

**Introduction to Philosophy
Carnegie Mellon University
Spring 2017**

Instructor: Aidan Kestigian
Office: Doherty Hall 4301 B
Email: akestigian@cmu.edu
Office hours: Monday 12:30-2:30, and by appointment

Course number: 80-100
Course location: Scaife Hall 208
Time: MWF 11:30 – 12:20 a.m.

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the study of philosophy. Throughout the semester, we will ask questions surrounding the nature of the mind, knowledge, and identity, and discuss the implications of those questions for our interpersonal relationships and for our social and political communities. The course uses classical and contemporary philosophical texts, case studies, and empirical evidence to consider these questions.

Philosophical inquiry is pursued via writing, speaking, and reading. Throughout this course, students will be asked to read primary source texts, write short responses, and participate in classroom discussions. Written work will typically involve a summary of one or more philosophers' arguments, followed by an original critique or defense of those arguments. No philosophical background is required for this class. However, if you are having difficulty with the readings or essays, please make an appointment to meet with the instructor.

Text:

There is no required text. All readings will be available on the Blackboard site.

Learning Expectations

By the end of this course, students should have a general understanding of several core philosophical positions, and be able to apply those positions to contemporary global issues. In particular, students should be able to:

- Read philosophical articles critically, and be able to summarize the main points of those articles in a classroom discussion.
- Generate thoughtful discussion questions in response to readings.
- Summarize the theories discussed in class in both short blog posts and medium-length essays.
- Explain how the theories discussed in class would apply to contemporary problems.
- Read and respond to peers' work by critiquing or providing further justification for their peers' claims.
- Review one's own work in light of instructor feedback and explain how one can improve essay and blog content and writing style in future work in a short response piece.

Grading

Discussion Questions & Reflections 10%
Participation & Attendance 10%

Blog Posts

Primary Blog Posts 20%
Response Blog Posts 15%
Conclusion Blog Posts 5%
Self-Assessments 5%

Final Paper

Paper Draft 10%
Paper 25%

Participation & Attendance

Students will be evaluated on their preparedness for the day's discussion. In order to be successful, a student must have completed the reading and come prepared with any questions or comments.

Attendance is required for this course and will be recorded each class. Each student is allowed two "freebies." Every class missed after the first two will result in a five-point deduction from your participation grade. Five or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. You can improve your participation & attendance grade by taking advantage of office hours. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what notes or assignments you missed. I am willing to excuse additional absences due to illness or job events (job fairs, interviews, etc.), but only if I am told about the absence *before* the missed class.

The instructor will give each student a participation grade every three weeks. Those grades will be averaged to give the student's initial participation grade. That initial grade, minus any deductions for absences, will be the student's final participation and attendance grade.

Course Assignments

Readings, Discussion Questions, and Short Reflections

Throughout the semester, you will be charged with reading various texts outside of class. We will discuss those texts together in class. Throughout the semester there are various dates on which you must submit *two discussion questions* the night before class. On other days, you will be asked to write a reflection on the reading or on a class activity. **These questions and reflections are due at 8:00 a.m. on the Blackboard site the morning before class listed on the syllabus unless otherwise noted.** Your questions should note something you did not understand from the reading, or raise a concern you had in light of what you read (such as a criticism, or a clarification question). The reflections will have specific instructions regarding content, but will be about a paragraph each.

Discussion Questions Assessment

Your discussion questions will be graded as follows:

- 10/10 pts- Two questions submitted that demonstrate having read the material.
- 5/10 pts- Two questions submitted, but do not demonstrate having read the material.
- 3/10- One question submitted.
- 0/10 pts- No questions submitted.

To demonstrate that you have read the material, your questions should be *specific* and refer to a particular part of the text or particular line of argument. In addition, **you should briefly summarize (in 1-2 sentences) the parts of the text that gave rise to your question.**

Reflection Assessment

Your reflections will be graded as follows:

- 10/10 pts- Provides a thorough, clear response to the reflection prompt.
- 5/10 pts- Provides a complete, but unclear response to the reflection prompt.
- 3/10 pts- Provides an incomplete response.
- 0/10 pts- No response provided.

At the end of the semester, your grades on the discussion questions and reflections will be averaged. This will constitute your Discussion Question & Reflection grade.

