

Philosophy 1000: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Justin Clark | *Office:* Geology 417 | *Email:* justin.clark@usu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:00, or by appointment

Course Website: phil1000.posthaven.com

I. Course Description: This course is a formal introduction to some of the major methods and topics in the discipline of philosophy. We will employ logic and argumentation as we search for answers to several philosophical questions: How can we understand our *nature* as human beings? What constitutes a good and happy life? What are the foundations of reality? Does God exist? If so, why do bad things happen? Do human beings possess free will? If not, how can we be held *morally* responsible for our actions? Where does morality come from? Can we expect to find answers to these questions? How can we come to *know* anything about the world we live in?

An emphasis will be placed on classic works in the history of philosophy. My hope is that students leave the course with a deeper understanding of philosophical issues, knowing what philosophers have said, and why they've said it. In the process, the course should develop one's ability to assess whether a philosophical thinker has good reasons for making their claims. This involves the ability to think clearly about the truth and significance of a text, and to understand arguments on both sides of an issue. Finally, it is my hope that students develop intellectual character, a better understanding of themselves and others, and an enlarged sense of intellectual curiosity with respect to the world.

II. Course Texts:

- (1) *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth* (10th Edition) Louis Pojman (ed). Oxford University Press, 2017
- (2) *Happiness: Classic and Contemporary Readings in Philosophy*, Cahn and Vitrano (ed). Oxford University Press, 2007

- Additional readings will be posted on the course website phil1000.posthaven.com

III. Requirements:

- (1) Attendance & Participation—10% of course grade
- (2) Quiz One— 20% of course grade (in class, Friday, October 6th)
- (3) Quiz Two— 20% of course grade (in class, Monday, November 6th)
- (4) Three Papers (1-2 pages)— 30% of course grade (10% each)
- (5) Quiz Three— 20% of course grade (in class, Friday December 8th)

Evaluation of papers and written work will be based on three criteria: (a) the clarity and organization of your written work, (b) the degree of understanding demonstrated, and (c) the depth of personal engagement and argumentation.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of lecture a total of ten times throughout the semester, on random days. These ten attendance points will be factored into your course grade, together with some participation considerations.

Late work will not be accepted. Do not use the work of another student, and do not use anything from the web when writing your papers. If you must use the web (although I urge you not to), quote and cite everything you have used. If you do not quote and cite material that you have used, it is plagiarism. Any student caught plagiarizing will fail the class. There will be no make-up quizzes or assignments. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to make-up a quiz or a paper, the following conditions *must* be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the exam or paper must be made-up within one calendar week.

Handouts will be made available on all topics; they will *not* be posted on the website or emailed to you. Handouts can be acquired by attending lecture or office hours.

IV. Tentative Schedule: The following schedule is subject to change. The abbreviation “PQT” refers to our first textbook, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, the abbreviation “HCC” refers to our second textbook, *Happiness: Classical and Contemporary Readings*.

Topic 1: Introduction to Philosophy and Logic

Readings: *What is Philosophy* (PQT p.1-14); *The Logical Toolkit* (posted on website); Plato, *Apology* (PQT p.27-38)

Topic 2: Plato and the Form of the Good

Readings: Plato, *Republic* Book IV (HCC p.11-15, and selections posted on website); *Allegory of the Cave* (PQT, p. 39-42)

Topic 3: Aristotle and the Human Function

Readings: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (HCC p.19-34)

- Paper 1 (due Wednesday, September 20th)

Topic 4: Stoicism and Cosmic Fate

Readings: Epictetus, *Enchiridion* (PQT p.637-646) and *Discourses* (selections posted on website); Seneca, *On the Happy Life* (HCC p. 41-51)

- Quiz 1 (in class, Friday, October 6th)

Topic 5: Arguments for the Existence of God

Readings: Anselm and Gaunilo, *The Ontological Argument*, (PQT p.102-104); Aquinas, *The Five Ways* (PQT p.60-63); Paley, *The Watch and the Watchmaker*, (PQT p.92-94); Collins, *God, Design and Fine-Tuning* (posted on website)

Topic 6: The Problem of Evil: An Atheistic Argument

Readings: Hume, *Critique of Teleological Argument*, (PQT p.95-101); Hick, *There is a Reason God Allows Evil* (PQT p. 128-132); Rowe, *The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism* (PQT p. 133-140)

- Paper 2 (due Monday, October 23rd)

Topic 7: The Human Will, Freedom and Determinism

Readings: Pojman, *Freedom of the Will and Determinism* (PQT p. 390-394); Van Inwagen, *The Powers of Rational Beings* (posted on website); Hume, *Liberty and Necessity* (PQT p.429-431)

- Quiz 2 (in class, Monday, November 6th)

Topic 8: Morality, Rightness and Wrongness

Readings: Rachels, *Divine Command Theory* (PQT p.555-558); Mill, *Utilitarianism* (HCC p.121-133); Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (selection posted on website); Nozick, *The Experience Machine* (HCC, p.236-7); Kant, *A Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals* (HCC p. 103-112)

- Paper 3 (due Monday, November 27th)

Topic 9: Human Knowledge: Rationalism and Empiricism

Readings: Pojman, *What Can We Know? Classical Theories of Knowledge* (PQT p. 192-194); Descartes, *Cartesian Doubt and the Search for Foundational Knowledge*, (PQT p.195-200); Hume, *The Origin of Our Ideas* (PQT p.222-224); Locke, *On Enthusiasm and the Quest for Truth* (PQT p.42-48)

- Quiz 3 (in class, Friday December 8th)

Scheduled Cancellations:

- * Monday, September 4th, Labor Day
- * Wednesday, October 4th, Reading Day (prior to Quiz One)
- * Friday, October 20th, Fall Break
- * Friday, November 4th, Reading Day (prior to Quiz Two)
- * Wednesday, November 22nd and Friday, November 24th, Thanksgiving Break
- * Wednesday, December 6th, Reading Day (prior to Quiz Three)