0307277787
   *Recommended text

5. Other hand-outs posted on CourseDen.
Assessments

Daily Grades (5 points/day; 140 total points):
You will receive a grade for every class period. These grades will help to ensure that you are reading for class, help me track overall understandings of the material, and also serve as a record of attendance. There are four types of assignments and each is worth 5 points:

Small Group Reports (SGRs)
Students will be assigned small groups once the add/drop deadline has passed. On the first day of each week, the groups will meet and discuss their responses to assigned questions. The questions are meant to encourage a close reading and to foster discussions of the material. As you are discussing, I will visit each group to check your responses and answer any lingering questions you may have. Each individual will receive a grade based on how well she/he answers her/his question. Once I have created the groups, I will pass out assignment instructions with greater detail.
Possible grades are 0 points (absent), 1 point (present with no response or an unsatisfactory response), 3 points (present with a satisfactory response), or 5 points (present with a thoughtful response).

Quizzes
On days labeled on the course schedule below, you will take a quiz online that is worth three (3) points. These quizzes will test reading and comprehension. They are due at 9:00am (before class) on the date listed in the course schedule.
The other two (2) points will be earned by attendance.

Attendance
Some days there will be student presentations in class. On these days, I will take attendance. Earning the full five points will require you to (i) attend class, (ii) arrive on time, and (iii) treat those presenting respectfully, especially by asking thoughtful questions.
If you talk, use your phone or other electronic device, or enter the classroom during a peer's presentation, you will receive a zero (0) for the day, and a zero (0) for your own presentation grade. Please be respectful of and engage with your peers.

Peer Review
Shortly before your Plato paper (Paper 1) is due, I will set aside class time for peer review. You should bring in 3 copies of your draft to share with your peers. You will take turns reading and commenting on each other’s drafts. Possible grades are 0 points (absent), 1 point (present but no draft or only notes), 3 points (present with only a detailed outline), or 5 points (present with a developed draft).

Written and Oral Assignments (110 total points)
You will have three large assignments due throughout the semester.

Essay (30 points)
The first is a short (1-2 page) exegetical paper over Plato.

Presentation (40 points)
The second is a presentation (8-10 minutes) you will deliver to class on a day you sign up for. Here, you must present an argument about the figure we are discussing during the week you give your presentation.
Final Exam (40 points)
The third is your Final, which will be a take-home exam.

I will post prompts for each assignment in CourseDen. **Be sure to follow the guidelines stated there and answer the question completely.**

**Grading Scale**
- **A:** 225-250 pts.
- **B:** 200-224.5 pts.
- **C:** 175-199.5 pts.
- **D:** 150-174.5 pts.
- **F:** 0-149.5 pts.

**Course Policies**

**Respect:**
It is imperative that students be respectful toward one another in this class. In order to foster any sort of genuine philosophical exchange, everyone must be willing to listen to others and express themselves courteously. This is especially true for this course, as discussions will occasionally focus on subjects that may make some students uncomfortable.

To that end, I will not permit the use of electronic devices of any type during class without my prior approval. More often than not, they lead to distraction and disrespect, so you should have a justification for wanting to use a device in class and if I grant approval, you must use the device in ways that are respectful to me and your peers.

**Electronic Communication:**
I will communicate with you by email and occasionally through CourseDen (especially the “Announcements” page). Please check both of these regularly.

Note that email communication and internet access are required features of the course. Students are expected to check their UWG email accounts regularly—at least once per business day—in order to receive updates concerning homework assignments, syllabus modifications, outside events, etc. Students are responsible for materials and information distributed via email, including modifications to the information contained in this syllabus. Note that while I will be in contact via e-mail throughout the semester, I usually only check my e-mail once per day and I will not check e-mails on weekends. Please be patient in waiting for replies (and I, in turn, will be patient with you).

