

SYLLABUS
PHI 1010
Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Sergio Gallegos

Fall 2013

Office: Central Classroom 307J

Office Hours: M/W 16:00-17:15 and by appointment

Email: sgalle36@msudenver.edu

Office Phone: 303-556-5237

Required Texts:

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett Publishing)

G. Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (Hackett Publishing)

B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a first course in philosophy designed to introduce students to basic philosophical issues, primarily in the areas of metaphysics (the study of what there is) and epistemology (the study of human knowledge). This course covers fundamental questions such as “Is the soul immortal and, if so, how can we know this?” or “Are there material objects and, if so, how can we know this?” Important cultural achievements, in the form of original and complete works, will be emphasized. (The course satisfies the requirement for Arts and Letters – Level II.)

We will present and critically evaluate in this semester the responses of certain philosophers from different periods to two fundamental questions that are interrelated: “What does exist?” and “How can we know that it exists?” Initially, we will consider Plato’s views about the existence of the Forms and the immortality of the soul, paying particular attention to reconstruct and evaluate the arguments that he presents in his works *Meno* and *Phaedo* (in *Five Dialogues*). Subsequently, we will assess Berkeley’s arguments in the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* to support his thesis that there are no material objects. Finally, we will present and evaluate Bertrand Russell’s responses to the views of Plato and Berkeley in *The Problems of Philosophy*.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. a. Identify central philosophical topics and problems, especially those of a continuing nature.
b. Apply key terminology and technical vocabulary unique to philosophy, including biographical information and historical detail as relevant.
2. a. Criticize possible answers and proposed techniques for answering philosophical problems.
b. Suggest and consider alternate solutions that may involve either the reformulation or the rejection of the question under consideration.
3. a. Apply some theoretical considerations to either history or practice.
b. Frame and evaluate the conflicting claims of philosophy in contradistinction to art, science and religion.

Grading for the Course:

First paper: Due September 24 (25% of your grade)

Second paper: Due October 31 (25%)

Third paper: Due Final's Week (25%)

Critique of one of your peers' papers (details to be discussed): (20%)

Office meeting: (5%)

Note: You may rewrite one of your first two papers for a higher grade. The deadline is December 4.

Grades will be determined as follows:

A: 94-100

A-: 90-93

B+: 86-89

B: 84-85

B-: 80-83

C+: 76-79

C: 74-75

C-: 70-73

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

Classroom Behavior Policy:

Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will be identified, warned and, if it continues, penalized appropriately. Respectful and non-disruptive behavior includes:

*Coming to class on time and not leaving early; informing Dr. Gallegos if you must leave early

*Coming to class prepared; being prepared means carefully reading the material by the assigned date. **Even if you have difficulty with it, still engage with the material**

*Asking thoughtful questions based on lecture, readings, and discussion

*Talking during class only when called upon or during class discussion by raising your hand.

*Keeping class discussion on topic rather than talking about your neurotic boss, dog, boyfriend, or girlfriend

*Not eating in class, though it is acceptable to drink water or coffee

*Listening to Dr. Gallegos or your classmates, and not your iPods, etc.

*Putting your cell phone on vibrate, and if you forget, not answering it if it rings during class; **No texting!!!** (I have to put this in bold because some students will still do this despite this warning; **if you do this, you will be immediately asked to leave**)

*Not reading the newspaper, magazines, or other coursework

*Not behaving in ways that threaten or disparage other students or Dr. Gallegos

*Staying awake and paying attention during class

***If you are not prepared to do the above, stay home!**

Useful Policy Information

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to discuss their specific needs. Students will need to provide the instructor with a disability verification letter from the ACCESS Center (located in the Auraria Library) before appropriate accommodations can be made. Failure to notify the instructor in a timely fashion may hinder the college's ability to assist students to successfully complete the course.

Academic Dishonesty:

As students, faculty, staff and administrators of Metropolitan State University of Denver, it is our responsibility to uphold and maintain an academic environment that furthers scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge. We will not tolerate academic dishonesty. We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all activities related to our learning and scholarship. We will not plagiarize, fabricate information or data, cheat on tests or exams, steal academic material, or submit work to more than one class without full disclosure. **If you engage in any kind of academic dishonesty (even unwillingly) in an assignment, this will immediately result in a failing grade for the assignment in question and may bring further sanctions. If you have any doubts or questions regarding what kind of sources you may use for your assignments or how you should use them, I strongly encourage you to discuss them with me.**

Class Attendance on Religious Holidays

Students at Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) who, because of their sincerely held religious beliefs, are unable to attend classes, take examinations, participate in graded activities or submit graded assignments on particular days shall without penalty be excused from such classes and be given a meaningful opportunity to make up such examinations and graded activities or assignments provided that advance written notice that the student will be absent for religious reasons is given to the faculty members during the first two weeks of the semester.

Reading Schedule:

Philosophy can be very difficult reading. Take your time to slowly and carefully read the material by the following date (if this becomes too unwieldy, we'll modify it):

T, August 20: Course Introduction

Th, 22: Euthyphro (to the end of 9D)

T, 27: Finish Euthyphro

Th, 29: Meno (to the end 81e)

T, September 3: Meno (to 90b)

Th, 5: Finish Meno

T, 10: Phaedo (to 76c); Topics for first paper handed out

Th, 12: Phaedo (to 97b);

T, 17: Review: "How to Write A Philosophy Paper"

Th, 19: Finish Phaedo

T, 24: First paper due. First Dialogue (7-24)

Th, 26: First Dialogue (24-32)

T, October 1: Finish First Dialogue (32-42)

Th, 3: Second Dialogue (43-50)

T, 8: Second Dialogue (50-61)

Th, 10: Review: "How to critique a Philosophy Paper"
T, 15: Third Dialogue (61-68)
Th, 18: Third Dialogue (69-74); Topics for second paper handed out
T, 22: Third Dialogue (75-82)
Th, 24: Third Dialogue (83-88), Critique of peer's paper due
T, 29: Third Dialogue (89-94)
Th, 31: Second Paper 2 due; "Appearance and Reality"
T, November 5: "The Existence of matter"
Th, 7: "The Nature of matter"
T, 12: "Knowledge by acquaintance and Knowledge by description"
Th, 14: "On induction"
T, 19: "On our knowledge of General Principles", Topics for third paper handed out
Th, 21: "The World of Universals"
T, 26: Thanksgiving Break, No Class
Th, 28: No Class
T, December 3: "On our knowledge of Universals"
Th, 5: "On intuitive knowledge"
Finals week: Third paper due