

Introduction to Philosophy

Phil 100 · Autumn 2010

Class Location	CBA 140A	Professor	Alexander Klein
Class Time	M & W 11–11:50 AM*	Email	aklein@csulb.edu
* Each student will be assigned to a discussion section that will meet every Friday. Attendance is required at all class meetings, as well as at all discussion sections.		Office Location	MHB 912
		Office Hours	M & W 9:45–10:45 AM, or by appt.
		Graduate Assistants	Alyssa Hennig Neil Richmond
		GA Office Location	MHB 915
		GA Office Hours	M & W 12:00–1:00 AM, or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Philosophy is an intellectual practice that stretches back more than 2,000 years. It was invented by Plato in the fifth century BCE, and has been carried on in a slowly evolving, almost unbroken conversation, all the way to today. Even now, philosophers pose questions that are disarmingly simple, yet at the same time address fundamental issues about humanity and our place in the universe. Philosophers' investigations can be divided into some broad categories: epistemology (the study of knowledge), metaphysics (the study of the nature of reality), ethics (the study of right and wrong), aesthetics (the study of art), and logic (the study of reasoning). This course uses both classic and contemporary texts to offer a basic overview of philosophy.

COURSE GOALS

Upon completion of this course, diligent students should find that they

- ◆ can demonstrate basic comprehension of the main ideas of some key figures and questions in the history of philosophy;
- ◆ can demonstrate a basic ability to think philosophically and critically about novel problems;
- ◆ can demonstrate a basic ability to comprehend and critically analyze philosophical texts.

REQUIRED TEXT

Jonathan E. Adler and Catherine Z. Elgin (2007). *Philosophical Inquiry: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Indianapolis: Hackett. [Available at campus bookstore.](#)

NOTE: You must bring the book to every lecture and to every discussion section.

GRADING

- ◆ plagiarism quiz (0%, but required) *
- ◆ the average (mean) of your 9 best scores out of 12 weekly worksheets (30%)
- ◆ 1 in-class test (20%)
- ◆ 1 essay (20%)
- ◆ 1 final exam (20%)
- ◆ discussion section attendance and participation (10%)

* You must score 100% on the online plagiarism quiz. Until you do so, **YOU MAY NOT HAND IN ANY WRITTEN WORK**. If you fail to score 100% on the plagiarism quiz by the end of the semester, **YOUR FINAL GRADE WILL BE AN F**.

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

This class will have **mandatory** discussion sections on Fridays in lieu of class lectures. To find your discussion section, please consult the chart below.

If your last name starts with ...	then your section number is ...	and your GA's last name is ...	and your section meets at ...	in this location.
A–Ch	1	Hennig	10–10:50 AM	LA1-307
Co–Gar	2	Hennig	11–11:50 AM	LA1-307
Go–Lopez, C	3	Hennig	12–12:50 AM	LA1-307
Lopez, I–Pad	4	Richmond	10–10:50 AM	LA1-309
Pal–San	5	Richmond	11–11:50 AM	LA1-309
Sap–Z	6	Richmond	12–12:50 AM	LA1-309

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS

Plagiarism Quiz

I will assign an online plagiarism quiz during the first week of the semester. Every student must score 100% on this quiz. Students may take the quiz as many times as needed to earn a perfect score. However, if you do not score 100% on this quiz, you will not be permitted to hand in any written work—this includes the in-class test. Failure successfully to complete the plagiarism quiz is not an excusable reason to hand in any written work late. You will fail the class if you do not earn a perfect score on this quiz by the end of the semester.

Weekly Worksheets

Each weekly worksheet will consist of a series of multiple-choice questions (usually five) that must be accessed and answered on Beachboard. Each week's assignment will be uploaded by Wednesday evening, and will be **due by 9:45 AM, Friday morning** of the same week. Beachboard is set not accept late submissions. These assignments will always be based on the prior week's lectures and assigned readings.

Your Graduate Assistants will go over the answers to the weekly worksheets in discussion section each Friday. **These worksheets will serve as your review guides for the test, the essay, and for the final exam. You will not be able to get worksheet answers anywhere but in your discussion section.**

At the end of the semester, I will only count the top 9 of your 12 scores. This is to allow you perhaps to miss an assignment or two for any reason, or simply to have as many chances as possible to do well. Because of this cushion, **worksheets will not be accepted late even for an excused absence or other documented obstacle.** I allow you to miss a maximum of three worksheets precisely because it is impractical in such a large class to referee everybody's excuses, reasonable though those excuses may sometimes be. Also, these assignments will not be accepted outside of class for any reason—they must be submitted on Beachboard. For my policy on unusual cases where you have an extended absence from the class that is documentable, please see the section below entitled "How to Submit Assignments in Case of an Excused Absence."

