

Philosophy 101-04,05: **Western Philosophical Traditions**  
Gadfly: Daryl L. Hale  
Office Hours: TR 11-12, 2:00-3:00; W 10-12, 1-3

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Philosophy, both by historical self-definition and by example of its practitioners, is comprised of the quest for and love of wisdom. Philosophers, from the very earliest times, saw wisdom developing out of their sense of wonder (as Aristotle put it) about both the things in front of them and also those things distant from them (heavens, orbits of the planets, how the universe became arranged so orderly). Not surprisingly then, one of the central tasks of philosophy was seen in **theoria**, the classical Greek expression for theoretical reflection on subtle problems detected in our theories of knowledge, nature, and philosophical reality (such as, which is true – appearance or reality?). However, as we shall soon see, the ancient Greeks did not limit their love of wisdom to abstract speculative theorizing; they also envisioned philosophical inquiry as embedded in a way of life, a voluntary decision to engage in one form of life over another. So, since the time of Socrates, philosophers have understood wisdom, **phronesis**, practical wisdom, as a life that is engaged with the everyday affairs of the world.

Secondly, the pursuit of this life and love of wisdom is never made in solitude. As one contemporary scholar of ancient Greek thought put it,

*There can never be a philosophy or philosophers outside a group, a community – in a word, a philosophical “school.” The philosophical school thus corresponds, above all, to the choice of a certain way of life and existential option which demands from the individual a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one’s entire being, and ultimately a certain desire to be and to live in a certain way. This existential option, in turn, implies a certain vision of the world, and the task of philosophical discourse will therefore be to reveal and rationally justify this existential option, as well as this representation of the world. Theoretical philosophical discourse is thus born from this initial existential option, and it leads back to it, insofar as – by means of its logical and persuasive force, and the action it tries to exert upon the interlocutor – it incites both masters and disciples to live in genuine conformity with their initial choice. In other words, it is, in a way, the application of a certain ideal of life.*

[Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, tr. Michael Chase, Harvard U. Press, p.3]

In a similar vein, Immanuel Kant, famed philosopher of the German Enlightenment, offered this criticism of his contemporaries:

*The ancient Greek philosophers, such as Epicurus, Zeno, and Socrates, remained more faithful to the Idea of the philosopher than their modern counterparts have done. “When will you finally begin to live virtuously?” said Plato to an old man who told him he was attending classes on virtue. The point is not always to speculate, but also ultimately to think about applying our knowledge. Today, however, he who lives in conformity with what he teaches is taken for a dreamer.*

[Kant, *Lectures on the Philosophical Encyclopedia*]

Since the historical Socrates was, **par excellence**, one who mastered critical reflection and who freely chose the examined life over other existential options, our examination of the history of the quest for wisdom will begin with him.

#### List of Daily Reading Assignments

January 11 – Philosophy: The Quest for Truth [Pojman, 1-5]  
**I. The Ancient Greek Polis: Socrates’ Pursuit of Wisdom** [Trials, vii-x]  
13 -- Plato: *Apology*, 17a-31c [R]  
17 -- **Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday: attend MLK event**

- 18 -- Plato: *Apology*, 31c-54e [R]; Aristophanes: *Clouds* [R, 89-117]  
 20 -- Plato: *Crito*, 43a-54e [R]  
 25 -- Xenophon: *Socrates' Defense to the Jury* [R, pp. 178-184];  
 Hadot: "The Figure of Socrates" [*What is Ancient Philosophy?*,  
 Ch. 3, handout or e-version]  
 27 -- Plato: *Crito*, 43a-54e [R]
- II. Late Antiquity: Quest for the Meaning of Life** [P, 497-8]  
 February 1 -- Epicurus: Moderate Hedonism [P, 499-504]  
 3 -- Epictetus: Stoic Moral Integrity [P, 505-514]  
 8 -- Long: "The Socratic Paradigm" [*Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic  
 Guide to Life*, Ch. 3; handout/e-version]
- III. Medieval Philosophy: *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*** [Williams, xi-xix]  
 10 -- Augustine: *Free Choice of the Will*, Book One  
 15,17 -- *Free Choice of the Will*, Book Two  
 22,24 -- *Free Choice of the Will*, Book Three
- February 26-March 6 -- **SPRING BREAK**
- March 8 -- **MIDTERM EXAM: Review Readings, Notes, Terms**
- IV. Early Modern Philosophy: Epistemology & Metaphysics** [P, 142-3]  
 10 -- Descartes' Epistemology: Cartesian Doubt, **Cogito Ergo Sum**,  
 Quest for Certainty [P, 143-148]  
 15 -- Descartes' Metaphysics: Dualistic Interactionism [P, 229-235]  
 17-- Hume: Skepticism about Causal Reasoning [P, 171-179]  
 22 -- Hume: No Substantial Self [P, 293-296]
- March 24-27 -- **EASTER HOLIDAY**
- V. Contemporary Philosophy: Ethical & Social/Political Theory**  
 29,31 -- Mill: Utilitarianism [P, 427-433]; *The Subjection of Women*,  
 Ch. I
- April 5 -- Mill: *The Subjection of Women*, Ch. II  
 7,12 -- *The Subjection of Women*, Ch. III  
 14,19 -- *The Subjection of Women*, Ch. IV
- VI. Philosophy of Religion: Problem of Evil**  
 21 -- Plato: *Euthyphro*, 2a-16a  
 26 -- Dostoevsky, Johnson: Why does God permit evil? [P, 86-90, 90-  
 95]  
 28 -- Hick: A Christian Theodicy [P, 96-100]
- Monday, May 2 -- PAR 101-04 (12:30) **FINAL EXAM, 12:00-2:30** MK 201  
 Tuesday, May 3 -- PAR 101-05 (9:30) **FINAL EXAM, 8:30-11:00** MK 201

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

##### **1. Texts**

**A. Rental:** *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, 5th edition; edited by Louis P. Pojman (readings are signified by 'P' followed by page numbers).

