

Syllabus (rev. 2/5/14)
PHIL 105-16
Introduction to Philosophy: Self and Reality
Spring 2014

Instructor: Kent Staley
Office: Adorjan Hall 101
Phone: 977-3151
email: staleykw@slu.edu
website: www.kentstaley.net
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 am to 10:30 am
other meeting times available by appointment

1 Texts

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and tr. Roger Crisp. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Aristotle. *Physics*, tr. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Plato. *Republic*, tr. G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992.
Additional readings will be made available through Blackboard.

2 Overview of the Course

This course is meant to introduce you to some important philosophical arguments and concepts through careful readings of historically significant texts. We focus on the works of the Ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, as well as some important figures in the rise of modern science and philosophy from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. We will see how the later writers introduced new ideas into the discussion of questions dating from the ancient period, entangling those discussions with the novelties and discoveries of the scientific revolution. We will also consider more recent perspectives on these issues.

3 Course objectives

During this course, students should:

- become familiar with some major developments in the history of philosophy
- learn how to construct a good argument
- learn how to evaluate an argument
- improve their written and verbal communication skills
- collaborate philosophically with other students by respectfully engaging with each other's ideas and arguments
- practice the reading and interpretation of difficult texts

- engage in informed and reasoned reflection on their own lives and beliefs about the world

4 Coursework

4.1 Course Blog

We will have a group blog for the course. You will need to sign up to write **two substantial blog posts** regarding the readings. These should be a few paragraphs in length, though depth of engagement is more important than length. You will also need to write **substantive comments regarding at least eight blog posts by other students**. You must complete your blog post on an assigned reading by 12:00 Noon on the day before the scheduled discussion of that reading. This will allow time for other students to comment on your post. Comments on blog posts must be completed by the beginning of the class in which discussion of the reading will take place.

4.2 Exegetical Paper

You will be asked to write **one exegetical paper** on a passage from Plato's *Republic*. This paper should be about 1000 words in length.

4.3 Tutorial Papers

There will be **three papers** (each 1500–2000 words in length), which will be completed using the tutorial system. On this system, you will not only hand in your paper, but meet with me and another student to read your paper out loud and to discuss both your own paper and that of the other student present. Evaluation of tutorials comprises three categories: (1) content of the paper, (2) organization and quality of writing in the paper, and (3) quality of discussion (of both your own and your tutorial partner's papers) in the tutorial meeting. Papers are due in advance of the tutorial (see class schedule for due dates) and are to be submitted by e-mail by 5:00pm on the day they are due. Failure to submit your paper on time will result in a 10% reduction in your grade on the paper. A further 10% will be taken off for every additional day your paper is late.

5 Grades

Your grade for the course will be determined by the number of points you accumulate in each of the categories of coursework:

Blog posts and comments*	160
Exegetical paper	160
First tutorial	200
Second tutorial	230
Third tutorial	250
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 1000

* up to 40 points for each blog post, and up to 10 points for each comment

Course grades will be based on total accumulated points as follows:

940–1000	A
900–939	A-
865–899	B+
835–864	B
800–834	B-
765–799	C+
735–764	C
700–734	C-
600–699	D
<600	F

6 A Word on Academic Honesty

I will be vigilant in enforcing a strict code of ethical academic conduct. Here is a simple rule to follow to avoid any difficulties: *If you use the work of someone else in anything you write for this class you must make it clear that you are doing so, and indicate (through footnotes, quotation marks, etc. as appropriate) whose words or ideas you are using.* Violations of this rule will be treated as plagiarism.

Here is SLU’s Academic Honesty Policy: “The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such Conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion by the University.”

7 Attendance

I will take attendance for every class meeting after the first week. Students missing more than four classes will have their course grade reduced by one letter grade (e.g., an A becomes a B, an A- becomes a B-, etc.). Every three additional absences will bring a further grade reduction. Attendance will also be considered in deciding borderline grades. I will assume that all absences are for good reasons such as illness, so you do not need to provide excuses (unless you miss an assignment). Exceptions will be made only for extended illness or other circumstances that make these limits unreasonable.

8 Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

9 The Writing Center

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center's services; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. The Center helps with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-2930 or visit <http://www.slu.edu/x13305.xml>.

10 Life is Full of Surprises

Sometimes the need arises to change one's approach to doing things. Learning is no exception. Consequently, the information given in this syllabus is subject to change on short notice (but not without reason). Such changes, should they arise, will be announced in class. You are responsible for keeping track of any changes in course assignments or schedule.

11 Course Schedule

Class meets on Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30–10:45am in Xavier Hall 117.

Schedule of Readings for Class Meetings	
Justice, Happiness, and the Good	
1/14	Introduction
1/16	<i>Republic</i> , Summary of Book I, all of Book II
1/21	<i>Republic</i> , Summary of Book III, all of Book IV
1/23	<i>Republic</i> , Summaries of Books IV-VIII, Book IX to 583b
1/28	Annas, “Politics in Plato’s <i>Republic</i> : His and Ours”
1/30	Continued discussion
1/31	Exegesis Due
2/4	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I, chs. 1–7
2/6	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I, chs. 8–13
2/11	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II, chs. 1–6
2/13	Kraut, “Two Conceptions of Happiness”
Form and Change	
2/18	<i>Republic</i> , Book V, 471c–480a
2/20	<i>Republic</i> , Book VI, 504d–Book VII, 521b
2/21	Paper 1 due
2/25–2/27	Tutorial meetings
3/4	Russell, “The World of Universals”
3/6	<i>Physics</i> , Book I, chs. 4–8
3/11–13	No class (Spring Break)
3/18	<i>Physics</i> , Book II, chs. 1–4
3/20	<i>Physics</i> , Book II, chs. 5–9
3/25	Continued discussion
Method and Knowledge	
3/27	Descartes, <i>Rules for the Direction of our Native Intelligence</i> , Rules 1–13
4/1	Descartes, <i>Principles of Philosophy</i> , articles 1–20
4/3	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections 2 and 3
4/4	Paper 2 due
4/8–10	Tutorial meetings
4/15	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections 4 and Part 1 of 5
4/17	no class (Holy Thursday)
4/22	Continued discussion
4/24	Grene, “The Errors of Descartes”
4/29	Continued discussion
5/1	TBA
5/6	Paper 3 due
5/7–9	Tutorial meetings