

"The unexamined life is not worth living." - Socrates

Philosophy 2010-0009: Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2016

Instructor Information:

Dr. Jennifer Mundale

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The message below is from The Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:

“As of Fall 2014, all faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course.... Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.”

Required Academic Activity: Take the “Attendance Verification Activity”, given in person, during the first week of class. It will not be administered online since this is a face-to-face course. This activity will not count toward your course grade. It will be available for you to take either Monday, August 22, or Wednesday, August 24th, in class. If you are a late add, please see me to complete this task as soon as possible during the second week. .

Texts:

You are not required to *purchase* any materials for this course, but there will be several *required* readings. All required reading materials are provided free, either in hardcopy form in class, or electronically, through the course website and/or through your Knight’s email. Some of these materials are subject to copyright restrictions, and are only to be used for the purposes of this course. They are not to be sold, shared, or otherwise disseminated except for the purposes of this course.

Course Description:

This is an introductory level course in philosophy, with no prerequisites. The course is intended to introduce students to some of the major philosophical fields, figures and topics.

Course Goals and Objectives:

Students will gain a basic familiarity with major fields as ethics, social and political philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics. Specific topics will include theories for evaluating the moral status of our actions, the social contract, common reasoning errors, the origins and status of our knowledge, the mind body problem, and others. More broadly, students will develop their abilities to 1) analyze meanings and assertions from diverse philosophical texts, and 2) think critically about philosophical concepts, assertions, and arguments from diverse philosophical texts.

Requirements:

Regular attendance, thoughtful reading and preparation of the assigned text, frequent checking of your e-mail for course mailings, frequent checking of the course website, respectful class decorum, and solid performance on class quizzes and exams will be essential to your successful completion of this course. Excessive absence will lower your final grade, but meaningful class participation will figure positively in determining your final grade. Disagreement and debate in the exchange of philosophical ideas are natural and encouraged, but you must observe a courteous, respectful attitude toward others in the class. Disruptive or discourteous behavior will not be tolerated and may result in a lowered grade, a failing grade, or dismissal from the class. If you miss class, you are responsible for the information presented in the missed class, as well as for any missed handouts.

E-mail:

E-mail is an essential part of this course, and you are responsible for its contents. The university requires that students use their Knight's e-mail account for all official university communication, such as course communications. Please make sure to check it, as you are responsible for anything I send via e-mail. Please note that **I use regular e-mail, not Canvas email**, because I find regular e-mail more reliable and convenient. It will help me to answer you more quickly if you observe the following tips:

- Use reasonable grammar and punctuation in your e-mail messages; in other words, don't write as if it were a text message. We all make a few errors from time to time, but I will not respond to messages that are excessively sloppy or whose meaning is indiscernible. Have enough respect for yourself and your words to write them carefully: if you don't, others likely won't either.
- Please be patient. Don't always expect an immediate response when you send a message. Generally, two days is considered reasonable amount of time to receive a reply, not counting weekends.
- Include descriptive "Subject" headings: something that is descriptive and relevant to the subject of your e-mail. If you just hit reply to my last message, be sure to change the subject; otherwise, it bespeaks lack of proper attention to what you are attempting to say, and it won't readily catch my attention amidst all the usual spam that accumulates.
- Do not discuss grades or anything confidential in e-mail. Likewise, I cannot send your grades or test scores in email, as it violates privacy restrictions. Generally, I will not even respond to emails in which I am requested to do so.
- Include your name and *your class* on your e-mail messages (I may have hundreds of students in a given semester, and surely more than one class, so identify yourself).

Makeup and Lateness Policy:

- **Exams: I do not routinely grant makeup exams.** I give them only in seriously extenuating circumstances, and generally only with written documentation from a competent authority (physician, coach, counselor, etc.). Additionally, you must contact me within 3 days of the missed test in order for me to consider granting a makeup: note that "contact" means actually discussing the matter with me, not merely leaving me a message or an e-mail. **If granted, the make-up will be more difficult than the original that was missed, and likely will be given at the end of the semester.** Alternatively, if you anticipate having to be absent on an exam day, and have a legitimate reason for your absence, **see me well ahead of time**, and if possible, I will arrange for you to take it early. Unexcused absence from an exam will result in a score of zero for the missed exam. **Students who arrive late on an exam day will not be allowed to take the exam** unless no student has yet left the classroom. If no student has left the room, you will be allowed to take the exam without any penalty to your grade, but you will not be given extra time to complete the exam.
- **Quizzes: There will be no makeups for the pop quizzes**, as I will only keep the best 5 out of 7 anyway. (If there should be more than 7 pop quizzes given, I will still only keep your best 5). I will not give early pop quizzes, since, it is the nature of a pop quiz to come at a time that is not announced in advance. Missed quizzes will receive a score of zero. Students who arrive to class late, after a quiz has been completed, will not be allowed to take the quiz.

