



Philosophy 200,
Introduction to Philosophy
Spring Semester 2013, Michigan
State University
Prof. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last UPDATE: April 03, 2013)

NUMBER	DATE	TOPIC	READING	INFORMATION	THESIS STATEMENT	ASSIGNMENTS	
1	Jan 8	Introduction					
2	Jan 10	Introduction	Zeno, Protagoras				
3	Jan 15	Introduction	Plato, Apology				
INTRODUCTION: PLATO ON LOVE							
4	Jan 17	Eros	Plato, Symposium, Beginning+Phaedrus+Pausanius+				
5	Jan 22	Difference and Unity	Plato, Symposium, Eryximachus+Aristophanes				
6	Jan 24	Difference and Unity	Plato, Symposium, Agathon+Diotima/Socrates				
7	Jan 29	class cancelled because of sickness					
8	Jan 31	class cancelled because of sickness					Assignment per email
KNOWLEDGE (with Russell)							
9	Feb 5	Introduction to epistemology	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 1		Haley, Mat	Assignment due in class	
10	Feb 7	Appearance and reality, matter	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 2-3		Katlyn		
11	Feb 12	Knowledge	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 5-7		Will		
12	Feb 14	Knowledge of universals	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, chapter 8-10		Nick; Cayla		
MORALITY (with Kant)							
13	Feb 19	Introduction to Ethics	Kant, Groundwork, preface		Mitch; Jaclyn	First take-home assignment will be passed out in class	

14	Feb 21	no class	no class	
15	Feb 26	The good will	Kant, Groundwork, section I	Michael; Tevin Assignment due
16	Feb 28	hypothetical imperatives	Kant, Groundwork, section I	Tingbo; Lauren
17	Mar 5	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
18	Mar 7	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
19	Mar 12	The categorical imperative	Kant, Groundwork, section II	Haoyuan; Hamza
20	Mar 14	Freedom	Kant, Groundwork, section II	Kyle

SOCIETY (with Marx)

21	Mar 19	Introduction to social-political philosophy	Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, pp.116-118	Kara, Mike
22	Mar 21	Reproduction of social life	Marx, German Ideology, pp.119-135	Zachary, William
23	Mar 26	Ideology	Marx, German Ideology, pp.119-135	Alex; Joe
24	Mar 28	Capitalism as a specific form of reproduction	Marx, German Ideology, pp.135-154	Elaine, Michael
25	Apr 2	Capitalism and Classes	Marx, German Ideology, pp.154-181	Chris, Brinn Second take-home assignment will be passed out in class

GENDER (with De Beauvoir)

26	Apr 4	Social Construction of "Woman" and Existential Project	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, Introduction	Catherine, Marlee
27	Apr 9	Rejection of Biologism	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, volume I, part one, chapter 1+3	Ryan, Phil Assignment due
28	Apr 11	Childhood	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, volume II, part one, childhood	Leanna, Ryan
29	Apr 16	Marriage	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, volume II, part two, The Married Woman	Jalessa, Olivia Group assignment will be passed out in class
30	Apr 18	no class	no class	
31	Apr 23	Group Project on De Beauvoir (meeting without instructor)	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, volume II, part two, Woman's Character and Situation	
32	Apr 25	Group Project on De Beauvoir (meeting without instructor)	De Beauvoir, Second Sex, volume II, part four, The Independent Woman+Conclusion	
	Apr 27			Group write-up due per email
	May 3 (final exam day)			Individual write-up due per email

Class Meetings:

Days: TTH
 Time: 2:40-4pm
 Place: 318 Berkey

Office:

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]
 Place: 5xx S. Kedzie Hall
 Hours: see homepage

Other Contact:

E-mail: 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

Teaching Assistant: no teaching assistants

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 and love
- 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, Symposium

- Russell, The Problems of Philosophy
- Kant, Groundwork
- Marx, Early Political Writings
- De Beauvoir, Second Sex

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 thesis statement
- reading quizzes and group assignments
- group project + write-ups

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.

Make-Up Assignments

Students who need to miss the exam(s) for excusable reasons must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up the exam and movie assignment. I will only accept official doctor notes (no faxes, no emails) or letters from other professors.

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).

Thesis Statement (brief overview of assigned reading)

Each student has to prepare once a thesis paper for class. The thesis paper should contain [a] a list of main points and claims, [b] concepts that are unclear, [c] intelligent questions about the readings. Students who prepare the thesis paper need to send their responses by 8am per email on the due date to me, bring copies for everyone to class and be prepared to briefly present their paper. The thesis paper is limited to two pages and you must use the prepared document (download below). Note: you are not allowed to cite common internet resources, such as Wikipedia. Instead, work with the following online resources (or other resources in the library): [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy](#) - [Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) - [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) - [Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy](#) (e-book) - [The Oxford Companion to Philosophy](#)

[Click here to download thesis statement form](#)

Reaction Papers

Each student has to write two 2-4page (up to 1000 words) reaction papers in reaction to one of the readings or YouTube material. The reaction paper should contain a systematic thesis about a selected aspect of the material. Assignments will be passed out in class.

Reading Quizzes and Group Assignments

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 (except with doctor notes). I will waive this requirement if I have the impression that students come prepared to class.

Group Project

There will be one group project at the end of this term. You meet in groups without instructor (if you can't find times for meetings, then you need to meet during normal class times). The assignment has two parts: one shared group write-up as well as individual write-ups.

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.

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

5 response sheets	15 points
2 reaction papers	20 points
Unannounced reading quizzes and group assignments	15 points
Thesis statement	10 points
Participation	10 points
Group project	10 points
Individual group project write-up	20 points

	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)

Laptop/Cell Phone Policy

You are not permitted to use laptops and cell phones in class. Please do not text under the table. Cell phones should be removed from tables. Failure to follow this policy will lead to unannounced assignments in class or loss of points (at the digression of the instructor).

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.

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) 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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