

Philosophy 11001/005/18784  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Fall 2009

7:00-8:15 pm, T R, BOW 219

Instructor: Clarence G. Uher  
Office: Philosophy Department – 320 Bowman Hall, Room W

Office Hours: M W 2:05-3:35 pm, T R 5:05-6:05 pm, and by appointment.

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A. Course Description

This course begins with the last chapter of Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* ("The Value of Philosophy"). We begin with this chapter from Russell in order to identify and address some of the general misconceptions often associated with philosophy. We will also contrast our initial understanding of what philosophy involves with that of Russell. The first major work we read will be Plato's *Republic*. I chose the *Republic* for two reasons. First, because of Plato's strong influence on Western philosophy; and second because of the *Republic*'s comprehensive nature concerning the major areas of philosophy. The major areas of philosophy found in the *Republic* include discussions concerning aesthetics, metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology (the latter part of the course will focus on epistemology).

After completing the *Republic*, the course will focus on more specific epistemological issues. Epistemology is the area of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge. We will survey some of the predominant philosophers throughout history and their views on what knowledge is, and how one acquires knowledge. The main objective of this course is to foster a foundational understanding of the issues philosophy explores, and some of the predominant philosophers that have influenced western thought.

B. Text

*Republic*, Plato, G. M. A. Grube trans., revised by C. D. C. Reeve (ISBN: 0-87220-136-8)

*Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, 4th edition, Donald A. Cress, trans. (ISBN: 0-87220-420-0)

*The Problems of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell (ISBN: 0-87220-098-1)

### C. Mechanics

- (a) There will be eight (8) quizzes during the term. The three of the lowest quiz scores will be dropped. A missed quiz is counted as a dropped quiz. There are no make-ups offered for missed quizzes (regardless of reason) until the dropped quizzes are exhausted. (20 points each.)
- (b) Two midterm exams will cover the course material completed up to the date of the exam. (100 points.)
- (c) The final exam will cover material completed after the last midterm and will follow a similar format as the mid-term exam. (100 points.)

### D. Grades

Your final grade will be determined on a straight scale of: 90%=A, 80%=B, 70%=C, 60%=D and less than 60%=F. Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

5 Quizzes @ 20 points each	100 points
2 Midterm Exam @ 100 points	200 points
Final Exam	100 points
	400 points total

Minimum Points	0	240	252	270	280	292	310	320	332	350	360
Grade	F	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A

### E. Make-ups

Please contact me as soon as possible if your absence has caused you to miss any graded course-work. Students will be permitted to make up missed quizzes (after the three dropped quizzes are exhausted) or exams do to an excused absence (e.g., a doctor's excuse). If a student does not have the proper documentation they will not be permitted to take a make-up exam. A missed quiz is counted as a dropped quiz. There are no make-ups offered for missed quizzes (regardless of reason) until the dropped quizzes are exhausted. A *request of make-up form* must be completed prior to taking the make-up assignment. Make-up work must be completed in a timely manor. In most cases, work must be completed on the day the student returns to class.

### F. Course Material On-line

There will be some course material found on *Flashline*. Students can find the course syllabus, course notes, and assignments in the *files* folder under the *My Courses* tab on *Flashline*. Students must establish and maintain their Kent State University e-mail account to access the course material on-line. All e-mails are sent to students using the Kent State University e-mail account.



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Tentative Reading and Assignment Schedule  
Kent State University, Kent Campus  
Fall - 2009

Week	Date	Assignment
1	9/1	Introduction to the course.
	9/3	<i>Problems</i> , "The Value of Philosophy," pp. 153-161. This LER and you...& Introduction to Plato's <i>Republic</i>
2	9/8	<i>Republic</i> , Book I, pp. 1-31.
	9/10	<i>Republic</i> , Book II, pp. 32-59.
3	9/15	<i>Republic</i> , Books III, pp. 60-93.
	9/17	<i>Republic</i> , Books IV, pp. 94-121.
4	9/22	<i>Republic</i> , Books V, pp. 122-156.
	9/24	<i>Republic</i> , Books VI, pp. 157-185.
5	9/29	Review for First Exam.
	10/1	<i>First Exam</i> – 100 points
6	10/6	<i>Republic</i> , Books VII, pp. 186-212.
	10/8	<i>Republic</i> , Books VIII, pp. 213-240.
7	10/13	<i>Republic</i> , Books IX, pp. 241-263.
	10/15	<i>Republic</i> , Books X, pp. 264-292.
8	10/20	Review of Plato's <i>Republic</i>
	10/22	Introduction to Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> , p.46-56.

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- 9      10/27    Descartes' *Meditations* I, pp. 59-63.  
       10/29    Descartes' *Meditations* II, pp. 63-70.
- 10     11/3     Review for Second Exam.  
       11/5     *Second Exam* – 100 points
- 11     11/10    Descartes' *Meditations* III, pp. 70-81.  
       11/12    Descartes' *Meditations* IV, pp. 81-88.
- 12     11/17    Descartes' *Meditations* V, pp. 88-93.  
       11/19    Descartes' *Meditations* VI, pp. 93-105.
- 13     11/24    *Problems*, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 7-26.  
       11/26    *Thanksgiving Day*-- No Classes after noon on 11/25.
- 14     12/1     *Problems*, Chapter 3, pp. 27-36.  
       12/3     *Problems*, Chapter 4, pp. 37-45.
- 15     12/8     *Problems*, Chapter 5, pp. 46-59.  
       12/10    Review for Final Exam.

Final Exam — ~~Tuesday~~, December 15, 2009, at 8:15-10:00 pm.

*The instructor reserves the right to change, correct, or amend the syllabus and / or the reading schedule during the semester.*