Blog Posts

The second written assignments for this course are in the form of blog posts. You will belong to a group of three or four students who must all contribute to a blog throughout the semester. Every two weeks, group members will contribute to the blog, and you will discuss your findings in class. *If you are absent for a blog group discussion, you will receive a 15 pt. deduction from your blog post grade for that week.*

Blog Entries

Every two weeks, one member of your group will write a *primary blog entry* about your chosen reading from the previous three weeks. Then, another group member will be responsible for responding to the primary post in a *response post*. Finally, you will discuss your group's primary and response posts in class, and the final group member will be responsible for summarizing the group's findings in a *conclusion post*. ****Please note that every group member is responsible for writing one primary post for posts 1-3 and one primary post for posts 4-6.****

Primary Posts (Written at home, discussed in class)

A primary post must accomplish two tasks. First, the post should summarize one of the arguments discussed in one of the readings from the previous three weeks of class (acceptable topics listed below). Second, the post should raise a criticism of the argument, or provide additional support for the argument. In general, the goal is to have you provide a novel argument for or against the readings discussed in class. Primary posts should be 500-700 words.

Response Posts (Written at home, discussed in class)

Response posts should identify any components of the week's primary post that are unclear. In addition, response posts should raise a criticism or provide further support for the author's argument in the primary post. Response posts should be 300-400 words.

Conclusion Posts (Written and discussed in class)

Conclusion posts should summarize the blog's findings for the week, and explain the *strengths* and *weaknesses* in both the blog's *content* and *organization*.

Self-Assessments

Every other Friday, students will meet with their groups in class to discuss their progress on the blogs. Before that discussion, students will complete a short self-assessment of their work in class.

Course Paper

In addition to discussion questions and blog posts, students will be asked to write an individual essay at the end of the semester based on one of their primary posts.

Blog Post Topics

Primary posts should respond to one of the following papers:

Blog post 1 – Mind

Descartes Meditations 1 & 2

Blog Post 2- Knowledge & Value

Crumley on Justified True Belief & Complications

Narayan, “Perspective”

Blog Post 3- Rationality & Identity

Korsgaard, “Reflection”

Nagl-Docekal, “Critiques”

Appiah, “Still be Me?”

Blog Post 4- Freedom

Raz, “Freedom”

Beste, “Conflicting Duties”

Blog Post 5- Domination & Exploitation

Friedman, “Social Disruption”

Pettit, “Republican Theory”

Snyder, “Exploitation”

Wolff, “Marx & Exploitation”

Blog Post 6- Oppression & Social Justice

Young, “Five Faces”

King, “Letter from Birmingham”

Walzer, “Spheres of Justice”

Course Policies

Late Work

All work handed in late will receive a deduction, starting the minute after assignments are due. Late work will receive a 10-point deduction for every day late. Assignments that are more than four days late will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

I take very seriously the university's policy on plagiarism and cheating. In all original work, you *must* cite every source you use. Please use a consistent, standard system of citation unless otherwise noted. MLA and APA are common formats in the humanities and social sciences. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student in question will receive a failing grade for both the assignment and the course. In addition, the university will be notified of the student's misconduct.

A short excerpt from the Carnegie Mellon *Policy on Academic Integrity* is listed below:

“In any manner of presentation, it is the responsibility of each student to produce her/his own original academic work. Collaboration or assistance on academic work to be graded is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor(s). Students may utilize the assistance provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q) unless specifically prohibited by the course instructor(s). Any other sources of collaboration or assistance must be specifically authorized by the course instructor(s).”

In all academic work to be graded, the citation of all sources is required. When collaboration or assistance is permitted by the course instructor(s) or when a student utilizes the services provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q), the acknowledgement of any collaboration or assistance is likewise required. This citation and acknowledgement must be incorporated into the work submitted and not separately or at a later point in time. Failure to do so is dishonest and is subject to disciplinary action”

For more information, please read the full *Policy on Academic Integrity*, found at the following link: <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Academic%20Integrity.html>

Statement on Disabilities

I strive to make the classroom environment as inclusive as possible. If you would like to request accommodations for a disability, please contact me (the instructor) and the Office of Disability Resources at access@andrew.cmu.edu as soon as you are able. You can read about the Office of Disability Resources services here: <https://www.cmu.edu/hr/eos/disability/index.html>.

Participation & Engagement

(Source: Adapted from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, CMU)

	Exemplary (90-100%)	Proficient (80-90%)	Developing (70-80%)	Unacceptable (<70%)
Engagement	Student is consistently engaged with the discussion, even when they are not speaking.	Student is usually engaged with class discussion.	-----	Student is usually not engaged with class discussion, or spends most of their time looking at their computer.
Listening Skills	Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives.	Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas.	Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; sleeps, etc.
Respect for Others	Student is consistently respectful of others' comments, even when he or she disagrees with what has been said.	Student is usually respectful of others.	Student is often disrespectful of others' comments.	Student does not show any respect for other students.

Daily Schedule

Weeks 1 & 2: Introduction to Philosophy

Week 1: Introduction

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(W) January 18	Intro. to Philosophy		
(F) January 20	What is Philosophy?	Sellars, "The Philosophical Quest", p. 1-5	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.

