

Introduction to Philosophy Spring 2022

Primary Instructor: Spencer Ivy

Email: Spencer.Ivy@utah.edu

Office Hours: Via Zoom by appointment

Office Location: Somewhere amidst the buzzing vastness of Amazon's server farm

Preferred Method of Contact: Via email

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of this course and successful completion of all course requirements, the student will be able to do all of the following:

- Be conversant in conversations concerning *"The big questions"*
- Become the wisest person in Athens
- Gain confidence in thinking independently and critically about philosophical issues.

COURSE MATERIALS

Reading: All readings will be available online in Canvas. THERE IS NO TEXTBOOK FOR THIS CLASS.

Canvas: This is an online course which means that you will need to keep up to date with all announcements, added material, and class content presented through Canvas.

Lectures will be LIVE recorded on Zoom, Thursdays @ 5:30pm in CTIHB 459. You may attend remotely via zoom, in person, or just watch the recorded versions anytime you like. There is no attendance requirement, but showing up can earn you points (see course assignments for details)

Grading: Every point you earn is 1% of your grade. You may earn points in any number of ways – attendance, exams, discussion boards, reading-write-ups, and a term paper. No assignment is 'necessary' to complete or 'required.' You may choose to earn the grade you deserve however you like in the way that is best for you to learn and meet the course objectives. If you don't want to take a test, earn your grades elsewhere. If you don't want to or cannot attend any classes, complete other assignments. You are the author of your own grade – earn it well!

COURSE GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

To earn a 100% in the course, you must earn 100 total points. There are MANY ways to do this and you may 'choose your own grading adventure.' You may earn points by completing any of the tasks outlined below in any combination that you choose. Choose to complete assignments in whatever combination works best for you. All assignments will be graded, so you may not earn full points for just completion. **You may only earn up to 50 points before the midterm.** There are NO due dates for any assignment (except exams).

Attendance: Up to ~65 points (Contingent on class cancellations)

Zoom Attendance: 2 (+3) points

- You may attend lectures via zoom with your camera off for a total of 2 points. If you have your camera on during class, you will earn a full 5 points.

In Person Attendance: 5 points

- You may show up to class in person. If you do, you will earn the full 5 points.

Exams: Up to 100 points

How My Exams Work

- One week before the exam is due, you will receive a handout with 4 prompts. Each of the prompts is about a paragraph worth of questions on a particular topic. You will be required to answer 3 of the 4 prompts. All three prompts must be answered for the test to be graded. You may email me any questions you have about the exam – both logistics and content.

Midterm Exam: 50 points

Final Exam: 50 points

Discussion Board: Up to 130 points (10 points possible per board)

- *Ask a Question About the Reading: up to 3 points*
 - o Up to 3 points for a well formulated question that expresses a genuine problem with the reading. Good questions earning all five points will be able to stimulate a discussion (think in the vicinity of 100+ words)
 - o Up to 2 EXTRA points for a well formulated response to an answer from another student. The more robust and well-formulated your response, the more points you will earn.
- *Answer a Question: up to 5 points*
 - o For a full 5 points, answer your classmate's question like a professor would – with clarity and a full grasp of the reading & concepts in play. A good response will stimulate further conversation.

Reading Write-Up: Up to 130 points

- Write a 300-500 word summary of a week's reading and the lessons you've learned from it in the context of that week's lecture. Full points will be awarded to papers that are more than 300 words, though not exceeding 500, and that express a strong grasp of that week's course content.

Extra Credit: Up to 25 points - *If you need points to pass the class, you may also write a 5-8 page paper on a topic of your choice. Topics must be approved by me before you begin writing.*

GRADING POLICY

Points translate to grades as follows:

