

Philosophy 1000-01: Introduction to Philosophy

MWF 12:30-1:20

Professor: Arina Pismenny

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 AM-11:30 AM, or by appointment

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Required Texts:

1. *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*. (2017). **6th Edition**. Edited by Steven M. Cahn. ISBN: 0190674334 **[EP]**

- At USU Bookstore (buy: new \$69.95, used \$49.96; rent: new \$45.50, used \$30; ebook \$34.95)
- [On Amazon](#) (paperback new \$60.17, used \$48.96)
- [Chegg.com](#) (buy new \$66.49; rent \$32.99)

2. Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*. (2002). **2nd edition**. Edited by John M. Cooper. Translated by G.M.A. Grube. ISBN: 0872206335 **[FD]**

- **You will need to bring this book to class**
- At USU Bookstore (buy: new \$9.95, used \$6.95; rent new \$6.50, used \$4.25; ebook \$7.50)
- [On Amazon](#) (buy paperback new \$7.91, used \$7.03; Kindle \$5.62)

3. Edward Craig, *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. (2002). ISBN: 0192854216

- At USU Bookstore (buy: new \$11.95, used \$8.95; rent new \$8.00, used \$5.50; ebook \$7.99)
- [On Amazon](#) (buy: new \$9.90, used \$2.99; Kindle \$6.99)

Additional reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them. The readings posted on Canvas are designated by **[CN]** on the syllabus.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to some of the main topics of philosophy. Philosophy addresses some of the most fundamental questions in life. The main tool by which Philosophy addresses these questions is the human capacity to reason. You will find that philosophical answers are based on reasoned arguments, which analyze and seek to justify beliefs. Philosophy, therefore, is a sort of self-examination, in which you discover

what you think, and then reflect on whether your opinions are really worth holding. To look critically at your own ideas is the essence of the life of reason.

During this course you will examine your views on several core philosophical topics such as the existence of God, the possibility of knowledge, and the basis of morality. You will read philosophical texts, analyze their arguments and evaluate their answers to the questions of the course, see how philosophical concepts can help you understand practical dilemmas, and express your ideas through arguments - both verbal and written - which present your reasons for holding your beliefs.

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:

2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, lit, etc.).
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Teaching Philosophy:

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

II. DOING YOUR PART

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, I would like you to understand this decision as a kind of commitment: a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, to take responsibility for your education, to be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to keeping up with the course's reading. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, read all the assigned readings very carefully, and seriously prepare for the online quizzes and exams.

III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

A: 93.0-100; A-: 90.0-92.9; B+: 87.1-89.9; B: 83.0-87.0; B-: 80.0-82.9; C+77.1-79.9; C: 73.0-77.0; C-: 70.0-72.9; D+: 67.1-69.9; D: 63.0-67.0; D-: 60-62.9; F: 0.0-59.9.

What do grades mean at USU?

A is for excellent work.

B is for very good work.

C is for adequate or average work.

D is for below average, inadequate work.

F is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

Components of Course Grade

Weekly online quizzes (9): 4 pts/quiz; 36%

Group assignment: 10%

Reflection journal: 3%

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 25%

Attendance: 3%

Participation: 3%

Total: 100%

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Homework: You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials and completing Canvas quizzes.

Canvas quizzes: (almost) every week, due Thursdays (at 11.59 pm the latest), there is a short multiple-choice Canvas quiz based on the readings due that week. You will be tested on the comprehension of what you have read. There are 12 quizzes in total. Three lowest quiz scores will be dropped at the end of semester. This means that only 9 quizzes out of 12 count towards your final grade.

Extra credit: dropping the lowest three scores of your Canvas quizzes is the only extra credit you will get in this course. If you complete all 12 quizzes with perfect or near perfect scores on all of them, extra points will be added to your final grade. In addition, you may earn extra points by attending a philosophy event on campus and submitting a report on it. The extra points will be added to a specific assignment.

In-class reflections journal: You should always have a notebook with you in class. I will be asking you to spend 5 minutes or so in class to write on a specific question. Then I will ask you to read what you wrote aloud to the class. Your reading your reflections will

contribute to the class discussion. You will also need to upload your in-class reflections into the journal entry on Canvas by Fridays. You may do so by typing up your response and uploading it in .doc, .docx, or a .pdf format. You may also take a picture of your hand-written reflection journal response, and upload the picture of your work on Canvas. You will receive 3 points for the journal if it is neatly kept at the end of semester. You should keep track of the dates on which you've written your reflections, and the question you were attempting to answer. This exercise will also help you track your thoughts throughout the semester. It will be fun to track your progress throughout the semester. *If you were absent on the day we had the in-class reflection journal exercise, you do not need to do it. You are excused.* However, if you submit your RJ late, or if you were present but did not submit your RJ at all, points will be taken off.

