Ancient Philosophy

TR 12:30 – 1:45
CI-127

http://philosophy.tamucc.edu

Professor:

Don Berkich, Ph.D.

Office: FC-280
Hours: TBD
Office#: 3976 (do not leave a message, send email instead)
Home#: 944-2756 (never call after 9:00 p.m., but texting is encouraged)
Email: don.berkich@tamucc.edu
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Course Description:

This course is a reading and discussion seminar devoted to the two major figures of Ancient Western Philosophy, Plato and Aristotle. Our focus will be a close reading of their major texts. Our emphasis will set the stage for the philosophical transition to the medievals and, eventually, the moderns. The course concludes with a discussion of the philosophical problems discovered by Ancient Western Philosophy. There are no prerequisites.

Tentative Reading Schedule:

Week 1  Introduction
Week 2  The Apology
Week 3  The Republic
Week 4  The Republic
Week 5  The Republic
Week 6  The Republic
Week 7  The Republic
Week 8  The Meno
Week 9  The Meno
Week 10 De Anima
Week 11 Nicomachean Ethics
Week 12 Nicomachean Ethics
Week 13 Nicomachean Ethics
Week 14 Nicomachean Ethics
Student Learning Outcomes:

As determined by a pre-test and a post-test the first day, students will demonstrate their capacity for sentient cognition by

1. Learning the names of at least two historically important philosophers--e.g., Plato and Aristotle.

2. Learning the names of at least three important texts written by these philosophers--e.g., *The Symposium, The Republic, and The Metaphysics.*

Texts:*


* Useful but not required--selections from these and other sources will be provided as necessary. That said, anyone seriously considering developing a shelf of important philosophical works is well-advised to include these books.

Requirements:

Examinations

There will be a midterm examination due Thursday, 10/17, and a final examination due Wednesday, 12/12. Subject to student suggestions, the examinations will be short- and long-essay format. The examinations will be take-home and will include material from lecture, discussion, guest lecturers, and panel discussions. Students may expect approximately two weeks to work on each examination.

Reading Quizzes

Starting on Tuesday, 9/4, every class will begin with a very brief reading quiz. Each reading quiz will consist of a short-essay (no more than one side of one page, usually much less) answer to a question chosen from three published in advance. Only the best scoring twenty quizzes count towards the course grade. Each quiz is worth up to 25 points as per the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Where were you? We missed you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Um, which reading were you on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nice answer, but which question were you answering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>There are some serious gaps here, but you're heading in the right direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Good! You've got some of the basics covered, but there is a much better way to put it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Outstanding! Clear, concise, and correct!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation:

Students should be prepared to contribute to class discussion. Students should also be prepared to answer specific questions about the reading material and should be able to outline key elements of the assigned readings for the class.

Attendance:
Attendance is not mandatory, but it is strongly recommended. See below.

Policies:

The professor assumes that students enrolled in this course are sincere student-scholars. That is, the professor will treat them with the respect due scholars, and, as scholars, they shall do their best to live up to the standards of scholars. To wit,

*Preparation:*

Scholars carefully read assignments in advance of class, take notes on their reading, explore specific issues in discussion with fellow scholars, and follow-up class by re-reading portions of the required readings and exploring suggested readings.

*Participation:*

Scholars are eager to respectfully, openly, and critically discuss arguments and issues raised by the readings. Scholars are adept at following a line of reasoning wherever it may lead. Most importantly, scholars welcome the insights and criticisms of their peers: A scholar understands that it is possible to entertain a proposition without believing it, just as it is possible to present an argument without personally endorsing the argument. Scholars enjoy vigorous deliberations and are always careful to treat fellow scholars with patience and good humor.

*Assignments:*

Scholars fully immerse themselves in assignments and never assume that an assignment is only legitimate if it will be covered on a test. Scholars are naturally curious and see every assignment as an opportunity to explore new issues, see old issues in new light, and hone their growing skills.

*Cheating:*

Scholars are very careful to give proper credit and maintain the highest standards of scholarly conduct. Thus, subject to university guidelines, any instance of cheating (including plagiarism) will be vigorously prosecuted.

*Attendance:*

Scholars always attend class barring serious injury, illness, or disaster. Scholars view class-time as rare and valuable for the thought it evokes and the opportunities it presents. Scholars arrive early for class and never leave class early without obtaining prior approval from the professor. Scholars who miss class are responsible for obtaining class-notes, doing the readings, and fully answering any exam questions derived from class discussion. Make-up reading quizzes will be provided upon request, although the question asked may not be the question chosen in class.

*Grading Formula:*
There are 1000 points possible as follows:

- Reading Quizzes: 25 points each
- Midterm Examination: 200 points
- Final Examination: 300 points

Total Points =

Sum of the best twenty reading quizzes + Midterm Examination + Final Examination

Course Grade is determined by the following scale:

- A: 900-1000
- B: 800 - 899
- C: 700 - 799
- D: 600 - 699
- F: 000 - 599

Additional Notes:

Any change in the above will be announced in class. No change will be made which would be detrimental to the student's grade.

Please note that this syllabus is not authoritative. That is, the syllabus on the course website supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it appears in its entirety on the course website, including the schedule of topics and readings. This syllabus is provided solely to meet the requirements of the Texas State Legislature and has no bearing whatsoever on how the course will in fact be run.

Any student missing a due date must provide a documented, acceptable reason according to university guidelines. Students with a proper excuse for missing a due date will be given a reasonable extension.

Students without a proper excuse for missing a due date will lose 20 points per day after the due date.

Required University Note to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at 825-5816 or visit their office in 116 Corpus Christi Hall.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on Academic Advising: Academic advisors are available to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. Each college has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisors. In our college the undergraduate advisor is Linda Miller (825-3466, Linda.miller@tamucc.edu). The graduate advisor is Rachelle Stanley (825-3466, Rachelle.stanley@tamucc.edu). Both are located on the second floor of Driftwood. Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information please call (361) 825-5931 or log on to
http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on the Grade Appeal Process: Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

By accepting this syllabus the student indicates that the syllabus has been read, all requirements are understood, and all policies are acknowledged.