95 and above = A

90-95 = A-

88-89 = B+

83-87 = B

80-82 = B-

78-79 = C+

73-77 = C

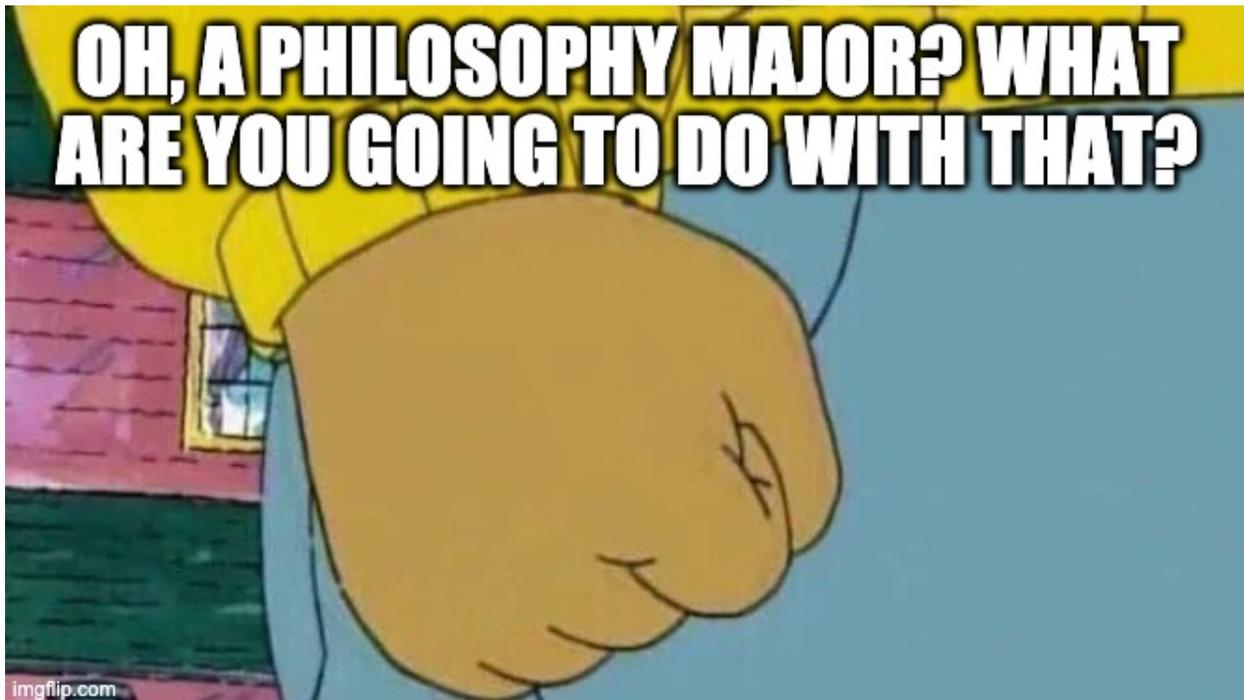
70-72 = C-

etc.

Below 60 = E

In this class, you'll learn the value of philosophy (and a major in it!) beyond just taking up space... like the meme on this page of the syllabus.

Philosophy majors score higher than any other category of study on *all* post-graduate exams (except the MCAT), and have a higher-than-average mean salary post-graduation.



Course Schedule

Week 1: Why Study Philosophy?

Jan 11 – Syllabus, Introduction, Russell
For Next Week – **Read Apology**

Week 2: What is the Philosophical Life?

Jan 20 – Plato’s Apology
For Next Week – **Read Meditation 1&2**

Week 3: What Is All This?

Jan 27 – Meditations
For Next Week – **Read Locke (Williams Optional)**

Week 4: What Am I?

Feb 3 – Personal Identity
For Next Week – **Read Parfit/Hume**

Week 5: Who Am I?

Feb 10 – Concern and No-Self
For Next Week – **Read Mengzi/Xunzi/Laozi**

Week 6: Is Human Nature Good or Bad?

Feb 17 – Mengzi/Xunzi/Laozi on Human Nature
For Next Week – **No reading, Exam Week.**
Midterm Prompts Assigned/Distributed

Week 7: TEST WEEK

Feb 17-Feb 28: Midterm Exam Period
Feb 24: OPTIONAL Midterm Review Session
(Feb 28 – Midterm Exam Ends)
For Next Week – **Read Sider**

Week 8: Am I Free?

March 3 – Sider’s Free Will and Determinism
For Next Week – **Spring BREAK**

Week 9: Spring BREAK

Vacation & Have Fun
Sun.-Sun., March 6-13
For Next Week – **Read Anscombe**

Week 10: How Should I Act?

March 17 – Utilitarianism and Deontology
For Next Week – **Read Aristotle**

Week 11: Who Should I Be?

March 24 – Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics
For Next Week - **Read Anselm/Aquinas/Paley**

Week 12: What is God?

April 7 – Classical Proofs for God’s Existence
For Next Week – **Read Rowe**

Week 13: Is there a God?

April 14 – The Problem of Evil & Theodicy
For Next Week – **Philosophy & Dance**

Week 14: Philosophy & Dance Workshop

April 21 – Eric Handman + Dancers Visit class
For Next Week – **Read Csikszentmihalyi**
Final Exam Prompts Assigned/Distributed

Week 15: What is Happiness?

April 28th – Flow States Lecture
The end! No more classes.

April 21 – May 9: Final Exam Period

(May 9– Final Exam Ends; ALL Assignments Due)

* Assignment due dates are marked **RED** under their corresponding deadlines.

** Weeks highlighted in **YELLOW** are proctored completely online (subject to change)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. *The Americans with Disabilities Act.* The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

2. *Addressing Sexual Misconduct.* Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

3. *Drop/Withdrawal.* Last day to Add/Drop this class: Friday Aug. 27th. Last day to withdraw from this class: Sept 17st

4. *University Policies and Procedures:*

400. Student Code: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

401. Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

402. ***General Education Statement:*** This course contributes to the University of Utah's Quantitative Reasoning requirement. For such courses, academic units must identify three essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that are relevant to university general education objectives. The ELOs for this course are: Inquiry and Analysis, Quantitative Literacy and Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning.

5. *Academic Misconduct:* "Academic misconduct" includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct." – **DON'T CHEAT.**

If someone is caught cheating, they will automatically fail the assignment and incur a class-wide email warning against cheating. If ANYONE ELSE is caught cheating after the warning email, they will be reported to the college for a breach of the student code in academic misconduct.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance & Punctuality: According to University policy, “**Instructors must communicate any particular attendance requirements of the course to students in writing on or before the first class meeting**” (PPM, Policy 6-100III-O)]. While attendance is not strictly mandatory, showing up can earn you points.

Food & Drink: If you bring drinks to class, please tidy up and be respectful of your classmates. Eating is not allowed in class.

Electronic Devices in Class: You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes on the lecture in class. Otherwise, no electronic devices may be used in class. If you use your laptop or tablet to check Facebook etc., play games or engage in other non-class activities you will be asked to turn those applications off. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave class.

Canvas: All information about this class will be posted on Canvas. Please consult the class Canvas page regularly.

Covid: **ALL students present in class MUST be wearing masks for the duration of the class period if they are not vaccinated and are attending in person. For students who are vaccinated, masks are suggested. If anything, it’s a matter of social propriety – don’t let your good time ruin someone else’s: wear a mask. This is an honor system. Please, for the sake of your classmates, wear a mask if you are unvaccinated when coming to class in person. Class is subject to be cancelled for any reason at any time and be moved completely online. These are uncertain times, so the best way to approach this class is with openness and adaptable expectations.**

Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements and in the Calendar.