Week 2: Philosophy & Method

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) January 23	Philosophical Method	Harrell, "What is the Argument?" p. 1-11	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) January 25	Blogging Assignment	Assignment Descriptions	
(F) January 27	Recitation		Blogging Schedule (Done in class)

Weeks 3-5: Mind & Knowledge

Week 3: Mind

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) January 30	Mind	Descartes, Meditations 1 & 2, p. 6-12	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Primary post 1 due 8:00 p.m.
(W) February 1	Mind & Body	Descartes, Meditation 6, p. 25-32	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Response post 1 due 8:00 p.m.
(F) February 3	Recitation		Conclusion post 1 due 8:00 p.m.

Week 4: Knowledge

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) February 6	Justified True Belief	Crumley, p. 53-65	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) February 8	Complications	Crumley, p. 65-81	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(F) February 10	Recitation		

Week 5: Knowledge and Power

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) February 13	Feminist Epistemology	Narayan, "Perspective"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Primary post 2 due 8:00 p.m.
(W) February 15	Epistemic Justice	Fricker, "Powerlessness"	Discussion Questions due 8:00 a.m. Response Post 2 Due 8:00 p.m.
(F) February 17	Recitation		Conclusion Post 2 Due

Weeks 6-8: Self & Identity**Week 6: Rationality**

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) February 20	Rationality	Korsgaard, "Reflection," p. 90-98	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) February 22	Rationality & Gender	Changed: "Feminist Perspectives on the Self" https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-self/ Read Intro and Part 1 ("Critique")	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(F) February 24	Recitation		

Week 7: Identity

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) February 27	Gender and Race Identity	Appiah, "Still Be Me?"	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m. Primary Post 3 Due 8:00 p.m.
(W) March 1	Intersectionality	Carastathis, "Intersectionality"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Response Post 3 Due 8:00 p.m.
(F) March 3	Recitation		Conclusion Post 3 Due 8:00 p.m.

Week 8: Autonomy

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments Due
(M) March 6	Traditional Autonomy	Raz, "Freedom" p. 369-378	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) March 8	Autonomy & Welfare in Medicine	Beste, "Conflicting Duties"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(F) March 10	Recitation		

Week 9: Spring Break**Weeks 10-12: Interpersonal Relationships****Week 10: Relational Autonomy & Domination**

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) March 20	Relational Autonomy	Friedman, "Social Disruption"	Discussion Questions due 8:00 a.m. Primary Post 4 Due 8:00 p.m.
(W) March 22	Freedom as Non-Domination	Pettit, "Republican Theory"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Response Post 4 Due 8:00 p.m.
(F) March 24	Recitation		Conclusion Post 4 Due 8:00 p.m.

Week 11: Exploitation

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) March 27	Exploitation as Unfairness	Snyder, "Exploitation" p. 187-196	Discussion Questions due 8:00 a.m.
(W) March 29	Marx's Account	Wolff, "Marx and Exploitation"	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.
(F) March 31	Recitation		

Week 12: Oppression

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) April 3	Five Faces of Oppression	Young, "Five Faces"	Reflection due 8:00 a.m. Primary Post 5 Due 8:00 p.m.
(W) April 5	Civil Rights	King, "Letter from Birmingham"	Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m. Response Post 5 Due 8:00 p.m.
(F) April 7	Recitation		Conclusion Post 5 Due 8:00 p.m.

Weeks 13-16: Community & Justice**Week 13: Social Justice**

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) April 10	Spheres of Justice	Walzer, "Spheres of Justice"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Primary Post 6 Due 8:00 p.m.
(W) April 12	Distribution of Social Goods	Marmot, "Health Inequalities"	Discussion Questions due 8:00 a.m. Response Post 6 Due 8:00 p.m.
(F) April 14	Recitation		Conclusion Post 6 Due 8:00 p.m.

Week 14: The Just State

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) April 17	Justice as Fairness	Rawls, "Justice as Rational Choice"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) April 19	Libertarianism	Nozick, "Distributive Justice"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m. Paper Topic Due by 8:00 p.m.
(F) April 21	No Class- Carnival		

Week 15: Justice for All

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
(M) April 24	Gender and Contracts	Pateman, "Contract," p. 39-60	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(W) April 26	The Racial Contract	Mills, "Introduction"	Reflection Due 8:00 a.m.
(F) April 28	Peer Review		Paper Draft Due (bring 2 copies)

Week 16: Conclusion

Date	Topic		Assignment Due
(M) May 1	Course Recap		Course Evaluation and Exit Survey
(W) May 3	No Class	Office Hours 9 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	
(F) May 5	No Class	Office Hours 9 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	
(M) May 8			Paper Due at 8:00 p.m.