



Introduction to Moral & Political Philosophy

Philosophy 101, Autumn 2006

Monday & Thursday, 1:10-2:25 | Griffin Hall Room 1

Joe Cruz, Associate Professor of Philosophy
& Chair, Cognitive Science Program

Research and teaching assistant: Ms. Anna Edmonds

FROM THE COURSE CATALOG

Throughout the history of Western philosophy, there have been debates concerning how human beings should live: What should we do both with our lives as wholes and in specific problematic situations? The debates have addressed us both as individuals and as members of political communities. This course aims to aid us in responding to these debates, and in living our lives, on the basis of reasoned conclusions rather than from unrecognized presuppositions. The course concentrates on Plato's *Republic*, the most influential ethical and political text within Western philosophy, but we assess the *Republic* in light of elaborations and criticisms that have developed over the past 2500 years, in works by Aristotle, Kant, and Mill.

This is a writing intensive course.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Available at Water Street Books)

Kant, I. (1993) *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (J.W. Ellington, trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett. (Original work published 1785)

Mill, J.S. (2002) *Utilitarianism* (G. Sher, ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett. (Original work published 1861)

Nietzsche, F. (1998) *On the Genealogy of Morality* (M. Clark and A. Swensen, trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett. (Original work published 1887)

Plato (1992) *Republic* (G.M.A. Grube, trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett (Original work ~390 B.C.E.)

Note on editions: I have selected editions that, in my view, strike an appropriate balance between scholarly usefulness and expense. If you do not already have copies of these texts, it would be best for you to acquire the above versions. On the other hand, if you already have some of these works, feel welcome to use the edition that you have. In class discussion we will work around differences in pagination and translation.

Additional required material for the course will be available electronically through links found in the schedule of readings, below.

GRADING

Grading on all writing assignments will be anonymous. Please turn in your papers with only your Williams ID number on it in some unobtrusive place.

Anonymous grading is one way of assuring that the collegiality of our interactions does not cloud my assessment of your work. Grading blindly is not a perfect mechanism for this purpose. One crucial disadvantage to anonymous grading is that the instructor will not know when your work is systematically inadequate and will not approach you with concerns about your writing. As a result, there is an additional burden of maturity and responsibility on your shoulders. You must elect to visit office hours, to discuss your work with the teaching assistant, and to seek out informal opportunities to improve your writing.

The desire to preserve the integrity of the anonymous grading system should never prevent you from seeking advice on assignments for this course. You are encouraged to speak with me with your work in hand. Naturally this will reveal facts of authorship, and may give the instructor some insight into your style and interests. Still, your success in meeting the challenges of this course should always be our first concern.

1. *Essay assignments*

For this course you will write FOUR essays, 5-6 pages each (7 maximum, strictly enforced).

The point of these assignments is to have you present a well developed and carefully argued thesis on topics we have covered. THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM MERELY GIVING YOUR OPINION OR CONFESSING YOUR EXPERIENCES. You must give reasons for why the reader should agree with you.

I have prepared an on-line [writing tutor for introductory philosophical essays](#). Please put aside a couple of hours to go through it fairly early in the semester.

Essays should be typewritten, double spaced in a 12 point font with 1 inch margins. No title page. Writing assignments should be turned in by the beginning of class on the dates they are due. You may turn in your assignments in advance. Late papers will not be accepted.

Written work must reflect original thoughts and ideas.

The essays for this course are not research papers. You will not be expected to consult outside sources for your work. Any direct quotations or paraphrased material from outside sources must be credited and footnoted. Violation of this constitutes plagiarism.

If you have questions about how the honor code applies to written work, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Each paper is worth 22.5% of your final grade.

2. Participation

Discussion is essential to the vitality of the class, and is a crucial component of philosophical engagement. Thoughtful participation in class discussion is also one indicator that you are reading carefully. Thus, the instructor reserves the privilege of treating participation as constituting *10% of the final grade*.

Many students are concerned with this aspect of the classroom dynamic, but it should not be a source of anxiety. Keep in mind that your first priority is reading the assignments carefully and working diligently on the writing for the course. Thoughtful, honest, and respectful participation derives from these. Every effort will be made to ensure that the class is a welcoming forum for sharing serious ideas. In addition, 'participation' is more inclusive than many students realize. Being attentive and engaged in class, asking clarificatory questions, and discussing aspects of the course with the instructor during office hours all fall under this heading.

CLASS RESOURCES

Office Hours - The instructor is available for office meetings each week in Harper House 9. Students may visit individually or in groups. You do not need to have a specific assignment or difficulty in mind in order to come to my office. Wide-ranging conversations about the class, about philosophy, or about intellectual inquiry at Williams are very welcome. Office hours are by appointment or during the following open-door times:

Mondays	2:30-4pm
Wednesdays	11 am-Noon
Thursdays	11 am-Noon, 2:30-4pm

Philosophy Table - The instructor will meet informally with students over lunch in the Dodd House Dining Hall before class (meet in the entryway at noon) to discuss issues in philosophy. These may be topics that arise in seminar, but need not be. We may occasionally be joined by other Williams faculty, and you are welcome to invite friends who are not in the class.

