Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 1000  Section 01
MWF 8:30-9:20
Old Main 326

Instructor: Dan Wack (daniel.wack@usu.edu)
Office Hours: 1-2:30 Wednesdays in Old Main 002A and by appointment

UTF: Seth Dunn (sethdunn@gmail.com)

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to philosophy. We will explore the practice of philosophy and, in particular, reading philosophical texts as a way of changing one’s relation to oneself and one’s ways of thinking. As such we read a number of texts from the history of philosophy, paying particular attention to the forms of knowing and of skepticism each text articulates. In so doing, we will investigate several forms of philosophical criticism, analyzing each text as a distinct response to questions such as: How do we know? What criteria do we have for knowing that we know? What are the different ways we have of knowing? How do the different ways of doubting allow us to better understand different ways of knowing? We begin by investigating the figure of Socrates as he appears in the writings of Plato. We then turn to Descartes’ Meditations, Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale, Simone Weil’s “Essay on the Concept of Reading”, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, and Nietzsche’s The Gay Science. In addition we will watch movies by Jean Renoir and Eric Rohmer.

Course Objectives:
1. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view. We will be reading three essential texts in the history of ethics and more recent ethical writings that expand upon or critique these fundamental ethical theories. The aim is to understand the arguments presented, to be able to evaluate the arguments’ strengths and weaknesses, and to understand the assumptions and motivations that underlie the arguments made.
2. Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories. We will be learning about the three basic ethical theories. By the end of the semester, you should know the core commitments that structure each theory, how these theories shape contemporary debates about good action, and how each of the three theories is distinguished from the other two.
3. Develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values. None of these theories gives us a clear list of what we should do and how we should do it. However, in studying these three basic ethical theories, the aim is to better understand your own conception of good action and a good human life. What beliefs and values support your commitment to telling the truth, being a good listener to a friend in need, etc.? The point is not to change your mind about what it is good to do, but to better understand why you take these kinds of actions to be good and to help you understand in what ways you want to relate to yourself and to others.

Required Texts:
Plato, Meno
Plato, Symposium
Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy
Shakespeare, The Winter’s Tale
Nietzsche, The Gay Science
+ pdfs of all other readings will be available through Canvas
Course Requirements:
Students are required to read carefully assigned material, to attend class regularly, to participate in class discussion and to fulfill all homework assignments and exams. Regular class attendance and participation constitutes a small but important portion of the course grade; additionally, routine, thoughtful participation in class is the primary ground for rounding up, rather than down, any borderline course grades. Discussion and questions should be voiced as they arise in the course of the class. Students should prepare for class by identifying passages in the reading they are particularly intrigued or troubled by and be prepared to initiate discussion on them.

Grades: There are a total of 1000 points available to earn in this class. Grades are based on total points students earn over the course of the class.

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Response Papers: There will be ten short response papers assigned throughout the semester. Each response paper will ask you to read carefully a particular text we have been discussing together and to write an analysis of a particular aspect of that text of at least 2 to 3 pages. Each response paper will initially be worth 20 points; response papers will be receive some portion of those 20 points based largely, but not exclusively, on the completion of the assignment, the attentiveness to the text being analyzed, and the effort evident in the response. After the completion of the first five response papers, you will identify the two papers you think are your best work. You may, if you like, revise your two papers selected for me to grade before you submit them the second time. I will grade each of those papers more critically, paying particular attention to the accuracy and insight of your analysis, with the highest possible grade being 100 points. This will repeat in the second half of the semester with the next five response papers. Your response papers will thus constitute 60% of the total grade for the class, for a total of 600 points.

Final Paper: There will be a longer final paper of at least 4 to 5 pages in length. In this paper, you will be asked to analyze more than one text that we have read together in order to generate your own analysis. This final paper will be worth 200 points, constituting 20% of the total grade for the course.

Pop quizzes and Homework Assignments: Over the course of the semester, there will ten pop quizzes relating to some basic aspects of the reading and are designed to encouraged reading and attendance. Quizzes will not be announced in advance and cannot be made up. Each quiz is worth 10 points for a total of 100 points or 10% of the total course grade.

The remaining 10% of the course grade or 100 points will be based on active class participation.

Movie Screenings: There will be two movie screenings over the course of the class. The screenings are strongly encouraged but not mandatory for students in light of the demands of
individuals’ schedules. If you object to watching movies or movies of certain kinds, you need not attend the screenings and your grade in the class will not be affected.