To access CourseDen, go to [https://westga.view.usg.edu/](https://westga.view.usg.edu/). You will be asked to enter your username and password. Once you do so, you will see a list of courses you have access to. Click on this course, and you will be brought to a homepage where you can see announcements. To see course content (including readings and assignments), click on “Content.”

**Turnitin:**
All final drafts of papers must be submitted in CourseDen (through Dropbox) for plagiarism checking through Turnitin.

**Academic Integrity and Student Misconduct:**
Academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism, **will not be tolerated** in this course. I **will** take disciplinary measures in cases of academic dishonesty. The expectations for academic integrity at UWG in the “Common Language for Course Syllabi” section below, and in the Student Handbook.
Please note that plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, including SGRs, not just essay assignments.

Expectations for student conduct are described in the “Common Language for Course Syllabi” section below, and in the Student Handbook. Disciplinary action may be taken against students found to have violated any provision of the university’s Student Code of Conduct.

Late Work
It is my general policy to take 1 point off for each day an assignment is late, up to 5 days. So, for example, if you earn 21 points for a paper and turn it in two days late, your final grade for the assignment will be 19 points.

After 5 days, I will no longer accept the assignment. In other words, after 5 days, the grade for the assignment will automatically be zero (0).

This policy does not apply to presentations or the final exam, which I will not accept late without an emergency excuse. In other words, if you don’t present on the day you signed up for, your grade for the assignment will be a zero (0), and if you don’t turn the final exam in on time, your grade for the assignment will be zero (0).

In the event of a documented excuse, I will waive the late work penalty provided the work is completed upon your return to class or before your missed class if you are aware of a scheduled absence beforehand. A documented excuse is one that has been verified by the sponsoring campus organization (for example, the Athletics Department for student athletes) or a patient advocate in Health Services (Phone: 678-839-6452).

If you know beforehand that you may not be able to get an assignment done on time, please let me know. I will be much more lenient with forgiving late work or generating alternative assignments if you notify me beforehand than if you contact me after the due date.

Disability Statement:
I feel very passionately about the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate fully in all social realms, including education. To that end, I am willing to work with students with disabilities to find ways to make the course accessible to as many people as possible. Upon speaking with me, I may encourage you to contact Accessibility Services. More information about UWG’s accessibility policies and Accessibility Services can be found below in the section “Common Language for Course Syllabi.”

Changes to the course:
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, given ample time for notification.

Common Language for Course Syllabi
Students, please carefully review the following information at this link: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf. It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester. For your convenience, I have copied the most up-to-date language below:
“ACADEMIC SUPPORT
Accessibility Services:
Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services.

Center for Academic Success:
The Center for Academic Success provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

University Writing Center:
The University Writing Center assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu.

ONLINE COURSES
UWG takes students’ privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the UWG Online site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the Online/Off-Campus Student Guide.

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the UWG Cares site. Online counseling is also available for online students.

HONOR CODE
At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG.
Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

UWG EMAIL POLICY
University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

CREDIT HOUR POLICY
The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).”