Test and Final Exam

The weekly worksheets will serve as your review guides for the test and the final exam. Again, please note that **answers to the weekly worksheets are only available in sections.**

The test and final exam will incorporate some multiple choice questions similar to those you will find on the weekly worksheets. In addition, the test and exam will also have some fill-in-the-blank questions and several short essays as well. The final exam will be cumulative.

Essay

There will be one short essay assigned in this class. We will spend some class time talking about how to write an effective academic essay—in particular, an effective *philosophical* essay.

Attendance/Participation

Your attendance/participation grade will be based on three things: the frequency with which you attend sections, the frequency with which you make positive contributions to section discussions and activities, and the quality of your contributions to section discussions and activities.

LATE PENALTIES

Weekly worksheets cannot be handed in late for any reason. Essays that are handed in late will be penalized at the rate of one fraction of a letter grade per day late. For

example, an otherwise B grade paper handed in a day late will receive a B-. If you attempt to take a test or exam before having completed your plagiarism quiz, your grade on the test or exam will also be lowered by 1 fraction of a letter grade per day until you complete the plagiarism quiz.

PLAGIARISM

The penalty for any and all plagiarism in this class is an F for the final course grade. I give no second chances. I will not permit you to rewrite the paper or assignment. I will simply fail you.

To be sure that everybody knows what constitutes plagiarism, you are required to complete a plagiarism quiz before the first written assignment (in this case, the first test) can be handed in. See above for details.

Why do I care so much about plagiarism? The grades you have when you graduate, the honors or distinctions that may go along with those grades, and the letters you get from your professors on the basis of your performance in their courses, are what you will have to show prospective employers or graduate schools that you are qualified to be employed or admitted. Plagiarism is a way of cheating in this process, pure and simple.

The founding ideal of the American university system is precisely that opportunity should be correlated with performance. In fact, the idea that social opportunities like jobs and education should be commensurate with actual performance, not with one's family or fraternity connections, money, or whatever, is also among the founding ideals of our entire American democracy. I cherish this ideal of a meritocracy. Since plagiarism is an affront to this ideal, I simply will not tolerate it.

Unfortunately the rise of the internet has ushered in a new era of plagiarism. Perhaps plagiarism seems less serious these days because it is so easy to cut, paste, and paraphrase. Whatever its source, the new wave of plagiarism has forced many professors to institute no-tolerance policies, and I am certainly part of that trend. So please—do not get mixed up in a plagiarism case. You will fail the course with no second chance.

E-MAIL POLICY

I often find that students appear not to know how to write emails that are appropriate in an academic context, or (by extension) emails that *would* be appropriate in a professional context. As a professor here at CSULB, one of my goals is to help prepare you for the working world. As such, I will not respond to email with an inappropriate tone. If your email to me or to your GA begins with “Hey” or “Dude,” please do not expect a reply.

When you email a professor, you should begin with “Dear Professor x.” When you email an instructor or Graduate Assistant you should begin with “Dear Mr. y” or “Dear Ms. y.” You should not dash off an email that contains spelling and grammar errors. Instead, proofread to be sure your email is neat and clear. You should also sign your emails properly—“Sincerely, x,” or “Best Wishes, y.”

That having been said, I will respond to (appropriate) student email within 1 work day (M–Sa) of receiving a message. I will probably suggest that we meet during office hours if you raise a substantive philosophical question over email.

Finally, please do not send me email attachments unless we have arranged something in advance.

OTHER POLICIES

This Syllabus

It is your responsibility to read and understand the rules and regulations set out in this syllabus. If there is anything you do not understand about this syllabus, it is your responsibility to ask either the professor or your GA for a clarification, and to ask early in the semester.

Ways to Fail

If you meet any one (or any combination) of the following conditions, you will fail this class:

1. you earn less than 60% for your final grade
2. you plagiarize [NO SECOND CHANCES]
3. you do not score a perfect grade on the plagiarism quiz by the end of the semester

Beachboard

This class requires the use of Beachboard. I will distribute the syllabus and many assignments simply by posting them online. I will also post your grades to Beachboard, and send the occasional group email to all enrolled students.

Withdrawal

I do **not** drop students who fail to attend the first week of class. Any student who wishes to withdraw from the class must take responsibility for withdrawing (in keeping with the University's withdrawal policy) him or herself. The University's withdrawal policy can be found here:

http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/2008-2009/academic_information/withdrawal_policy.html

How to Submit Assignments in Case of an Excused Absence

Weekly worksheets **cannot** be handed in outside of class, and they cannot be handed in late, even in the event of an excused absence. See section entitled “Weekly Worksheets,” above. However, in the event of a serious, documented emergency that causes you to miss more than two weeks of class, please contact me so we can try to make alternate arrangements for you to finish the work required in this course. If you cannot attend the in-class test or the final exam, you must contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the exam to make alternative arrangements.

Disability

I am happy to accommodate any special requirements you may have in connection with a University-documented disability. Please notify me in advance if you need any such accommodation. I would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible.