

**Denison University**  
**FYS-102-20: Self-Knowledge**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00PM - 4:20 PM**  
**Room: Knapp Hall 203**

---

**Instructor:** Sergio A. Gallegos

**Office:** Knapp Hall 205D

**Phone and E-mail:** 740-587-5636 and gallegoss@denison.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30-5:30PM and by appointment.

**Course description and objectives:** Throughout history, philosophers from different traditions have emphasized the importance of knowing oneself for a variety of different reasons. But what does self-knowledge consist in? What is its nature? How far does it reach? Is it a particular capacity that only human beings have or is it something that we have in common with other creatures? Do we know ourselves in a distinct, privileged way or is our self-knowledge no different than the knowledge that we have of our physical and social environment? Can we really know ourselves at all considering that self-deception is, according to our best psychological theories, a rather common phenomenon? Assuming that it is possible, does self-knowledge make us morally better persons or does it lack any bearing on our moral status?

In this writing intensive course, we will address these and other related questions. Readings will include selections from a variety of classical and contemporary sources belonging to different philosophical traditions including Plato, the Dao De Jing, the Bhagavad Gita, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Nietzsche, Freud, Ryle, Sartre, Shoemaker and Alston.

**Readings:** There will be no textbook for the course given that most of the texts that we will discuss throughout the course are available either in the public domain or through the databases to which the library is subscribed. All of the readings will be available on Blackboard in the "Course Documents" section.

**Course Outline:**

- Unit 1: Introduction
  - Introduction to the course
  - Plato, The Apology
- Unit 2: Self-knowledge for Plato II
  - Plato, Charmides 153-164

- Plato, Charmides 164-176
- Unit 3: Self-knowledge in Stoicism
  - Epictetus, The Enchiridion and the Discourses, Book II, Chapter 11
  - Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, Book VIII
- Unit 4: Self-knowledge in Indian Philosophy
  - Selected fragments of the Rg Veda and the Shvetashvatara Upanishad
  - Selected fragments of the Bhagavad Gita
- Unit 5: Self Knowledge in Daoism
  - The Dao De Jing, Sections 1-37
  - Kwang Ze, Book II, Part I, Section II ‘The Adjustment of Controversies’
- Unit 6: Self-Knowledge in Medieval Philosophy
  - Augustine, On the Trinity, Book XV, Section 12, 21-22
  - Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Part I, Question 87, Articles 1-4
- Unit 7 Self-Knowledge for Descartes
  - René Descartes, Discourse on the Method, Parts 1-4
  - René Descartes, Meditations I and II
- Unit 8: Self-Knowledge for Locke
  - J. Locke, An Essay on Human Understanding, Book II, Chap. I-II
  - J. Locke, An Enquiry on Human Understanding, Book II, Chap XXVII
- Unit 9: Self-Knowledge for Hume
  - D. Hume, A Treatise on Human Nature, Book I, Part I, Sections 1-2
  - D. Hume, A Treatise on Human Nature, Book I, Part IV, Section 6
- Unit 10: Self-Knowledge for Nietzsche and Freud
  - F. Nietzsche, Selections of Beyond Good and Evil
  - S. Freud, ‘The Unconscious’ [ER]
- Unit 11: Self-Knowledge for Sartre
  - J. P. Sartre, Being and Nothingness, Part I, Chap. 2, Sections I-II
  - J.P. Sartre Being and Nothingness, Part II, Chap. 3, Section I

- Unit 12: Self-Knowledge for Ryle and Armstrong
  - G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind, Chapter VI, Sections 1-4
  - D. Armstrong, Is Introspective Knowledge Incorrigible?
- Unit 13: Self-knowledge for Shoemaker and McKinsey
  - S. Shoemaker, Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity, 'How is Self-Knowledge Possible'
  - M. McKinsey, Anti-Individualism and Privileged Access
- Unit 14: Self-knowledge for Alston and DeGrazia
  - W. Alston, Varieties of Privileged Access
  - D. DeGrazia, Self-Awareness in Animals

**Class Policy and Grading:** Class announcements will be made using Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check regularly Blackboard for updates and, in case you are absent, to be up to date with the topics discussed during the class you missed. In case I need to contact you, I will use your Denison e-mail address. If you do not have a Denison address, let me know as soon as possible which is the e-mail address where you can be reached. The best way to contact me is by writing to the email address listed above.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Unjustified absences and tardiness will be sanctioned (your final grade will drop half a letter if you are absent more than three times throughout the semester or if you are tardy on more than five occasions). Computers, tablets, cell phones, pagers and electronic devices are to be turned off mode during class time and any use of them during class time (including, but not limited to, typing, texting or talking) will result in sanctions.

Your final grade for the class will be based on class participation (10 % of your grade), four short papers (4-5 pages long) on topics that I will assign (each one will be worth 20 % of your grade) and a series of unannounced quizzes (that will amount to 10% of your grade). **THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUPS FOR QUIZZES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.** In light of this, I strongly recommend that you attend regularly and participate in class discussion. Late papers will be accepted but will be automatically subject to a penalty of a full letter grade per day.

Since your final grade will be mainly determined by your papers, I urge you to follow a series of guidelines that I will post on Blackboard. I also strongly encourage you to look at the advice given by the Writing Center on writing philosophy papers, which is available at:

<http://www.denison.edu/academics/writingcenter/philosophy.pdf>.

**Note:** Depending on the time of day (or night) that you contact me, it may take me up to 24 hours to get back to you. In light of this, if you want to schedule an appointment, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance to make sure that I am able to set up a convenient time to meet with you outside my regular office hours. I will be away during the semester on certain weekends for academic conferences and may experience limited internet access on these occasions. I will let you know in advance through Blackboard announcements of any academic travels.

**Disability:** Any student who feel he or she may need an accomodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss his or her specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support and Enrichment Center in 102 Doane to verify the need for reasonable accomodations based on documentation on file in that office.

**Academic Integrity:** Proposed and developed by Denison students, passed unanimously by DCGA and Denison's faculty, the Code of Academic Integrity requires that instructors notify the Associate Provost of cases of academic dishonesty, and it requires that cases be heard by the Academic Integrity Board. Further, the code makes students responsible for promoting a culture of integrity on campus and acting in instances in which integrity is violated.

Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted-not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. Students should ask their instructors for assistance in determining what sorts of materials and assistance are appropriate for assignments and for guidance in citing such materials clearly.

Note: I reserve the right to modify the syllabus. You will be notified of any changes through announcements in class and in Blackboard.

**Important Dates:**

First paper due date: September 13

Rewrite of Paper One date: September 27

Second Paper due date: October 11

Third Paper due date: November 15

Fourth Paper due date: December 14 at 6:30PM