Course Calendar (Please note dates and assignments are subject to change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1 – Introductions</td>
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<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/11</td>
<td>Course Introduction, Frederick</td>
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<td>(Note: Last day to drop is August 12th, at 4pm; last day to add is August 15th, at 4pm.)</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>8/16</td>
<td>Freire, <em>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</em>, pp. 71-86</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>1. What is the banking model of education? What is the problem with it on Freire’s view?</td>
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<td>2. What do you want out of education?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 2 – Plato</td>
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<td>8/18</td>
<td><em>Five Dialogues</em>, “Euthyphro,” 2-9c (pp. 2-11)</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>1. Why is Euthyphro at the court?</td>
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<td>2. What question does Socrates ask Euthyphro that guides the dialogue?</td>
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<td>3. What are some definitions of piety offered by Euthyphro, and what are their flaws?</td>
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| Week 3 | 8/23 | “Euthyphro,” 9c-16 (pp. 11-20) | SGR | 1. What are some definitions of piety offered by Euthyphro, and what are their flaws?  
2. What charges are brought against Socrates? How does he reply to them? |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>“Apology,” 17-30b (pp. 22-34)</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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</table>
| Week 4 | 8/30 | “Apology,” 30c-42 (pp. 34-44) | SGR | 1. What value does Socrates think he has to the city? Why does he practice philosophy?  
2. Why should death not be feared? |
| 9/1    | Plato Review                      | Peer Review                  |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 5 | 9/6   | Meditations 1 and 2            | SGR | 1. Why does Descartes want to doubt his most foundational beliefs?  
2. So far, what does Descartes think we can know for certain?  
3. In “Meditation 3,” what is Descartes’s proof for the existence of God? |
| 9/8    | Meditation 3                      | Quiz                         |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 6 | 9/13  | Meditations 4                  | SGR | 1. If God is omnibenevolent, then why do we make mistakes?  
2. In “Meditation 5,” what is Descartes’s proof for the existence of God? |
| 9/15   | Meditation 5                      | Quiz                         |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 7 | 9/20  | Meditation 6                  | SGR | 1. What faculty alone gives us the most certain, or clear and distinct, knowledge?  
2. How can we correct for the errors that we are most likely to make? |
| 9/22   | Descartes Review                  | Attendance Presentations     |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 8 | 9/27  | *The Communist Manifesto,* “Bourgeois and Proletarians” | SGR | 1. What are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat? How are they related?  
2. What are the general and specific goals of communism?  
3. How does Marx characterize freedom under capitalism? |
<p>| 9/29   | <em>The Communist Manifesto,</em> “Proletarians and Communists” (Note: Last day to withdraw for a “W” is September 30th.) | Quiz                         |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 9 | 10/4  | “Alienated [Estranged] Labor”  | SGR | 1. How does capitalist labor alienate us? |
| 10/6   | Fall Break                        |                              |     |                                                                                                                                              |
| Week 10| 10/11 | “The German Ideology”          | SGR | 1. What is the basis of history and consciousness, for Marx? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Marx Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance Presentations</td>
<td>2. How does Marx’s view of history differ from how we often learn history?</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 5 – Du Bois</strong></td>
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<td>10/18</td>
<td>“Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” pp. 1-12</td>
<td>SGR</td>
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<td>1. What does du Bois mean by “second sight” and “double consciousness”?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>“The Propaganda of History,” pp. 711-721</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>2. How have the hopes of black people in the United States been continually crushed?</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 6 – Beauvoir</strong></td>
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<td>10/25</td>
<td>pp. 721-728</td>
<td>SGR</td>
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<td>1. How has the history of Reconstruction been falsified and why is this dangerous?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Du Bois Review</td>
<td>Attendance Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 7 – Foucault</strong></td>
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<td>11/1</td>
<td><em>The Second Sex (S.S)</em>, pp. 3-17</td>
<td>SGR</td>
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<td>1. Why is it significant that Beauvoir always feels compelled to define herself as a woman?</td>
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<td>11/3</td>
<td>pp. 40-48</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>2. Does Beauvoir think biology can account for all differences between men and women?</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 8 – Foucault</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>pp. 721-728, pp. 735-742</td>
<td>SGR</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Where has progress been made toward women’s liberation? Where do necessary changes remain?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Beauvoir Review</td>
<td>Attendance Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 9 – Foucault</strong></td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Foucault, pp. 92-102</td>
<td>SGR</td>
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<td>1. How does Foucault think we should understand “power” and why?</td>
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<td>11/17</td>
<td>Foucault, pp. 135-145</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>2. What are the two types of “power over life” that Foucault thinks developed in the 17th century?</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 10 – Foucault</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Foucault, pp. 145-159</td>
<td>SGR</td>
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<td>1. Why did sex emerge as a politically important issue in the West?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Foucault Review</td>
<td>Attendance Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam due on Thursday, December 8 by 11:00 am</strong></td>
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