Group assignments: in order to prepare for the exams, the class will collectively compile *study guides* for the midterm and the final exams. The class will be divided into six or seven groups (three groups to prepare us for the midterm, and three or four for the final). Each group is asked to answer a set of review questions that are intended to prepare one for doing well on the exam. Each group should get together and divide the questions amongst the group members. After answering the questions, the group should review everyone's answers to make sure that they are expressed clearly and that they are correct. The group will then e-mail their answers to me and Nicole for correction and grading. We will correct and grade the group work, and will post it on Canvas for everyone to use in the preparation for the exams. Group members will receive one grade, and for this reason are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member will e-mail me their peer review report, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own.

Midterm and final exams: There will be two exams in this class. Each exam is non-cumulative. Each exam will have a multiple-choice section, a short-answer section, and an essay section. You will be tested on the material we covered in class. You will be tested on memorization and understanding. In preparing for the exams you should study the following: philosophers (who said what), terms and concepts (what do they mean?), theories (what does each theory try to explain, show, state?), arguments (what are the arguments provided in support of each theory?), objections (what are some problems with a given argument, theory, concept?)

Late Work will not be accepted. There will be no make-up quizzes or exams. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to make-up a quiz or 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 quiz or paper must be made-up within one calendar week.

Attendance: Your presence in class is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. More than **four** absences, for any reason, create an academic problem, which may result in you being dropped from the course. Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 1% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worthy 3% of your final grade.

Please be aware that people who are sleeping in class will be marked absent because it is not enough to be physically present in class. You also have to be conscious.

If you need to leave early, please consult me before class.

Latenesses will also affect your attendance record. Two latenesses will count as one absence. If you do arrive late, make sure to notify me at the end of the class that you were here. Otherwise, once marked absent, the attendance record will not be changed.

Note taking: every student must carry a notebook with them to class. You will need it for writing your reflection journal entries as well as note taking. Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned. You should write down ideas. *You should not be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them.* Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn.

Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

Electronic devices class policy: Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*. Your use of a laptop or a tablet for note taking during class will be reflected in your record, and you will be required to e-mail me the notes within 15 minutes after class. The notes must be at least 375 words-long. You should put the word count at the top of the document. Otherwise, your use of electronic devices in class is not permitted. In your electronic notes, you **may not** copy the text from the slides.

Participation: Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This will enable me to learn your names. Your class participation will be tracked by me and Nicole. Participation is worth 3% of your final grade.

Course Evaluations: at some point during the semester you will be asked by USU to evaluate this course. The procedure will be done online. It is an USU policy that you should e-mail me a confirmation code you will receive after completing the course evaluations. Your participation is mandatory. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **General Objectives of the Course** on the syllabus.

Cheating and Plagiarism policy: If you are cheating on a quiz or exam, you will receive an F on that quiz or exam (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

Here is **Utah State University's Policy on Academic Honesty**
<<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140>>:

The University expects that students and faculty alike maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. For the benefit of students who may not be aware of specific standards of the University concerning academic honesty, the following information is quoted from The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University (revised September 2009), Article VI, Section 1:

Section 1. University Standard: Academic Integrity

Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the University by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty and by reporting all violations or suspected violations of the Academic Integrity Standard to their instructors.

The Honor Pledge—To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

Violations of the Academic Integrity Standard (academic violations) include, but are not limited to:

1. **Cheating:** (1) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually"; (2) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work; (4) acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission; (5) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test,

examination, or any other academic exercise or activity; (6) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or (7) engaging in any form of research fraud.

2. **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
3. **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

Section 2. Reporting Violations of Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Violation Form (AIVF) provides guidance to instructors and students, ensures minimum due process requirements are met, and allows tracking of repeat offenders at the University level. The AIVF is available through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once an instructor has determined that an academic violation has occurred and that a sanction is appropriate, an AIVF must be submitted prior to application of the sanction. The student may appeal the determination that an academic violation occurred if the AIVF is not filed.

