



Philosophy 100-31-2: Introduction to Philosophy

Time:	MTWR 1200–1300	Location:	Tripler AMC
Instructor:	Carl M. Johnson	Cell Phone:	(808) 599-0232
Email:	carl.johnson@adjunct.chaminade.edu		

Course Description:

A study of the nature of philosophical thought and methods by examining actual examples from a selection of classical Greek, medieval Christian, and modern European philosophers. Students will develop an understanding of the ways in which western culture functions.

This course will begin with the questions of Descartes and look at the responses of David Hume before going back to ancient Greece to find the roots of their philosophical thinking in Plato and its expansion into a Christian synthesis by Boethius. Finally, we will read a variety of more recent writings to see how philosophers today perceive the issues. Throughout the course, in addition to gaining a basic understanding of the history of the issues, students will learn how to read and understand complicated texts, analyze arguments closely, concisely summarize issues, write papers that express their own opinions and analyses, and conduct a philosophical investigation with their peers.

Course Texts:

Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Fourth Ed.). Tr.

Donald A. Cress. Hackett, 1998. ISBN-10: 0-87220-420-0.

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Second Ed.). Hackett, 1993.

ISBN-10: 0-87220-229-1.

Plato. *Republic*. Tr. C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett, 2004. ISBN-10: 978-0-87220-736-3.

Boethius. *Consolation of Philosophy*. Tr. Joel C. Relihan. Hackett, 2001. ISBN-10: 0-87220-583-5.

Assessment:

Reading Response Questions (10% total)

Before each class, students will do the assigned reading then write a question or questions inspired by the reading and turn it in at the beginning of class. These questions will be recorded and used as the basis for class discussion (see below). Questions clearly unrelated to the reading will be rejected and returned to the student.

Class Discussion (10% total)

Each Thursday will begin with a period of student discussion approximately twenty minutes in length. (*Exception: Jan. 20's discussion will be moved to Jan. 24.*) For each discussion, some students will be designated as the group leaders. The discussion leader will use the questions submitted last class to craft an group inquiry that will delve deeper

into the reading. At the end of the discussion, other students will anonymously evaluate the performance of their discussion leader.

Summaries (10% each, 20% total)

Students must write two summaries during the course. Summaries should be around two pages long (300 to 600 words). Summaries will be given an overall grade on the basis of mastery of content, style, and grammar/usage. The first summary will cover Descartes and is due on **Thurs., Jan. 27**. The second may cover any one of Hume (due **Thurs., Feb. 10**), Plato (**March 3**), or Boethius (**March 17**).

Argumentative papers (20% each, 40% total)

Students must write two argumentative papers. Papers should be around 5 pages (1,200 to 2,000 words). Papers will be given an overall grade on the basis of strength of argument/originality, mastery of content, structure/coherence, style, and grammar/usage. Papers may cover any two of Hume (due **Thurs., Feb. 10**), Plato (**March 3**), or Boethius (**March 17**).

Final Paper (20% total)

The final paper will be a culminating paper in which students synthesize all of the material in the course. Students are responsible for creating their own topic for the final paper. Final papers should be more than 7 pages (1,800 words) and under 20 pages at most. Final papers are due in class on the last day of the course, **Wed., March 23**.

Lateness Policy:

Assignments must be turned in by the start of class on the due date. Reading response questions are meant to measure class participation and so will not be accepted after the class in which they are due. Failure to turn in a summary or paper on time will result in a five percent penalty per day with a maximum penalty of twenty percent. If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a class due to work, sports, illness, or some other extracurricular activity, you may email an assignment in order to meet the deadline or be excused from a class discussion. In general, exceptions to the lateness policy are possible only with a doctor's note detailing serious illness. In the event of a serious family emergency, please call the instructor and discuss the situation over the phone.

Returns and Revisions Policy:

After being graded, the summaries and papers will be returned to students in a one-on-one conference in which the strengths and weakness of the writing will be discussed. These conferences are mandatory, and grades for the writing will not be recorded in the gradebook for students who fail to attend. Following a conference, students have one

week to revise their papers to have it re-graded. The score recorded in the gradebook will be the average of the initial and final grade a paper receives.

Disability Statement:

I am happy to accommodate any students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to self identify with the Director of Personal Counseling in order to receive accommodations. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive services. Contact the Director of Personal Counseling at (808) 739-4603 or email: <jyasuhar@chaminade.edu>.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will not be tolerated.

The instructor is not hesitant about failing any student suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty. Failure to properly quote and cite sources used in a paper is one of the many forms of academic dishonesty. All materials turned in by students must reflect their own work and not that of any other person.

Course Schedule:

Readings marked with a ※ will be provided by the instructor electronically. If you have difficulty accessing such readings, please contact the instructor.

January

M	10	First class
T	11	Descartes <i>Meditation One</i> and <i>Two</i>
W	12	Descartes 3 & 5
R	13	Class discussion
M	17	<i>No class</i>
T	18	James Cutsinger ※
W	19	Descartes 4 & 6
R	20	Correspondence of Descartes and Elisabeth of Bohemia ※
M	24	Class discussion
T	25	Hume §4, §5-1
W	26	Hume §8
R	27	Class discussion, summary due
M	31	Hume §11

February

T	1	Hume §10-1 & Marilyn McCord Adams ※
W	2	Hume §12

R	3	Class discussion
M	7	Plato <i>Apology</i> ※
T	8	Plato <i>Republic</i> Book I
W	9	<i>Republic</i> II
R	10	Class discussion, summary/paper due
M	14	<i>No class</i>
T	15	<i>Republic</i> Book IV
W	16	<i>Republic</i> _ V 472–480 & X 595–608
R	17	Class discussion
M	21	<i>Republic</i> VI
T	22	<i>Republic</i> VII 514–521 & X 608–621
W	23	Martha Nussbaum ※
R	24	Class discussion
M	28	Boethius, Book I
<i>March</i>		
T	1	Boethius II
W	2	Boethius III
R	3	Class discussion, summary/paper due
M	7	Boethius IV
T	8	Boethius V
W	9	Pierre Hadot ※
R	10	Class discussion
M	14	Martin Heidegger ※
T	15	Watsuji Tetsurō ※
W	16	Richard Rorty ※
R	17	Class discussion, summary/paper due
M	21	Zhuangzi ※
T	22	Bertrand Russell ※
W	23	Last day of class, final paper due

“I learned in my college days
that one cannot imagine anything so strange or so little believable
that it had not been said by one of the philosophers.”

— René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, p. 16.