



Philosophy 200,

## Introduction to Philosophy

Spring Semester 2012, Michigan State University

Dr. Christian Lotz

### Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: March 28, 2012)

NUMBER	DATE	TOPIC	READING	INFORMATION	SUMMARY	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Jan 10	Introduction				
<b>INTRODUCTION - PRESOCRATICS</b>						
2	Jan 12	First principles and metaphysics	copy in class			
3	Jan 17	Being vs. becoming	copy in class			
<b>INTRODUCTION - PLATO</b>						
4	Jan 19	Socrates as the paradigmatic philosopher	Plato, Apology			
5	Jan 24	Socrates as the paradigmatic philosopher	Plato, Apology			
6	Jan 26	Knowledge and Memory	Plato, Meno, 70a-86e		Battiste, Brantigan	
7	Jan 31	class cancelled due to illness	class cancelled due to illness		Gajewski, Musser	Homework assignment sent out per email on Jan 30
8	Feb 2	Knowledge and Memory	Plato, Meno		Hammad, Murphy	
<b>THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY: WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE? (with Russell)</b>						
9	Feb 7	Introduction to epistemology	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 1		Salic, Singh	
10	Feb 9	Appearance and reality, matter	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 2-3		Laurain, Topolia	
11	Feb 14	Knowledge	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 5-7		Barnett, Santoro	
12	Feb 16	Knowledge	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 5-7		Leach, Savage	

13	Feb 21	Knowledge of universals	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 8-10	Bozymowski, Doyle	First take-home assignment will be passed out in class
<b>PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY: WHAT IS MORALITY? (with Kant and Nietzsche)</b>					
14	Feb 23	Introduction to Ethics	Kant, Groundwork, preface	Ignat, Keaton, Kolean	
15	Feb 28	The good will	Kant, Groundwork, section I	McKinney, Stringer	Assignment due
16	Mar 2	hypothetical imperatives	Kant, Groundwork, section I	Hayman, Ulrey	
17	Mar 6	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	
18	Mar 8	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	
19	Mar 13	The categorical imperative	Kant, Groundwork, section II	Morgan, Lyttle	
20	Mar 15	Freedom	Kant, Groundwork, section II	Morales, Sarmiento	
21	Mar 20	Nietzsche's attack on morality	Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, Preface	Bingaman, Becksford	
22	Mar 22	Nietzsche's attack on morality	Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, First Essay	Klim, Spielmaker, Lee	
23	Mar 27	Nietzsche's attack on morality	Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, Second Essay	Voss, Lanza, Beck	
24	Mar 29	Nietzsche's attack on morality	Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, Third Essay	Ovenaudon, Martinie	
25	Apr 3	Nietzsche's attack on morality; Introduction to social-political philosophy	Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, Third Essay	no summary paper	
<b>SOCIAL-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: WHAT IS SOCIETY? (with Marx)</b>					
26	Apr 5	Introduction to social-political philosophy	Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, pp.116-118	Layson, Cleary	
27	Apr 10	Reproduction of social life	Marx, German Ideology, pp.119-135	Dunville, Johnson	
28	Apr 12	Ideology	Marx, German Ideology, pp.119-135	Hoyle, Withers	
29	Apr 17	Capitalism as a specific form of reproduction	Marx, German Ideology, pp.135-154	Atwood, MacArthur	
30	Apr 19	Capitalism as a specific form of reproduction	Marx, German Ideology, pp.154-181	Ribble, Mayne	Second take-home assignment will be passed out in class
31	Apr 24	Communism as the <i>real</i> movement of history	Marx, German Ideology, pp.154-181	Boyd, Foster	
32	Apr 26	Wrap Up	Wrap Up		
	Apr 30 (final exam day)				Assignment due

**Class Meetings:**

Days: TTH  
 Time: 10:20-11:40am  
 Place: 105 Bessey

**Office:**

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]  
 Place: 509 S. Kedzie Hall

Hours: see homepage

**Other Contact:**

E-mail: [lotz@msu.edu](mailto:lotz@msu.edu)

Home Phone: please ask

Webpage: <http://christianlotz.wordpress.com>

**Box**

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (and in front of my office)

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**Teaching Assistant:** no teaching assistants

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**Course Description**

This course is offered as an introductory course in philosophy, the focus of which is to prepare students for reading philosophical texts as well as for thinking and writing philosophically. It is hoped that by carefully reading the texts selected for the course, students will learn how to philosophically investigate some of the issues that are of central importance to human thinking. After a general introduction to philosophy and its sub-disciplines, we will spend most of our time closely analyzing central ideas in [1] theoretical philosophy, [2] practical philosophy, and [3] social-political philosophy. Reading and intensively studying primary - classical - texts is the absolute focus of this class. Students should be aware that this class is not a textbook style contemporary introduction to philosophy.

**Course Goals**

The format of the course includes lecture, class discussion, and student presentation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the careful reading, interpretation, and discussion of texts. Objectives of the course are learning how to read, analyze, and interpret philosophical texts as well as assessing philosophical ideas. The goal of this class is to make you think about the following questions: What is knowledge? What is a good will? What constitutes a society? Four major responses to these questions will be carefully developed in this class (Russell, Kant, Nietzsche, Marx). Accordingly, the goal of this class is not to "inform" you about philosophical positions; rather, the goal is to think about philosophical issues of universal and infinite endurance.