All submitted AIVF forms are kept in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Utah State University. When a resolution has been reached between the student and instructor, a Resolution Report detailing the action taken and agreement of both parties on that action shall be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If no Resolution Report has been filed for a submitted AIVF within the semester, the Campus Judicial Officer will investigate to determine if a solution was reached and why no Resolution Report was filed.

Section 3. Discipline Regarding Academic Integrity Violations

An instructor has full autonomy to evaluate a student's academic performance in a course. If a student commits an academic violation, the instructor may sanction the student. Such sanctions may include: (1) requiring the student to rewrite a paper/assignment or to retake a test/examination; (2) adjusting the student's grade—for either an assignment/test or the course; (3) giving the student a failing grade for the course; or (4) taking actions as appropriate. Additional disciplinary action beyond instructor sanction shall be determined by the Judicial Officer and the University.

The penalty that the University will impose on a student for the first Academic Integrity violation is placement on academic integrity probation after the first offense.

The penalties that the University may impose on a student for multiple or egregious academic integrity violations are:

1. **Probation:** continued participation in an academic program predicated upon the student satisfying certain requirements as specified in a written notice of probation. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary penalties if the student does not comply with the specified requirements or is found to be committing academic integrity violations during the probationary period. The student must request termination of the probation in writing.
2. Performance of community service.
3. **Suspension:** temporary dismissal from an academic program or from the University for a specified time, after which the student is eligible to continue the program or return to the University. Conditions for continuance or readmission may be specified.
4. **Expulsion:** permanent dismissal either from an academic program or from the University.
5. Assigning a designation with a course grade indicating an academic integrity violation involving academic integrity. Conditions for removal may be specified, but the designation remains on the student's transcript for a minimum of one year; provided however, that once the student's degree is posted to the transcript, the designation may not be removed thereafter.
6. Denial or revocation of degrees.

USU useful links (also posted on CN under 'Pages'):

Canvas:

<https://usu.instructure.com/>

Canvas help: <<http://guides.instructure.com>> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact MSU's Office of Information Technology: <<https://it.usu.edu/>>

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

<https://www.usu.edu/drc/>

Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources

<http://aaeo.usu.edu/sexual-misconduct/sexual-assault-resources>

USU Writing Center

<https://writing.usu.edu/>

USU Library

<https://library.usu.edu/>

Office of Information Technology (IT)

<https://it.usu.edu/>

LGBTQA Center

<https://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/index>

Philosophy at USU:

Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies Department (LPCS)

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/>

Philosophy Club and Honors Society

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/clubs-activities>

Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/WEB%20--%202017%20PHILOSOPHY%20MAJOR%20BA%20BS.pdf>

Philosophy Scholarships

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/languages/scholarships/scholarships-and-fellowships>

Philosophy Research Sources

How to write a good philosophy paper:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

Philosophy Bites Podcast

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

Philosophy of TED Talks

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>

V. COURSE SCHEDULE

Keep tabs on what's required a few days ahead on the schedule so that you can be prepared for due dates.

The source of the reading is indicated by the following abbreviations:

EP – *Exploring Philosophy* by Steven M. Cahn

FD – *Five Dialogues* by Plato

PI – *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* by Edward Craig

CN – Canvas

Course Outline* Subject to Change:

WEEK 1 1/7, 1/9 & 1/11 WELCOME! What is Philosophy?

NO CLASS ON 1/7

Readings: Part 1: Monroe and Elizabeth Beardsley, "What Is Philosophy?" [EP], Edward Craig, Ch. 1 - Philosophy [PI]

NO QUIZ THIS WEEK

I. LOGIC

WEEK 2 1/14, 1/16 & 1/18 What is Philosophy? and Reasoning

Readings: Part 1: Monroe and Elizabeth Beardsley, "What Is Philosophy?" [EP], Edward Craig, Ch. 1 - Philosophy [PI], Part 2: Steven M. Cahn, Patricia Kitcher, and George Sher, "The Elements of Argument" [EP]

CANVAS QUIZ 1 due Thursday, 1/17, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 3 1/23 & 1/25 Reasoning

1/21 NO CLASS – Martin Luther King's Day

Readings: Part 2: Steven M. Cahn, Patricia Kitcher, and George Sher, "The Elements of Argument" [EP].

