

Introduction to Philosophy, Honors: Spring 2018
PHIL121: 3 credit hours

Professor: Shanti Chu

Office Hours: Posted on BB

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Office: B279

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Required Texts:

Descartes *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*: Hackett Publishing, Fourth Edition, 978-0872204201

Siddhartha / The Dhammapada (New Directions Books), 0811218503

Sartre *Existentialism is a Humanism*: Yale University Press 0300115466

West, *Race Matters*: Random House 978-0-679749-86-8

For the texts that are provided as PDFs you are required to print them out and bring them to class. Part of being prepared for class means that you need to bring the reading to class. If you don't have the reading with you your participation grade will be negatively affected.

Course Description:

This course discusses the ideas of major philosophers concerning questions of human knowledge, logic, moral values, political and social philosophy, and religious beliefs. Attempts are made to get students to think out their own answers to these questions.

Course Outcomes: In this course, we will explore philosophical issues focused on human identity, human nature, and the human condition at the intersections of contemporary social justice. We will explore these issues through utilizing a wide variety of texts ranging from more traditional philosophical texts such as Plato's *Phaedo* and Descartes *Meditations* which focus on what is reality and truth to more contemporary texts that directly challenge these traditional texts such as Serrano's "Transwoman Manifesto" and West's *Race Matters*, which analyze gender, sex, and race and its impacts upon people from multiple backgrounds and embodiments. We are also exploring Eastern Philosophy and the intersections between Western and Eastern Philosophy by exploring and reading Buddhism's foundational text, *The Dhammapada*. By connecting your own lived experience with the texts we read, the concepts we discuss and the questions we explore will prove to be very insightful for you and all of your peers.

Philosophy is a discipline that is explicitly connected to your own lived experience rather than being separated from it. Philosophy can also illustrate our limitations such as our limited perspectives, which can be painful, but ultimately challenge us to become more critical and open-minded thinkers. **If you feel challenged, frustrated, etc. you are on the right track to becoming a more critical thinker. Philosophical readings are meant to be read multiple times in order to be truly understood.**

Questions that this course will help you delve into are: What does it mean to know and be wise? Is there a human nature or are we mainly socialized to exist in a certain fashion? What is the difference between the mind and the soul and can they work together to help us know? What does it mean to have an identity or a sense of self? What is equality? What is gender and how

does it impact everyone? What is race and how does it impact everyone? How can we create a more just society?

As honors students you are expected to take more of an active, engaged role with your learning. This course will require consistent, active engagement from you so it can be more discussion oriented. If you are struggling with a concept, it is your responsibility to come to my office hours and discuss it with me in order to be a truly active participant in the classroom.

While these works are challenging, they are accessible for individuals who have not had much experience with reading philosophical works, which is why this will be a challenging, but interesting and relevant course. **It is important to remember that reading philosophy and writing philosophy papers are challenging and that they can be done effectively only if you are committed to the reading and genuinely interested in the work/questions that the readings are approaching.** I am definitely here as a resource so please ask me questions and send me emails, etc. because I am here to help you.

Honors Program:

Welcome to the Honors Section of PHI 121: Introduction to Philosophy. You are each eligible to receive a scholarship of \$50 a credit hour - which will be awarded eight to 10 weeks into the semester. If you withdraw from the class, or receive a grade lower of "B," then you will lose the scholarship. In order to remain in the program, you need to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA and receive no less than a "B" in each of your honors sections. Please contact Nick Schevera in B265 or at 847-543-2959 if you have any questions about this process.

Course Objectives:

- Students will develop critical thinking skills
- Students will be able to logically support a position
- Students will apply philosophical concepts to social justice issues and their own lived experience
- Students will understand the practical importance of philosophy and use it to understand themselves, their communities, and their world
- Students will become aware of their own perspective and biases when interpreting knowledge and experience

Teaching Methodology: This course will be a mixture of interactive lecture and discussion involving small group work and larger group work. Reading assignments and writing assignments will be completed outside of the classroom.

Attendance Policy:

- You are allowed three absences throughout the semester without it affecting your grade. **I do not need to know the reason for your absence and all will be weighed equally. (A total of five absences will result in a 0% for your attendance/participation grade.) If you have more than eight absences, your overall final grade will be progressively lowered by ten percentage points and will automatically have a C or lower for your participation grade.**
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes/information that you missed from another student. You may also come to office hours to discuss the material.