**Specific Course Goals**

This class should students introduce to

- Socrates as the paradigmatic philosopher
- knowledge as something that is independent from experience
- knowledge as something that depends upon experience
- the idea of universals
- the good will as the source of morality
- the idea of a categorical imperative
- morality critique from a psychological point of view
- economy as the *form* of social reproduction

**Note**

Students should be aware of the fact that this course is based on extremely difficult (and, seen from your perspective, awkward) texts. Accordingly, this class requires self-responsible learners and an intense confrontation with the primary text. Accordingly, if you are not excited about the prospect of a daily confrontation with abstract reflections on difficult material, then you should not take this class. This class is not based on a set of fixed knowledge, as there is no such thing; rather, we will try to learn and think together.

**Reading assignments and preparation**

The reading assignment per session is limited; however, this means that I expect you to come to class having prepared the texts carefully and thoroughly and that you are able to talk meaningfully about the text, raise questions of your own and provide answers when called upon. I will take the liberty to call on students randomly. An approximate preparation time for each class is a minimum of three hours. The reading for the next session, if not clear from the course schedule (below), will be announced at the end of the previous class. "Preparing for class" implies underlining and making excerpts from the text assigned; looking up unfamiliar vocabulary and writing them into a note book (I encourage you to keep a vocabulary booklet for all of your classes). Just reading the text won't be sufficient. You have to study the material. Some vocabulary might not be sufficiently explained in a regular dictionary (this goes especially for philosophical terms), so it is necessary to consult additional sources (e.g., the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy — online (see remark below) — is an excellent source of information, and the MSU Library Website is a

great resource for nearly all questions).

### Required Texts (Bookstore)

- Plato, Five Dialogues
- Russell, The Problems of Philosophy
- Kant, Groundwork
- Marx, Early Political Writings
- Nietzsche, Basic Writings

### Organization

The course will be organized such that, ideally, each class period will include [i] "interactive" lecture, [ii] discussion time or [iii] response time. Students will be asked to intensively prepare a certain text or part of a text for the next class period.

### Course Requirements

- Daily reading and studying (around 5 pages)
- 2 take-home exams/papers
- response sheets
- 1 summary paper
- reading quizzes and group assignments

### Note

The class and my lectures are solely based on the texts selected for class and require a thorough study and preparation of the material. I will primarily lecture on the readings, which will help you to more fully understand the texts. Therefore it is not sufficient for students to come to class without having prepared the texts. And indeed, in your papers you have to demonstrate whether you have appropriately prepared the readings selected for each lecture.

### Attendance

To get a good grade in this class, regular attendance is required. I will not call roll. Hence, it is up to you to come to class or not. However, if you do not come to class on a regular basis and participate in the class discussion, it is impossible for you to achieve a good grade in this class; so coming to class is your responsibility and your call. If you choose to attend class, please come on time, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices that interfere with your (and others') concentration, have the reading prepared and be ready to participate. If you are not prepared, do not bother showing up. It is a sign of disrespect to your peers and the instructor to attend class unprepared. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student and to catch up on reading. Nevertheless, please be aware that you should not make me responsible for a failure that results out of your decision. You should be aware that chances to master this class are minimal, if you do not show up for class or if you do not prepare the readings (=studying).

### Class Response Sheets

Every student is asked to submit up to 5 class response sheets during the semester.

[Click here to download the class response sheet](#)

(Word document, I will only accept answers that are given on this form) The response sheets have to be submitted at the end of a class session. I do not accept late turn ins.

### Summary Papers

Each student has to write a 2-page (no more than 600 words) summary paper of one of the readings. Students have to send their summary papers to me by email one day before class (by 12pm!), need to make copies for every participants and pass their assignment out at the beginning of class. Selected papers will be read aloud in class. You need to add page references to your paper whenever you are referring to a major point. In addition, you need to focus on a selected aspect of the reading and explain this aspect. Don't simply list topics and give an overview (and then, and then, and then, etc.).

### Papers

In order to intensify and improve your understanding of the material, you will turn in on selected days (check schedule for due dates) a brief paper, in which you analyze the readings (4 pages, double spaced, no more than 1200 words). Assignments will be passed out in class.

### Reading Quizzes

There will be - from time to time - unannounced reading quizzes and group assignments. Students who do not attend class (and have no medical documentation) will lose all points. Reading quizzes and group assignments cannot be made up. I will waive this requirement if I have the impression that students come prepared to class.

### Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

5 response sheets	15 points
2 papers (up to 1200 words, up to 1500 words)	40 points
Unannounced reading quizzes and group assignments	25 points
Summary paper (up to 600 words)	10 points
Participation	10 points
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	100 points

### Grading:

4.0 (=A)	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87
3 (=B)	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2 (=C)	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0 (=D)	64 - 60
0.0	< 60

### GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

#### Class Attendance

As mentioned above, I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

#### Grading Criteria

Check out [this page for grading criteria, example of assignments, etc.](#)

#### Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

[Click here to find help on your presentations and your writing](#)

#### Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use reliable academic sources, such as Britannica Online, or the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's [library resources!](#) And, as with other sources, you must cite any

online sources to which you refer in your essay.

### **Writing Center Information**

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to [writing@msu.edu](mailto:writing@msu.edu).

### **Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (Plagiarism)**

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]: [download document](#) (pdf)

### **Academic Honesty**

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu)) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

### **Drops and Adds**

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

### **Note on Attendance**

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

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