

# Syllabus

## Course Syllabus

**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.

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- Course Texts**
- Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*. (Free online.)
  - Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. (Free online.)
  - 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.
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## Assessment **Reading Response (20%)**

Every week there will be three lessons with reading assignments (see Course Schedule in site sidebar). Each week by Friday at 11:59pm, students should have completed 200 to 400 word reading responses to each of these reading assignments and posted them in the discussion section of the site. Students may look at and respond to one another's responses but are expected to do their own reading and their responses should reflect an individual's perspective on the reading.

Responses should be written in standard, professional English: use normal casing (NOT ALL CAPS or lowercase even for i and new sentences), avoid excessive abbreviation ("u" for "you," "UR" for "your," etc.), and spell correctly ("definitely" not "definately," distinguish "lose" and "loose," if-then but greater-than, etc.).

Over the weekend, the instructor will make available podcast lectures providing further background information about the reading assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to listen to these lectures as preparation for the longer writing assignments.

## **Summary (10%)**

Students must write one summary paper during the course. The summary should be around two pages long (300 to 600 words) and will cover Descartes. Summaries are due **January 26** and will be given an overall grade on the basis of mastery of content, style, and grammar/usage.

### **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 will cover Hume (due **February 9**) and Plato (**March 2**).

### **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. A topic proposal must be submitted to the instructor for approval by **March 16**. 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, **March 20**.

### **Final Exam (10%)**

To confirm your understanding of the material covered, students are expected to take a final exam at the end of the semester and show a basic knowledge of the terms and arguments mentioned in class. To study for this exam, online practice quizzes will be offered throughout the semester. You must schedule this exam with the AEOP office yourself.

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**Lateness Policy** Assignments must be turned in before midnight on the due date. Late reading responses will receive only half-credit upon completion. Failure to turn in a summary or paper on time will result in a five percent penalty per day with a maximum penalty of fifteen percent. If you know ahead of time that you will be unable to access the course for any period of time, you must contact the instructor in advance to receive an extension. 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.**

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**Returns and Revisions** After being graded, the summaries and papers will be returned to students with comments on the strengths and weakness of the writing. Following the return of the summary or paper, 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.

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**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>.

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

**Dishonesty** instructor is not hesitant about failing any student suspected of engaging in academic  
**Policy** 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.

The simplest guideline is **always cite the sources you read and when you copy-and-paste use quotation marks and indicate your source** (do NOT “paraphrase!”).

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**Course  
Motto**

“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*

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