CANVAS QUIZ 2 due Thursday, 1/24, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 4 Reasoning 1/28, 1/30, & 2/1

Part 2: Stephen Barker, "Improving Your Thinking" [EP], Part 2: Carl G. Hempel, "Scientific Inquiry" [EP]

CANVAS QUIZ 3 due Thursday, 1/31, at 11.59 pm the latest

II. ETHICS

WEEK 5 2/4, 2/6, & 2/8 Moral Theory

Readings: Part 8: Tom Regan, "How Not to Answer Moral Questions" [EP], Part 8:

Mary Midgley "Moral Isolationsim" [EP]

CANVAS QUIZ 4 due Thursday, 2/7, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 6 2/11, 2/13, & 2/15 Morality and Religion

Readings: Plato, *Euthyphro* [FD], David Baggett 'The Euthyphro Dilemma' [CN], Part 7:

Steven M. Cahn, 'God and Morality' [EP]

CANVAS QUIZ 5 due Thursday, 2/14, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 7 2/20 & 2/22 Morality and Application

2/18 NO CLASS – PRESIDENT'S DAY

Readings: Burton Leiser, "Is Homosexuality Unnatural?" [CN], Plato, *Apology* [FD]

CANVAS QUIZ 6 due Thursday, 2/21, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 8 2/25, 2/27, & 3/1 Morality and Social Justice

Readings: Plato, *Crito*, [FD], Plato, *Phaedo* (only 115a-118a), Edward Craig, Ch. 2 – What

Should I do? [PI], Part 10: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" [EP]

CANVAS QUIZ 7 due Thursday, 2/28, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 9 3/4, 3/6, & 3/8 MIDTERM EXAM WEEK

3/4 REVIEW

3/5-3/8 MIDTERM EXAM to be taken at the USU Testing Center

WEEK 10 3/11, 3/13, 3/15 – NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK

III. EPISTEMOLOGY

WEEK 11 3/18, 3/20, & 3/22 Knowledge

Readings: HW: Part 3: A. J. Ayer, "What is Knowledge?" [EP], Edward Craig, Ch. 5 – Some Themes (only pp. 52-55 *evidence and rationality* section) [PI], Part 3: Rene Descartes,

Meditations on the First Philosophy, Meditation I [EP], Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream

(link [here](#) or <https://en.m.wikiquote.org/wiki/Zhuangzi>) [CN], Edward Craig, Ch. 7 –

Some More High Spots (only pp. 74-80 on Descartes and his project) [PI]

CANVAS QUIZ 8 due Thursday, 3/21, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 12 3/25, 3/27, & 3/29 Knowledge

Readings: Part 4: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on the First Philosophy*, Meditation II [EP], Edward Craig, Ch. 6 – Of ‘isms (only pp. bottom 66 – top 72 section on rationalism and empiricism) [PI]

CANVAS QUIZ 9 due Thursday, 3/28, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 13 4/1, 4/3, & 4/5 Knowledge and Self

Readings: David Hume, *Of Miracles* [CN], Edward Craig, Ch. 3 – How Do We Know? [PI], Rene Descartes, *Meditation VI* [CN], Edward Craig, Ch. 6 – Of ‘isms (only pp. bottom 61 – bottom 66 section on dualism) [PI]

CANVAS QUIZ 10 due Thursday, 4/4, at 11.59 pm the latest

IV. METAPHYSICS

WEEK 14 4/8, 4/10, & 4/12 The Self and Personal Identity (movie week)

Readings: Part 6: John Locke, “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding” [EP], Brian Smart, “A Case of Identity”, John Perry, “The Problem of Identity”, David Hume, “A Treatise on Human Nature”, Edward Craig, Ch. 4 – What am I? [PI], Edward Craig, Ch. 5 – Some Themes (only pp. 56-58 *The self* section) [PI]

CANVAS QUIZ 11 due Thursday, 4/11, at 11.59 pm the latest

V. ASIAN PHILOSOPHIES

WEEK 15 4/15, 4/17, & 4/19 Asian Philosophies – a different perspective

Readings: Part 15: Christopher Gowans, “The Buddha’s Message”; Ray Billington, “The Tao”, *Twelve Zen Stories* [EP].

CANVAS QUIZ 12 due Thursday, 4/18, at 11.59 pm the latest

WEEK 16

4/22 Review

FINAL EXAM FROM April 25 – May 1 at the USU Testing Center

Good luck!