**Policy on Extensions and Grading:**
All reasonable requests for extensions will be considered up until noon, one day before the homework assignment is due. Extensions will not be granted after that except in the case of emergency. Emergencies include such things as death, serious injury or illness to some member of one’s family, one’s circle of friends, or one’s person. Homework assignments handed after the day and time due without an extension will be considered late and will be docked one third a letter grade for each day late. Exams must be handed in prior to the beginning of class on the date due in all cases.

**University Policies & Procedures:**

**Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities**

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

**Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"**

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. 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."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

**Academic Dishonesty**

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University’s Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;

- Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.

- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **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.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](#)

### Sexual Harassment/Title IX

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and USU Policy 339 ([https://www.usu.edu/policies/339/](https://www.usu.edu/policies/339/)) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU’s Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity (AA/EO) Office for available options and resources or clarification, leading to an informal resolution of the matter. Further information and forms for reporting an incident to USU can be found here: [http://aaeo.usu.edu](http://aaeo.usu.edu)

### Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term ‘extenuating’ circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center (DRC)](http://drc.usu.edu) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn
All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

**Diversity Statement**

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: [https://studentaffairs.usu.edu](https://studentaffairs.usu.edu), (435) 797-1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: [https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services](https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services), (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: [http://accesscenter.usu.edu](http://accesscenter.usu.edu), (435) 797-1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: [http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture](http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture), (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: [http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa](http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa), (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost’s Office Diversity Resources: [https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity](https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: [https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode)

**Grievance Process**

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII.

**Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:**

- [Student Conduct](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode)
- [Student Code](https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode)
- [Academic Integrity](https://www.usu.edu/academic/integrity)
- [USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures](https://www.usu.edu/policies)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](https://www.usu.edu/policies)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](https://www.usu.edu/policies)

**Emergency Procedures**

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.
Course Schedule:

Week 1
M 1.6: Introduction to Class: What Is Philosophy?
W 1.8: Discussion: Forms of Knowledge and Scepticism
F 1.10: Plato, *Alcibiades I*, pp. 1-36 (103a-124e); short writing response 1 distributed

Week 2
M 1.13: Plato, *Alcibiades I*, pp. 1-36 (103a-124e); short writing response 1 due
W 1.15: Plato, *Alcibiades I*, pp. 37-58 (125a-135e)
F 1.17: Plato, *Alcibiades I*, pp. 37-58 (125a-135e); short writing response 2 distributed

Week 3
M 1.20: No Class—Martin Luther King Day
W 1.22: Plato, *Meno* (70a-86d); short writing response 2 due
F 1.24: Plato, *Meno* (86e-100c)

Week 4
M 1.27: Plato, *Symposium* (172a-201d)
W 1.29: Plato, *Symposium* (172a-201d)
F 1.31: Plato, *Symposium* (201d-223d); short writing response 3 distributed

Week 5
M 2.3: Plato, *Symposium* (201d-223d); short writing response 3 due
W 2.5: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Preface, Meditation 1
F 2.7: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 1; short writing response 4 distributed

Week 6
M 2.10: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 2; short writing response 4 due
W 2.12: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 2
F 2.14: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 3; short writing response 5 distributed
Week 7
M 2.17: No Class—Presidents’ Day
W 2.19: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 3; short writing response 5 due
F 2.21: Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 1

Week 8
W 2.26: Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 3; 2 of best short writing responses due for final submission
F 2.28: Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, Act 4; short writing response 6 distributed

Spring Break—3.2 through 3.6

Week 9
T 3.10: Screening—*A Tale of Winter* (Old Main 119, 7 pm)
W 3.11: Discussion: Rohmer’s *A Tale of Winter* and *The Winter’s Tale*
F 3.13: Weil, “Essay on the Concept of Reading”; short writing response 7 distributed

Week 10
M 3.16: Weil, “Essay on the Concept of Reading”; short writing response 7 due
W 3.18: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B Preface (106-124)
F 3.20: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B Preface (106-124); short writing response 8 distributed

Week 11
M 3.23: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B Introduction (136-152); short writing response 8 due
F 3.27: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Aesthetic (155-192); short writing response 9 distributed

Week 12
M 3.30: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Logic (193-218); short writing response 9 due
W 4.1: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Logic (193-218)
F 4.3: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Schematism (271-277); short writing response 10 distributed

**Week 13**


T 4.7: Screening: *The Rules of the Game* (Old Main 119, 7 pm)

W 4.8: Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, Book 1 (27-65); short writing response 10 due


**Week 14**

M 4.13: Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, Book 3 (109-156); final paper assignment distributed


F 4.17: Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, Book 5 (199-248); best 2 out of last 5 short writing responses due for final submission

**Week 15**

M 4.20: Final class discussion

F 4.24: Final paper due