Attendance does not only mean being physically present, but also mentally present, no cell phones, laptops, i-objects, etc. please come prepared with the text, no sleeping. If you are using your cell phone, laptop, sleeping, etc. (unless otherwise instructed) you will be asked to leave and will have a zero for participation that week. You are also expected to be on-time for class and to stay for the whole class. Failure to do so will result in being marked absent for the day. It is extremely disrespectful and rude to do any of the above activities and shows a lack of effort and participation on your behalf. You need to schedule appointments around your classes. Participation includes engagement in class discussions and coming prepared to answer questions during lecture. The nature of this class is discussion, which is why participation is very important.

- **It is the policy of our classroom to turn off all electronic forms of communication and entertainment, e.g., cell phones and notebook computers, unless specifically directed otherwise. If you cannot abide by that then you will be asked to leave as it is disrespectful, disruptive and rude.**

Method of Evaluation: Grades are calculated out of the total number of points in this course: 305 points total

Participation: Out of 70 points (average of your weekly participation points), attendance (not only being physically present, but also mentally present, no cell phones, laptops, please come prepared, no sleeping). **If you are using your cell phone, laptop, sleeping, etc. you will be asked to leave and will have a zero for participation that week. It is extremely disrespectful and rude to do any of the above activities and shows a lack of effort and participation on your behalf. If you are late or are not present for the whole class (for example: leave class early, come to class late), your participation grade will fall as you will be marked absent. It is your responsibility to schedule things around your classes instead of during your classes.** Participation includes engagement in class discussions and coming prepared to answer questions during lecture. This also includes BRINGING THE READING TO CLASS EVERYDAY. It is your responsibility to be prepared for the discussions so you can participate sufficiently. Failure to participate will lead to a zero in participation for the week.

- Your participation grade is a composite of the following criteria combined with attendance. **An A is basically consistent participation in all 3 of these categories:**
 - o Active participation in interactive lecture: Response to questions asked by instructor, actively ask questions as well/relate to your own lives.
 - o Active participation in small group discussions: Dialogue/discussion with group participants, actively look for central quotes in the text to answer discussion questions.
 - o Active participation in large group discussions/debates: Dialogue/discussion with peers, response to follow-up questions asked, reference to specific quotes in the text.

Reading Comprehension Responses: There will be 8 reading comprehension responses due on the assigned reading material. You will choose one of the guided reading questions provided and submit a 1-paragraph response to it (typed) and submit it for the next class. Hard copies need to be submitted. If there is an issue with the printer, please email it to me before class to ensure that late points will not be taken off. These will be 5 points each, 40 points total.

Papers: You will have 3 required unit papers (at least 2 pages typed, 12 point font, times new roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins maximum) worth 25 points each, 75 points total - These

will respond to a question that I post on Blackboard (“assignments”) and must include textual references/citations (specific quotes from the text with page numbers that you explain) in order to get any type of credit. The due dates for these papers are listed in the schedule.

Presentation: (50 points) You will be responsible for presenting on a reading of your choice (from the syllabus) to the rest of the class. The presentation needs to include a visual (Powerpoint, Prezi, handout, video, blog, etc.). You will also be responsible for leading the discussion. You will receive more specific instructions for this.

Final Paper: Out of 70 points, one analysis paper (70 points total, 5-6 pages), instructions/directions will be given during the appropriate time. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to understand, explain, and relate the different philosophical frameworks to one another where you can identify similarities and differences across traditions.

Criteria and Process for Determining Final Grades:

I calculate your final grades based off of the number of points you earned and divide that by 305 points. Here are the minimum points needed for each grade: Out of 305 points

A (90-100%): 275

B (80-89%): 244

C (70-79%): 214

D (60-69%): 183

F (Below 60%): Anything below 183 points

Late Work: Each assignment must be turned in on the day that the paper is due. I will not accept late papers unless there are special circumstances that need to be discussed with me **before the assignment is due.**

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Whenever you quote or paraphrase from a book, the internet, a lecture, or other source, you must cite that source and use quotes if appropriate. Please review the College’s Academic Honesty Policy.

