

Harrison Kleiner  
Office: Main 311, 435-797-2388

Email: Use Canvas for all e-contact  
Website: <http://saintsocratessociety.com>

Format: We will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2:00-2:50 in Main 227  
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00, Friday 10:30-11:30, or by appointment

### General Objectives of the Course

At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate the course's success at meeting these objectives:

- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
- Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

### Specific Objectives of the Course

Basic themes will be the problematic of the modern philosophy of consciousness, the movement to post-metaphysical thought, and an exploration into the implications (both positive and negative) of this movement for subjectivity and the 'ethical turn' to the Other. Along the way we will consider the possibility and philosophical implications of gift-giving, the relation between thinking and violence, the role and nature of language, and the relation between the immanent and the transcendent. This is an upper level course that has been designed for students who have a solid background in philosophy.

### Required Texts

- *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*, Jacques Derrida (trans. David Wills). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, UChicago, 2007.
- *Basic Writings*, Martin Heidegger (ed. David Krell). Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008.
- *The Nature of Love*, Dietrich von Hildebrand (trans. J.F and J.H. Crosby). St. Augustine's Press, 2009.
- *Collected Philosophical Papers*, Emmanuel Levinas. Duquesne Univ Press, 1998.
- *Course Packet (available on Canvas ... will print and make available for purchase if interest).*
- Optional -- we will not read: *The Mystery of Being* Vols I and II, Gabriel Marcel (trans. G.S. Fraser). St. Augustine's Press, 2001.

### Required Work

\*Note: Failure to submit any assignment will constitute a sufficient though not necessary condition for failing the course \*

- Daily Reflection (¼ of course grade): You will submit a short reflection on the reading assigned for the day for every day that reading is assigned. Reflections cannot be longer than 2 double spaced pages, but should be at least 1 page. These **reflections are due by 8pm the day before the class when we will consider the reading** and will be submitted on Canvas.
  - Your daily reflections should do two things - explain and respond. First, unpack and explain a passage, idea or theme in the reading. Do not try to take on too much, your focus should typically be very narrow. Depending on how dense the text is, you may write on a few pages or even just a passage. Please indicate the page numbers of the passages you are considering. Be sure to define and explain any jargon. The goal here is not summary but exegesis (critical explanation and interpretation). Then offer a brief reaction to what you have explained - evaluate it or consider its significance (philosophically in either the academic or lived sense). Focus on the assigned reading for the day, but feel free to connect the reading to other readings we have discussed.
  - These will be checked to see if an adequate effort was submitted on time (grade scale 0 to 1). At the end of the term the total number will be summed and a grade scale set.
  - I do not want you to rely on secondary sources as these are meant to be the outcome of your engagement with the primary text. In particular, evidence that you have used online sources will be considered cheating.
- Grade Reflections (¼ of course grade): Some number of your Daily Reflections will be selected for more careful grading. If you failed to submit one on that day, you will get an F for that graded reflection. Students who submit an IDEA course evaluation (and provide me evidence) by the last Friday of class will have their lowest graded reflection grade dropped.

- **Final Paper** (¼ of course grade): This will be a scholarly paper (12-15 pages) on a topic of the student's choice, in consultation with the instructor. The Final Paper assignment consists of a paper proposal and the final paper itself, both of which will be submitted on Canvas. See the course schedule for proposal and final paper due dates. Plan on visiting with your instructor in advance of these deadlines to discuss your ideas.
  - Students must submit a paper proposal (200 words or less) along with an annotated bibliography. The proposal should include a thesis along with a general description of what you see yourself doing. The annotated bibliography need not be complete, but it should provide evidence of a fair amount of time spent in the library finding secondary material you will consider. An annotated bibliography includes a brief (short paragraph) summary and evaluation of each source along with a brief explanation of how each source will be used in your paper.
- **Participation** (¼ of course grade): I expect regular, informed, and thoughtful contributions to class discussion.
  - There are different kinds of participants.
    - "A participants" contribute in a way that demonstrates mastery of the assigned material. They make substantive contributions which are clearly presented and thoroughly substantiated. Without these "A participants", the class discussion would be noticeably worse.
    - "B participants" contribute in a way that demonstrates thorough preparation. Their contributions are usually substantive, clear and substantiated, but do not necessarily advance the class discussion. Without these participants, class discussion would be slightly diminished.
    - "C participants" contribute in a way that demonstrates satisfactory preparation. Some comments are substantive but are not well substantiated and rarely advance class discussion. Without these participants, the quality of discussion would be unchanged.
    - "D and F participants" contribute in a way that demonstrates inadequate preparation. Their contributions are rarely substantive and are generally not constructive. Without these participants, class time would be improved since valuable time would not have been wasted.
    - And, of course, some are basically non-participants. They contribute little or nothing to class and so without them the quality of class discussion would be unaffected.
  - You are expected to attend class. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade. More than 6 absences (excused or unexcused) may result, depending on the judgment of the instructor, in failing the participation portion. Egregious cases of absenteeism may result in the student failing the course outright.