**B. Supplemental:** The 3 supplementary texts which you are required to buy are *The Trials of Socrates*, ed. by C. D. C. Reeve (designated as 'R'), Augustine's *On Free Choice of the Will*, and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*.

**Homework Assignments:** I expect all members of the class to keep current on assigned class readings; accordingly, I will expect you to be prepared to discuss the daily reading, to raise some questions about how we are to interpret the text, the author's claims (thesis, argument), or the cultural context which produced this text & author. If you are having trouble with the reading, then your classmates' and my discussion should help to illuminate those dim spots in your understanding. As the semester proceeds, you will be writing outlines of textual arguments or critical analyses (1-2 pages each) of these pivotal philosophical texts; so, your attendance is imperative. These assignments will count for 20% of your grade.

**2. Writing Assignments:** There will be several longer essays required (3-4 pp. each) on each of these 3 supplemental books. These papers will constitute 20 % of your grade. No late or handwritten (except when written in class) papers will be accepted -- you will receive a '0' for papers not turned in on time. This will require you to use the library or internet resources (at least 2 other sources) to amplify your understanding of Socrates, Augustine, and J. S. Mill. In each of the books, you will find a selective bibliography that lists secondary sources on (works about) these pivotal thinkers: these works should give you help in analyzing and critiquing their arguments. You must include a bibliography, & incorporate the 2 sources into your project. The point of this assignment is to teach you how to research and present a philosophical problem or thinker. These are **philosophical**, not biographical, historical, or literary essays; so, you must address some philosophical problem (e.g. knowledge, evil, virtue, reason & faith, free will, gender inequity, etc.) that concern these thinkers. No late or untyped papers (or diskette versions) will be accepted. **Be sure to state, clarify, and defend your thesis clearly. Plagiarism in any of the short essays or homework assignments will result in an 'F' for the course: downloading a paper from the Internet constitutes stealing the work of someone else; plagiarism is academic dishonesty, and is intolerable in university-level work.** These essays constitute 20% of your grade.

**3 & 4. Midterm and Final Exams:** there will be a midterm examination on March 8, so your attendance in class is necessary to ready yourself for that exam. In an historical and conceptual course (such as this one), everything builds on previous thinkers we have studied; so if you miss a class, it will hurt your comprehension of the overall trends of philosophical thought. Also there will be a final examination at the end of the semester. Both the midterm and the final, individually, will count for 20% of your grade; both together will comprise 2\5 of your grade. The final for your class will take place on:

PAR 101-04 [TR 12:30) --	Mon., May 2, 12:00 - 2:30 p.m.
PAR 101-05 (TR 9:30) --	Tues., May 3, 8:30 - 11:00 a.m.

**5. Participation:** the remaining 20% of your grade is totally in your hands. Following the classical Greek model of democracy, I will treat this class as a **polis** – a self-sufficient, self-governing community of citizens governed by a constitution that insures members' direct participation in the affairs of state. Accordingly, we will be entertaining the texts we read as proposals for how we are to live and conduct our public policy in our **polis**; hence class attendance, quizzes on assigned readings, and written questions on daily readings demonstrate your active participation as members of the **polis**, and thus can raise your grade considerably. Finally, I expect all students to attend class each day it meets. This is not a merely formal requirement; it has your best long-term interests at heart. We will be reading some difficult articles. This course is a rigorous introduction to philosophical thought, and consequently, it requires you to read a good deal of material for each day's discussion. If you are not present for the early parts of the class, you will be lost regarding later parts of the class, since learning those later parts builds on the basic elements covered earlier.

As a practitioner of this spirit of mutual inquiry after the truth, I offer here some secondary sources that have been central to my pursuit of wisdom. These sources are helpful commentaries on the quest for truth; they should enable you to understand more completely some of the pivotal philosophers, their concepts, theories, and terms:

- A. Single-volume Works with concise explanations
  1. Robert Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*
  2. Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*
  3. Edward Craig, *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford U. Press)

- B. Multi-volume Encyclopedia with systematic exposition
1. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (multi-volume)
  2. Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (4 vols.)
  3. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy* (4 vols.)
- C. English Dictionaries
1. The Oxford English Dictionary (now available on-line or in CD-Rom; also, *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is an invaluable, inexpensive 2-volume edition)
  2. Any single-volume dictionary with a helpful etymology at the end of the word (American Heritage, Webster's, etc.)

### **PLUS/MINUS GRADING SYSTEM**

The plus/minus grading system is now in effect at Western Carolina University, and will be utilized in computing grades for this course. Your papers and exams will be returned with numerical grades on them, but the following scale will make it easy for you to determine your standing in the course by simple conversion from the numerical grade to the corresponding letter grade. The primary reasons for changing to a plus/minus grading system are that plus/minus grades are more precise in indicating a student's actual grade in a course, the "plus" grades recognize exceptional work of students, grade inflation is reduced, and final exams should be more prominent in motivating student course work.

<u>Numerical Grades</u>	=	<u>Letter Grades</u>	=	<u>Quality Points</u>
93 - 100		A		4.00
90 - 92		A-		3.67
87 - 89		B+		3.33
83 - 86		B		3.00
80 - 82		B-		2.67
77 - 79		C+		2.33
73 - 76		C		2.00
70 - 72		C-		1.67
67 - 69		D+		1.33
63 - 66		D		1.00
60 - 62		D-		0.67
0 - 59		F		0.00