

## **Philosophy 1: The Examined Life--Introduction to Philosophy**

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**Office Hours: MWF 12:00-2:00 and by appointment**

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1. Course description: Philosophy has gotten a bad rap, thanks in part to the throwing-together of sincere, but flaky texts in self-help and mysticism with outright frauds in the same fields at the philosophy rack in the typical mall bookstore. Philosophy can be an important tool for self-help, and some philosophers are mystics, but with philosophy as with other fields of inquiry one must avoid confusing the popular stereotype with reality.

No one is forced to become a mystic. But in a very real sense, I think, we are all forced to do philosophy, whether we want to or not, by questions we all face just by virtue of being alive. Even many of the most vertiginous flights of philosophical abstraction are simply the a natural consequence of treating these questions with the seriousness they deserve. Since we all have no choice but to be philosophers, it pays to embrace the inevitable, and to learn what tools are available for dealing with philosophical problems. This course might thus have been title, "The inevitability of philosophy." Its actual title, "The Examined Life," comes from a Socratic dictum that itself merits closer scrutiny.

2. Readings: The following items are (or will soon be) available for sale at the University Bookstore:

Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Classics of Western Philosophy*

Voltaire, *Candide*.

Rudy Rucker, *Software*.

Paul Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*

Jean-Jaques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Plato, *Republic*

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

I have made every effort to find cheap editions providing good value for money. Please buy all of them, if possible. In addition, you may use the on-line *Hypertext History of Philosophy* now being developed at:

<http://guava.phil.lehigh.edu/hhp>

3. Evaluation: There will be three papers and a take-home final exam. The first two papers (three to five pages in length) are each worth 25 points. The third paper (four to six pages in length) is worth 30 points. The take-home final is worth 15 points. Contributions to the class in the form of questions or comments made either in class or on-line are worth up to an additional

10 points, and so the maximum possible score is 105. Course grades will be assigned on a 100-point scale. Of the 10 points awarded for contributions, each student will receive five by default. This number will be adjusted upward with the value of contributions, or downward for notably poor attendance.

Late papers will be penalized three points per day late. I do not plan to take regular attendance, but I do expect you to be in class, regardless of other commitments you may have. I may do attendance spot-checks.

Much as it pains me, since I know the vast majority of students are honest, hard-working people, I feel obliged to say something here about plagiarism. Recent years have seen a rash of plagiarism cases in Philosophy 1, and so my colleagues and I are especially alert to the problem. Briefly, plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own. A more complete discussion of plagiarism may be found in the *Lehigh Student Handbook* under the heading "Academic Dishonesty." As far as this course is concerned, be aware that the *minimum* sanction to be imposed on any student committing plagiarism will be a failing grade for the course. In other words, if a student plagiarizes on one assignment, even an assignment worth only 25% of his or her grade, that assignment will be treated as worth 100% of the grade and awarded 0 points; no other course work will be taken into account, and the student will receive an F. In addition, a report will be made to the Dean of Students for possible subsequent disciplinary action.

One final note: I like this course in part because no one is required to take it. It's an elective for everyone, as it should be. Fun and exciting as philosophy is, however, it's also serious business. The issues can be very hard, and the reading schedule is *quite* demanding. Experience has shown that it *is* possible to fail this course. Please stay on your toes.

4. Schedule of Readings and Assignments: All page numbers refer to Cahn, Classics of Western Philosophy, except where otherwise noted. Please do the readings for each class meeting prior to class.

Week of:

Readings and Assignments:

### **Introduction**

Aug. 25

Confucius, "Adult Education" (handout); Plato, Euthyphro (28).

### **How should I live?**

Aug. 31

Plato, Apology, Crito (41-66).

Sep. 7

Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, excerpt, (274-290);

	Thomast Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u> XIII-XV(489-505)
Sep. 14	<u>Leviathan</u> (continued); Rousseau, <u>The Social Contract</u> , Parts I-II.
Sep. 21	Kant, <u>Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals</u> , Preface, Section I (1058-1070); John Stuart Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u> (1127-1155).
<b>What must I live with?</b>	
Sep. 28	<b>Monday, Sep. 28: First paper due!</b> Plato, <u>Phaedo</u> , Anselm, <u>Proslogion</u> I-V (375-381)
Oct. 5	Aquinas, <u>Summa Theologica</u> , Questions 1-2 (407-426); Leibniz, <u>Discourse on Metaphysics</u> (599-630).
Oct. 12	Monday, October 12: No class (Pacing Break). David Hume, <u>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</u> , Parts I, II, V, IX, X, XI.
Oct. 19	Voltaire, <u>Candide</u> . <b>Friday, Oct. 23: Second paper due!</b>
<b>What can I know?</b>	
Oct. 26	René Descartes, <u>Meditations</u> I-III (427-454), George Berkeley, <u>Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous</u> (765)
Nov. 2	David Hume, <u>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</u> , Ch. 1-5 (829-858).
<b>What am I?</b>	
Nov. 9	Paul Churchland, <u>Matter and Consciousness</u> , Ch. 1-4.
Nov. 16	Rudy Rucker, <u>Software</u> .

## Conclusion

Nov. 23

Plato, Republic

Nov. 30

Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, pp. 1-65.

**Friday, Dec. 4: Third paper due! Take-home finals will be passed out the last day of class, and will be due at the Philosophy Building at 12:00 noon, Wednesday, December 9.**

That's it! Have a great break!