

Philosophy 1150: Major Questions in Philosophy

Summer 2008

MTWR 5:30-8:10, 208 Clark Hall

Instructor: Tyler Paytas

E-mail: tylerpaytas@umsl.edu

Office: 556 Lucas Hall

Office Hours: after class, or by appointment

Texts:

1. *The Story of Philosophy* by Bryan Magee (Dorling-Kindersley, 1998)
2. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu>
3. Photocopies of additional readings will be provided.

Course description:

This is an introductory course in the most important questions and figures in philosophy. The course is divided into four parts, the first dealing with ethics, the second with political theory, the third with metaphysics or the theory of being, and the fourth with epistemology or the theory of knowledge.

The goal of the course is not only to acquaint students with the major questions and thinkers in philosophy, but also to introduce them to the experience of thinking philosophically, of taking a critical stance toward philosophical ideas - both in discussion and writing - and to guide them towards informed future reading and course choices in the subject.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and class participation	10%
Four weekly discussion board posts (due 5/18, 5/25/, 6/1, & 6/8)	20%
Quiz 1 5/19	10%
Quiz 2 5/27	10%
Quiz 3 6/2	10%
Quiz 4 6/5	10%
Paper (4-5 pages, double-spaced, due 6/8)	30%

Notes on Course Requirements:

Attendance

Regular attendance is required for you to do well in and pass this course. You are expected to be in attendance at every class session unless you have a legitimate reason for not being there (for example: family emergency, illness, or a pre-arranged, university-sponsored activity like a sporting event). Absence for legitimate reasons is not automatically excused; you must contact me (in advance, if at all possible) to let me know the reason for your absence.

Class Participation

The best philosophical positions are developed through dialogue with others. To that end, it is important that you are an active participant in the course. Course participation involves

- Being prepared to discuss the course readings in the class period for which they are assigned.
- Lively and active contributions to the class discussions.

Here are the grade criteria for your participation grade:

- A: Few or no unexcused absences; regular, thoughtful contributions in class
- B: Like the "A" criteria, except possibly a few more absences or less frequent/ less thoughtful class contributions
- C: EITHER: regular attendance, but not many contributions to the discussion in class
OR: irregular attendance, but a fair number of contributions to the class discussion
- D: regular absences from class
- F: absent from class a large portion of the time

Discussion Board

Coming to a full understanding of philosophical arguments requires one to write about them. To that end, you will be writing entries on the MyGateway course discussion board in response to the readings and class discussions. The discussion board entries will not only help you to absorb the course material more thoroughly; they will also serve as good "scratch pads" for exploring ideas that you may later use in your course paper.

The discussion board entries should be at least 250 words long and are due by 6:00 p.m. on 5/18, 5/25/, 6/1, and 6/8. The topic for the week's entry will be posted on MyGateway a few days before the entry is due. I encourage you to read and respond to each other's entries.

Quizzes

The four quizzes will be given in class and will be over factual information from the course. If you are absent the day of the quiz, you cannot make up the quiz unless your absence is excused by me (see "Attendance" above for more discussion of excused absences).

Paper

The paper must be at least 4-5 pages long, double spaced. It can be written about any topic form the course. *You must consult with me beforehand to check that your topic is suitable.* The paper is due by 6:00 p.m. on June 8th, and should be e-mailed to me at tylerpaytas@umsl.edu.

Course Schedule: (Note: From time to time, adjustments in this schedule may need to be made. Any change in it will be announced in class.)

PART I - ETHICS

How should I live?

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Assignment Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>
5/12	None	Introduction & Aristotle
5/13	http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics (1-5, 10) “Story of Philosophy”: pp. 32-39, 130-137 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral (1-7, 10)	Kant
5/14	“Story of Philosophy”: pp. 182-185 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism	Utilitarianism
5/15	Handout	Ethical Skepticism

PART II - POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

How should we be governed?

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Assignment Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>
5/19	“Story of Philosophy”: pp. 24-31 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics-politics	QUIZ 1 & Plato
5/20	“Story of Philosophy”: pp. 78-81 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral Handout	Hobbes
5/21	“Story of Philosophy”: pp. 164-171 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/marx/#3	Marx
5/22	http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/ Handout	Rawls

PART III - METAPHYSICS

What is the nature of reality?

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Assignment Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>
5/26	None	No class
5/27	Handout	Quiz 2, Mind/Body Problem
5/28	Handout	Free Will
5/29	Story of Philosophy": pp. 48-61 Handout	Existence of God

PART IV - EPISTEMOLOGY

What can I know?

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Assignment Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>
6/2	"Story of Philosophy": pp. 82-89 Handout	QUIZ 3 & Skepticism
6/3	Handout	Belief and Knowledge
6/4	"Story of Philosophy": pp. 112-117 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/induction-problem/#Hum	Induction
6/5	None	QUIZ 4

Miscellaneous Remarks

I encourage you to meet with me outside of class if you have any questions or problems. E-mail is another good way to reach me. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get any information from another student. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Access Services Office in 144 Millennium Student Center at 516-6554 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are arranged in a timely fashion.

Department of Philosophy Academic Honesty Statement

In all cases of academic dishonesty, for example cheating, plagiarism, or sabotage, the instructor shall make an academic judgment about the student's grade on the work involved. Since this judgment is often a grade of zero, its assignment may result in a failing grade for the course. The complete campus policy on academic dishonesty may be found under "Student Conduct Code" in the Student Planner or at

http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.htm