

SYLLABUS

P100 Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2013

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office hours: Thursday 3-5 and by appointment

Course description:

In the 1600s and 1700s, many of the best educated people in Europe made a radical and self-conscious break with the intellectual heritage of ancient and medieval systems of thought—a break that has forever transformed how people understand the world and their place in it, and that continues to shape life and thought today in profound ways. In this course we will reconstruct the ancient philosophical system that was on the chopping block in the 1600s and 1700s and then examine in detail the ways that system was dismantled and the alternatives that were put in its place. Along the way we'll encounter the work of some of the most powerful thinkers in history.

Course objectives:

- familiarity with Aristotelian thought as an example of a systematic philosophical worldview
- exposure to a number of the most important thinkers in the Western intellectual tradition: Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes, David Hume, Thomas Reid and several others
- exposure to the three branches of philosophical inquiry: Metaphysics, Epistemology and Ethics
- introduction to the history of western philosophy, through the lens of one particular thread: the consolidation, rejection and rehabilitation of the Aristotelian tradition

Texts:

Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*.

(All other readings available under 'resources' tab on OnCourse.)

Course requirements:

Regular attendance

20% Reading quizzes (lowest two grades dropped)

20% First exam

20% Second exam

40% Final exam

Policy on missed quizzes/exams:

Exams cannot be taken late, apart from an emergency circumstance, later documented. If you have a schedule conflict, you may take an exam earlier than scheduled. However, you must notify me at least ten days in advance to arrange for an alternate day/time.

Quizzes can be excused in cases of travel with an IU athletic team or prolonged hospitalization, if properly documented.

Plagiarism/cheating on quizzes or exams will result in a failing grade in the course.
(Bear in mind: we catch cheaters often and easily.)

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE

Part I: The Aristotelian System

Or, You've Got a Philosophical Question? I've Got a Teleological Answer

1. The Ancient Background

1/7

1/9

1/11 Plato: Euthyphro

1/14 Plato: Apology, 17a-28b

1/16 Plato: Apology, 28b-42

1/18 Plato: Crito

1/21 NO CLASS (MLK day)

1/23 Plato: Phaedo

2. The Aristotelian System

1/25 Aristotle: Physics, Book II Parts 1&3

1/28 Aristotle: Physics, Book II Parts 7&8 1-2, 4, 7

1/30

2/1 Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book I Parts

2/4 Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, Book II Parts 1&6; Book X chapters 6&7

2/6

2/8 Aquinas: Summa Contra Gentiles, Book III Chapters 3, 16, 17, 19, 20, 25

2/11

2/13 FIRST EXAM

2/15 NO CLASS

Part II: The Mechanical Philosophy and the Threat of Skepticism

Or, The Universe is Like a Machine, so the Mind Must Be Like a Machine

3. The Rise of the Mechanical Philosophy

2/18 Descartes: *Meditations*, "First Meditation"

2/20 Descartes: *Meditations*, "Second Meditation"

2/22 Descartes: *Meditations*, "Third Meditation" [1st half]

- 2/25 Descartes: *Meditations*, "Third Meditation" [2nd half]
 2/27 Descartes: *Meditations*, "Sixth Meditation"
 3/1
 3/4 Newton: *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, pp. 416-17, 943
 3/6

4. The Mechanical Philosophy and the Threat of Skepticism

- 3/8 Hume: Enquiry, §2&3
 3/11 NO CLASS (Spring Break)
 3/13 NO CLASS (Spring Break)
 3/15 NO CLASS (Spring Break)
 3/18 Hume: Enquiry, §4
 3/20 Hume: Enquiry, §5 Part I
 3/22 Hume: Enquiry, §7 Part I
 3/25 Hume: Enquiry, §7 Part II
 3/27
 3/29 Reid: Selections, pp. 1-3
 4/1 Reid: Selections, pp. 4-8
 4/3
 4/5 SECOND EXAM

Part III: Modernity and the Meaning of Life

Or, There is No Purpose to Human Existence, But We Should Obey the Rules Anyway

5. Modernity and the Meaning of Life

- 4/8 Hobbes: *Leviathan*, Chapter 13 pp. 56-59
 4/10
 4/12 MacIntyre: *After Virtue*, pp. 51-55
 4/15 Mackie: *The Subjectivity of Value*
 4/17
 4/19 Nussbaum: "Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach", sections 1-4
 4/22 Nussbaum: "Non-relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach", sections 5-8
 4/24 Taylor: "The Meaning of Life"
 4/26
 5/1 FINAL EXAM 8:00-10:00