Note on Plagiarism: I am very strict about plagiarism and **will not accept it.** I use SafeAssign for every assignment submitted so you need to be aware of your responsibilities regarding appropriately citing sources you are using. **Even if you are using a website to help you understand the material and you end up using an idea from the website without citing it, you are plagiarizing.** If you are having trouble understanding the material, reread the material, come to my office hours, and engage with the text more rather than looking at a misinformed website online and copying from it without citing it. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on the assignment, which can lead to failing the class depending on the severity of plagiarism and the assignment.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class.

Plagiarism includes:

1. Downloading papers from the web.
2. Copying parts of web pages into your paper.
3. Quoting from a book or article without citation.
4. Paraphrasing an author’s work without credit.
5. Taking someone else’s ideas and claiming them as your own.

If you are unclear about how to cite sources see me. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism.

If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the paper and the class and the incident will be added to your permanent CLC record.

Disability and Mental Wellness: If you are a student with a documented disability and may need academic accommodations such as extended time for exams and/or an in-class note taker, please present documentation to the Office for Students with Disabilities in L112 at the Grayslake campus. To schedule an appointment, please call: voice (847) 543-2055, TTY 223-0134. If you have already contacted the Office for Students with Disabilities and have completed the Instructor Notification Form, please schedule a time to meet with me and discuss your needs.

The College of Lake County Counseling Office offers professional counseling for students who are in crisis or are having personal problems, which as a result may affect their academic and career goals. The services of professional counselors are available at three locations on an appointment or drop-in basis.

Women's Center, LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Multicultural Resource Center, and Veterans Affairs: Stop by B113 (The Student Resource Center) Monday-Friday to check out any of these resources/offices. For more information on general student services, please contact me at schu@clcillinois.edu and I can direct you to the correct people.

Course Schedule: This is a tentative schedule, there are likely to be some changes since readings may take more or less time than expected. Changes made will be announced in class or online. The text is due by the date it is listed by. It is your responsibility to keep up with the due dates.

Monday, January 22nd: Introduction to course, What is Philosophy? Life goals?

Wednesday, January 24th: Ancient Greece: Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (PDF)

Monday, January 29th: *Phaedo*

Wednesday, January 31st: Finish *Phaedo* and start **Buddhism**

Monday, February 5th: Buddhism: *Dhammapada* ch.1-6

Wednesday, February 7th: *Dhammapada* ch.7-13

Monday, February 12th: *Dhammapada* ch.14-20

Wednesday, February 14th: *Dhammapada* Discussion ch. 21-26

Monday, February 19th: Cartesian Philosophy: Rene Descartes *Meditations* 1-2

Wednesday, February 21st: *Meditations* 3-4

Monday, February 26th: *Meditations* 5-6

Wednesday, February 28th: *Meditations* Discussion, **Descartes Paper Due**

Monday, March 5th: Marxism: Marx Dialectics activity, Karl Marx "Estranged Labor" p.58-68

Wednesday, March 7th: Continued "Estranged Labor" and "Thesis on Feuerbach" p.98-101

Monday, March 12th: Marx "Communist Manifesto" p.157-176 discussion and Communist Manifesto

Wednesday, March 14th: Communism Discussion

Monday, March 19th-Wednesday, March 21st: Spring Break, No Classes

Monday, March 26th: Jean Paul Sartre *Existentialism is a Humanism*, p.17-39

Wednesday, March 28th: Sartre *Existentialism is a Humanism* cont., **Marxism Paper Due**

Monday, April 2nd: *Existentialism is a Humanism* p.40-72

Wednesday, April 4th: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

Monday, April 9th: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* Cont. and Discussion,

Wednesday, April 11th: Feminist Theory/Queer Theory: Intro to Feminism and Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* Introduction (PDF)

Monday April 16th: *The Second Sex* Cont./ Bring a song to class about gender/sexuality

Wednesday, April 18th: Julia Serrano's *The Whipping Girl: Selected Readings* (PDF),

Existentialist Feminist Theory Paper Due

Monday, April 23rd: Critical Race Theory: Cornel West's *Race Matter*: Preface, Introduction, and Ch.1, Sartre/De Beauvoir **Paper Due**

Wednesday, April 25th: *Race Matters* ch.5-7

Monday, April 30th: *Race Matters* ch. 8 and Epilogue

Wednesday, May 2nd: Closing Discussion and Catch-up Day

Monday, May 7th: 12pm-1:50pm, Final Presentations - there is no Final Exam.