

PHIL 102: Introduction to Philosophy
M/W 2:20-3:35
Dr. Michelle Panchuk

Office: Byrnes 429
Office Hours: Monday: 11-12; Wednesday: 4-5; and by appointment
Email: quallsm@email.sc.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce and initiate students into the practice of philosophy. We do this by **reading** the work of a few central figures in the history of philosophy, carefully **interpreting** these texts, charitably **evaluating** the arguments we find in them, **thinking** deeply about how the questions they address are relevant to our lives as human beings, as citizens, as friends, and as students, and by **constructing** persuasive arguments in defense of our own conclusions.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Read, interpret, and analyze argumentative texts, discovering the main argument
2. Understand and think critically about positions that they confront, including those with which they disagree
3. Evaluate the quality of arguments
4. Compose arguments that are persuasive and linguistically precise, in a manner that is sensitive to the philosophical position or positions of the intended audience
5. Recognize and articulate the argumentative presuppositions that underlie positions taken both in an academic setting as well as in a broader context
6. Engage in civil philosophical debate in a way that does justice to alternative positions

Required Texts:

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, (Hackett Publishing Company)
2. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, (Penguin Classics).
3. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett Publishing Company).
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol 8 (Stanford University Press).
5. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (Vintage).

Course Requirements:

A. Philosophy Café (10%)

On blackboard, I have set up a “Philosophy Café,” where you may ask questions and discuss aspects of the readings and any other topic that comes up in class with your classmates. Each question or serious reflection is rated on a scale of 1-3. A question like, “What does Aristotle mean by virtue?” will receive 1 point, because the answer can be found easily in the text, while a question like, “Are all virtues a mean? What about something like self-sacrifice? One might think it is a virtue, but it is hard to imagine what might be the second extreme (maybe selfishness is the first?).” would receive a 3. Responses to question are graded on a scale of 1-2. You must post at least one question and one response to a fellow student’s question each week. You may post more in order to earn extra credit, but may not earn more than 8 points per week. Questions and comments for the week are due by 11:59 pm each Saturday. I will address topics raised in the Café during weekly lectures and discussions.

B. Reading Quizzes (10%)

We will have weekly, open-note, reading quizzes. Each quiz will consist of three questions and will focus on central aspects of the reading (thesis, main arguments, etc). You may use one page of your own notes on the reading material, which you must submit with your quiz. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

C. Abstracts (15%-- 3 x 5%)

You will submit abstracts for each of your papers. An abstract is a summary of the argument in your paper. It should including the thesis and your primary support for that thesis.

D. Socrates Says What?! (10%)

You will chose a claim that Socrates makes in on of the dialogues that you find surprising and defend it. In the paper, you must state Socrates’ claim, explain why you find it surprising, and then give your best defense of Socrates’ reasons. The thesis should be a claim about why Socrates is actually right. Since this is your first attempt at formal philosophy, we will avoid criticism of the author. It is easy to rush to criticism of another person’s views, but criticism is usually more charitable, and thus more powerful, once you have a clear grasp the of the strongest arguments for that position. The Paper should be 3 (full) pages long.

E. Philosophy in Story (15%)

You will find a book or film that engages one of the central topics discussed thus far in the course (other topics may be addressed only with prior permission). The paper should present the question or issue, describe what our author has to say

about it, explain how it is addressed in the story, and discuss what conclusions the author draws on the issue.

B. TED Talk (10%)

You will sign up to present a TED-style talk. The talk should be 5-7 minutes long and should make a philosophical claim related to a topic discussed in the course. You should present it in a way that an average person can understand and demonstrate how this topic is relevant to an average person (or some subset of average people).

F. Argumentative Essay/Final Paper (20%)

This paper, due in place of a final exam, is an argumentative essay in which you defend a thesis on any topic discussed in this class.

D. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Because this course is largely discussion based, attendance and participation is critical, not only for each individual student's progress, but for the progress of the entire class. You are expected to come to class each period having read the material carefully and having prepared comments and questions to share. You are allowed two absences without penalty. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases in which students have a documented good reason for missing class (Examples of good reasons are: serious illness, death in family etc. Examples of bad reasons are: over-sleeping, planned events, trips that are not sponsored by the university, etc.)

Grading Scale:

A	90-100	Student demonstrates exceptional knowledge of the material. Student's work significantly exceeds expectations.
B+	87-89	
B	80-86	Student demonstrates solid working knowledge of the material. Student's work exceeds the minimum requirements.
C+	77-79	
C	70-76	Student demonstrates a minimum satisfactory knowledge of the material. Student's work meets minimum requirements.
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	Student demonstrates a significantly deficient understanding of the material. Student's work comes short of requirements.

F	Below 60	Student does not demonstrate significant comprehension of the material. Student's work falls far short of requirements.
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Late Policy:

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated in the schedule. Assignments will be counted late 15 minutes after the beginning of class time on that day. Papers will be marked down 5 points for each day past the due date. Students may turn in papers at the professor's office prior to the date due. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in the case of a documented good reason.

Academic Integrity and Classroom Decorum:

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Students found engaging in these activities will receive an automatic 0 on the assignment, possibly an F for the course, and will be reported to the Dean.

A second aspect of academic integrity is respect for both the instructor and fellow students. Ideas may be evaluated and criticized, but the character of the individual defending those ideas may not. Personal insult is never an acceptable form of philosophical argument and certainly fails to accord with the Christian commitment to love of neighbor. Students engaging in this, or any other form of disruption, will be asked to leave the class for the day.

Please turn off all cell phones during class. Lap top computers may be used for note-taking; however, if it becomes clear that they are being used for other purposes that distract from classroom discussion, the instructor may ask that the device be turned off.

Tentative Course Schedule:

1/11	Introduction and Review of Syllabus
1/13	Euthyphro (Pp. 1-10: 1a—8e)
1/18	MLK Day: No Class
1/20	Euthyphro (Pp. 11-20: 9a-16)
1/25	Apology (Pp 22-39: 17a-35d)
1/27	Apology (Pp 39-44: 18a-42)
2/1	Crito (Pp. 45-57: 43a-54e)
2/3	Meno 59-70 70a-80e Abstract #1 Due
2/8	Meno 70-82 81a-89e
2/10	Meno: 82-92 (90a-100b)
2/15	<i>CoP</i> Book 1: I-III "Socrates Says What?!" Due
2/17	<i>CoP</i> Book 1: IV-VII
2/22	<i>CoP</i> Book 2: I-IV
2/24	<i>CoP</i> Book 2: V-VIII

2/29	<i>CoP</i> Book 3: I-IX
3/2	<i>CoP</i> Book 3: X-XII Abstract 2 Due
3/6-3/13	Spring Break
3/14	<i>CoP</i> Book 4: I-IV
3/16	<i>CoP</i> Book 4: V-VII
3/21	<i>CoP</i> Book 5: I-IV "Philosophy in Story" Due
3/23	<i>CoP</i> Book 5: V-VI;
3/28	<i>Meditations</i> 1-2;
3/30	<i>Meditations</i> 3 TED Talks Begin
4/4	<i>Meditations</i> 4
4/6	<i>Meditations</i> 5-6;
4/11	<i>Genealogy</i>
4/13	<i>Genealogy</i> Abstract 3 Due
4/18	<i>Second Sex</i>
4/20	<i>Second Sex</i>
4/25	<i>Second Sex</i>
4/29	12:30-3:30 Final Paper Due (Must be turned in by end of exam period)