### **Honors Program**

The Honors Program is for students who are looking for "something extra" in their education, and this class would make an excellent Honors class. If you are interested in this option, please contact me as soon as possible, but not later than the third week of class.

### **Policies**

- Late work will be accepted only with a reasonable and documented excuse.
- University regulations are enforced concerning any kind of dishonesty.
- If you have any circumstance that requires any sort of special consideration, see me as soon as possible.
- Logistical and educational point: Email has made for considerably easier communication between students and teachers. However, the medium can be abused. I prefer that you come to my office hours when you have questions. It is beneficial for you too – the human contact allows for a more intimate and natural mode of discourse, and it is my belief that students learn more from dialogue than from monologue (which is the necessary form of email).

## Canvas

Canvas is a web-based course management program. I am providing some basic information but I would encourage you to thoroughly explore Canvas on your own. Even for people with limited digital world competency (like me), it is quite user friendly and easy to understand. **Keep in mind - it is *your* responsibility to make sure you understand how to access course information and submit Canvas administered assignments.** Go to [online.usu.edu](http://online.usu.edu) to see various tutorials as well as to log in using your A# and Banner password. If you have problems logging in or other technical difficulties, please do not contact me - I am a philosophy professor, not an IT guy. If technical problems persist, call the USU Help Desk (797-HELP).

The first thing to do is set up your notification preferences (see tutorials). This is all highly customizable (you can receive messages via email, text messages to your cell, facebook, twitter, all of the above) but since you are expected to keep up to date on any messages I may send or any changes in the course, do not select “never” for all the preferences.

Here is a quick preview of some other highlights:

- Announcements: I may post some announcements to the class here.
- Contact: To contact me or anyone else in the course, click the ‘People’ link in the ‘Course Tools’ menu, then ‘Create Message’ and choose my name from the address list in ‘Browse for Recipients’.
- Assignments: Under the ‘Assignments’ link on the left you will find links to all course assignments. Assignments are “locked” until their distribution date. Once distributed, this is where you will find detailed assignment information for the papers. This is also where you will upload your paper to submit it. I will return your assignments electronically with comments (a truly paperless course!). Again, see the tutorials for information on how to submit assignments.
- Syllabus: The syllabus feature gives you a quick overview of the course and the schedule, which is linked to and synced with the Calendar and the other tools.
- Calendar: The Calendar lists the due dates for all readings and assignments.
- Grades: This is where your grades will be posted.

-

**Philosophy Department Grading Guidelines:**

**A or A**

The essay is excellent. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays firmly on topic. The writer has accurately and thoroughly described the relevant philosophical positions and arguments. The essay demonstrates that the student has engaged the topic with intellectual curiosity and seriousness, going beyond classroom discussions and readings, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the material.

**B+**

The essay is very good. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays firmly on topic. The writer has accurately described the relevant philosophical positions and arguments, except perhaps with a few very minor errors or some lack of thoroughness of explanation. The essay shows intellectual engagement with the topic, but there is little in the essay which goes beyond classroom discussions and readings.

**B or B**

The essay is good. The writing is clear and concise, using proper sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. The essay stays on topic. The writer has provided a broadly accurate account of the relevant philosophical positions and arguments. There are some errors, but they do not detract from the central aim of the essay. There is little in the essay which goes beyond classroom discussions and readings.

**C+ or C or C**

The essay is adequate in meeting the assignment's requirements. The writing is generally clear and is acceptable in terms of grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, though there are errors or the writing is at times awkward and confusing. The writer has provided an adequate account of relevant philosophical positions and arguments, but with some important errors or omissions. Perhaps the essay wanders from the topic, introducing needless examples or pursuing tangents.

**D+ or D**

This essay is not adequate in quality. The writing is frequently awkward and confusing, with serious problems in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. It is not clear that the writer has grasped the relevant philosophical positions or arguments, though there may be hints of some minimally adequate understanding of some relevant material. The organization of the essay is unclear, or nonexistent. Nevertheless, it is clear that some attempt has been made to meet the assignment's requirements; but the result does not demonstrate an adequate mastery of the material.

**F**

This essay is a failure. Writing errors abound, and there is no indication of an understanding of the material, or even that any serious effort has been made.