Class Decorum:

How you handle yourself reflects upon who you are, so behave in a way that shows respect for yourself and for those around you. Please turn off your cell phone before you come to class. Obviously, excessive talking that

interrupts lectures or interferes with the usual conduct of the course, will not be tolerated, neither will personal attacks or aggression toward others. Additionally, you are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. Coming late, stepping out, and leaving early are generally discourteous and can be disruptive. It is understood that urgent situations may occasionally arise which make these things necessary. In all other cases, this behavior should be avoided. If such behavior becomes excessive, it will be considered disruptive to the class and represent grounds for lowering your grade and/or taking disciplinary action. If you know that you will need to leave early, please tell me before class, and leave with minimal disruption to others.

Basis for Grades:

Five "Pop" Quizzes worth 5% each - 25%. (I will keep only your best 5, though I will give at least 7).

Two Midterm Exams - 25% each.

Final Exam (cumulative for entire course) - 25%, cannot be dropped

- I will use the plus/minus grading convention (A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.).

Canvas Course Website:

This is not an online course so do not expect to be able to miss class without detriment to your grade. The course website is available primarily to be a repository for the syllabus, certain assigned readings, announcements, scheduled chats, and possibly class discussions. If you miss a class lecture, you should ask a reliable classmate for notes and check to see if you missed a hard copy handout. I do not post my lecture notes online (nor would they be decipherable to anyone but me if I did).

More About Pop Quizzes:

As indicated above, there will be several unannounced, or "pop" quizzes throughout the semester. They are intended to encourage you to keep up with the assigned reading and to give you a sense of your progress with the basics. Philosophy isn't the sort of subject that lends itself to cramming, so to do your best work, it is necessary to keep up with the class rather than wait until the night before the exam to try to learn the material. As mentioned above, there will be no makeups for the pop quizzes, though I will keep only your best five quizzes (we will have at least seven during the semester, possibly more). If you arrive to class late, after the quiz has already been completed, you will not be allowed to take it. Please bear in mind that these quizzes will be much easier than the midterms and final exams. They will be short, usually objective-style quizzes, unlike the exams, which will be mixed format.

INITIAL SCHEDULE (Will be developed further after first week of class). Please have readings completed **before** the day they are scheduled.

Week 1

M August 22 – Introductions, Syllabus, Overview of Major Areas of Philosophy, Attendance Verification Activity

Reading: Syllabus

W August 24 – A discussion of how to read Philosophy, in-class handout with background preparation for Plato's *Apology*, Attendance Verification Activity (if not completed on previous Monday).

Reading: Syllabus if you joined late, in-class handout, feel free to start Plato's *Apology* for next week, if possible.

Week 2

M August 29 – Begin Plato's *Apology*

Reading: Plato's *Apology*, online at, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>

W August 31 – continue with Plato's *Apology*

Week 3

M September 5 - Labor Day Holiday

W September 7 – Handout on King, King's, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, and Public Statement from 8 clergymen.

Reading: King handout (in class), [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#), and [Public Statement from 8 Clergymen](#).

Week 4

M September 12 – King, Mountaintop Speech.

Reading: King, transcript and recording of [Mountaintop Speech](#)

W September 14 – Plato, “The Cave” excerpt from *Republic*

Reading: Plato, “Cave” excerpt from [The Republic](#)

- - - will be continued after initial class meetings - - -

Fall 2016 UCF Holidays and Other Important Dates

August 25, 11:59 p.m., is Drop & Swap Deadline

August 26, 11:59 p.m., is Add deadline.

September 5, Labor Day Holiday (no classes).

Last Day to Withdraw: Monday, October 31, 2016 11:59 p.m.

November 11, Veteran’s Day (no classes).

November 24-26, Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes).

Classes End: Saturday, December 3.

Final Exams: December 6-12.

Fall 2016 Academic Calendar: <http://calendar.ucf.edu/2016/fall>