Teaching Assistant - Anna Edmonds will be available to talk informally about the readings, the class discussion, and the paper assignments. Please email her for meeting times.

Philosophy Study Hall in Schow - Several nights before each essay is due the instructor and teaching assistant will meet to talk about paper ideas and to discuss philosophy.

These OPTIONAL sessions will typically go from 9pm to about midnight. Feel welcome to bring your notes, books, and laptop.

Instant Messaging - The instructor will occasionally be available via AIM. You may check anytime, but especially from 11pm to 1am on Sunday through Thursday nights. My screen name is profjcruz.

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related classroom accommodations for this course are encouraged to set up an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible and to contact the Dean's Office (at extension 4262) to better insure that accommodations are provided in a timely manner.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

All readings are to be done in advance of the class meeting. Background material and central readings are required, and you are responsible for both. We will concentrate class time on the central readings.

September 7	Discussion:	On the possibility of objective morality and justice
	Background:	None
	Readings:	None
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11	Discussion:	Piousness and goodness: Plato
	Background:	<u>Plato</u> entry (first three sections) in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
	Readings:	Plato, <u>Euthyphro</u> (print out and read entire)
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14	Discussion:	Metaphysical realism about ethics: Plato
	Background:	None
	Readings:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I
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18	Discussion:	Metaphysical realism about ethics: Plato
	Background:	None
	Readings:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book II
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21	Discussion:	Metaphysical realism about ethics: Plato
	Background:	You may wish to begin looking at the <u>writing tutor</u> in preparation for your first essay
	Readings:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book III
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25	Discussion:	Metaphysical realism about ethics: Plato
	Background:	You may wish to continue looking at the <u>writing tutor</u> in preparation for your first essay
	Readings:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books IV & V

- 28 Discussion: Metaphysical realism about ethics: Plato
Background: You may wish to continue looking at the writing tutor in preparation for your first essay
Readings: Plato, *Republic*, Books VI & VII

STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9pm-Midnight

Sunday

October 1 STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9pm-Midnight

- October 2 Discussion: Appraisal of the *Republic*
Background: None
Readings: Re-read Book VII

ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

- 5 Discussion: Contractarianism: Hobbes
Background: Hobbes entry (first three sections) in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Readings: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction, Chapters 5 & 6, Chapters 13, 14, & 15 (print out and read)
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9 Reading period, no class

12 Professor is away giving lecture, no class

- 16 Discussion: Contractarianism: Hobbes
Background: None
Readings: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21 (print out and read)
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- 19 Discussion: Moral sentiments: Hume
Background: Hume entry in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Introduction
Readings: Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, sections 3, 4 & 5, and Book III, Part I, sections 1 & 2 (print out and read)
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- 23 Discussion: Moral sentiments: Hume
Background: None
Readings: Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part II, sections 1, 2 & 7 (print out and read)
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- 26 Discussion: Moral sentiments: Hume

Background: None
Readings: Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part III, sections 1, 2, 3 & 6 (print out and read entire)

STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9pm-Midnight

Sunday

29 STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9pm-Midnight

30 Discussion: Reason, sentiment, and morality
Background: Kant biographical entry in QuoteMonk
Professor Palmquist's Glossary of Kant's Technical Terms (print out and consult as necessary)
Readings: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface & First Section

ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

November Discussion: Morality in Reason: Kant
2 Background: None
Readings: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section, first half (pp. 19-32 in Ellington edition)

6 Discussion: Morality in Reason: Kant
Background: None
Readings: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section, second half (pp. 32-48 in Ellington edition)

9 Discussion: Morality in Reason: Kant
Background: None
Readings: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Third Section

13 Discussion: Reason, sentiment, and morality reprise
Background: Mill's Life and Writings entry from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Readings: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter I

16 Discussion: Utilitarianism: Mill
Background: None
Readings: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapters II & III

Sunday

19 STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9pm-Midnight

20 Discussion: Utilitarianism: Mill
Background: None
Readings: Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapters IV & V

STUDY HALL IN SCHOW GROUP STUDY ROOM 9:30pm-Midnight

27 Discussion: Nihilism: Nietzsche
Background: Nietzsche [life entry](#) in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
Readings: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Preface

ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

30 Discussion: Nihilism: Nietzsche
Background: None
Readings: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, First Treatise

December Discussion: Nihilism: Nietzsche
4 Background: None
Readings: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Second Treatise

7 Discussion: Nihilism: Nietzsche
Background: None
Readings: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Third Treatise

ESSAY DUE ON December 15th at
5:00pm (email as an attachment without
your name on the file)