

The Catholic University of America  
The School of Philosophy

PHIL 201-04: The Classical Mind (3): First Year Experience Course, Learning Community 17  
Fall 2009, MWF, 9:10am – 10:00am, O’Boyle 220

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Office Hours: Tue. 10:00am – 1 2:00pm, Th. 2:00pm – 4:00pm, and by appointment

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### **Course Description**

As stated in the CUA course catalog, PHIL 201 is, “An introduction to philosophy, using the original writings of several philosophers from the ancient and medieval periods, with a more general consideration of the history of philosophy.” More specifically, we will be reading texts that raise fundamental questions about human nature, virtue, and happiness, as well as the relationship between faith and reason. The four authors we will study have, in various ways, determined the course of Western intellectual, political, and cultural development. Their works, therefore, are connected inherently to our own experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite the centuries of revolutions in philosophy, science, politics, and culture which separate us.

Please note as well that a passing grade in this course is a pre-requisite for PHIL 202.

### **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to serve as an introduction to philosophy generally and as a good foundation for further philosophical studies. Thus, *my* objectives are to work with you through the assigned readings and to help you gain an understanding of 1) what philosophy is, 2) some different approaches to philosophical thinking, 3) the types of questions and answers philosophical thought encounters, 4) the themes and arguments in each text, and 5) why and how philosophy matters in your daily life and personal intellectual development.

*Your* objectives are 1) to develop the ability to read philosophical texts actively and attentively, 2) to develop the ability to think critically about the ideas and arguments presented in a philosophical text, 3) to develop the ability to discuss and write about philosophical ideas, problems, arguments, etc. coherently, displaying comprehension and insight.

While our objectives are different, they are similar in that none of us will achieve our objectives unless we work together, with each doing his or her part to contribute to a fruitful and active class.

### **Required Texts**

You must have your own copy of each text and bring the assigned text to class.

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book I: God*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis, FRSC. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1999.

Augustine. *On Free Choice of the Will*. Translated by Thomas Williams. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1993.

Hacker, Diane. *A Writer’s Reference*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2007.

Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Translated by G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Republic*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1991.

## Course Requirements and Assessment

Your grade for the course will be calculated based on the following breakdown:

|                            |     |   |
|----------------------------|-----|---|
| Participation              | 5%  |   |
| Preparedness               | 5%  |   |
| Quizzes (5)                | 10% | (2% each)                               |
| Tests (4)                  | 28% | (7% each)                               |
| Papers (4)                 | 34% | (scaled progressively: 7%, 8%, 9%, 10%) |
| Service Project Assignment | 3%  |   |
| Final Exam                 | 15% |   |

### Participation (and Attendance)

Participation is crucial to a successful philosophy course – for each of you individually as well as for the class as a whole. In order to encourage you to be actively involved in class, I will keep track of your participation – asking questions (and/or answering them), contributing to discussion, etc. It should be obvious that doing your reading ahead of class is extremely important to this aspect of your grade, as well as the overall pleasantness of your experience in the class.

Participation cannot occur unless you are present, of course. Regular attendance is both expected and required, and attendance will be checked at the beginning of every class. Although attendance does not figure into the 100 points possible for your overall grade, your grade will suffer deductions for over-absence. The School of Philosophy attendance policy states: “Attendance counts toward the assessment of the final grade in the following way: For classes meeting three days per week, *four absences will be tolerated without academic penalty. Each absence after the fourth will result in a reduction of two points of the total 100 points for the course up until the tenth absence which results in failure for the course.* For such a course, a maximum of nine absences will be allowed without failure for the course due to absences. No distinction in general is made between excused and unexcused absences.” **Please note: four “tardies” or early exits will be considered equivalent to one absence.** Any early exit from class should be discussed with me beforehand. If you are late, please be sure to check with me after class to ensure that I have noted your attendance properly.

### Preparedness

By “preparedness,” I basically mean doing your homework. You will be given a set of reading guide questions for each week’s assigned readings, which should help you focus on main points and themes as well as draw your attention to some important details. I will collect your answers for these questions every Friday and return them to you with any corrections the following Monday. Two points to keep in mind: 1) This exercise really will not do you much good if you try to complete the whole thing on Thursday evening, and 2) Hold on to these corrected questions, as you will benefit greatly from studying them before tests.

### Quizzes

You will see on the class schedule that there are five quizzes scheduled throughout the semester. These will be only 2-3 questions each and will come from our readings up to the quiz date (i.e., not necessarily from a specific week or day).

### Tests

There will be four tests (one per author) during the semester. The first three will be straightforward exams: these will be given with the aim of gauging your understanding of the texts as well as your ability to remember specific information. It is most likely that they will be primarily short-answer questions with one or two longer answer questions. The fourth test (dealing with Aquinas) will be an in-class essay, wherein you work through a specific question with some detail and depth. I will explain this more as the date of the essay approaches.

*\*Tests must be taken on the date specified on the course schedule.*

### Papers

There will be four papers due during the semester. The goal is to develop your writing skills generally, and to introduce you to philosophical writing specifically. Each paper will be only 2-3 pages long, addressing an assigned topic. Given the brevity of these papers, it will be necessary to remain specific and focused, and to avoid “filler” in discussing the topic.

*\*A hard copy of each paper must be turned in to me on the due date (see course schedule). Late papers may be turned in up to two days after the due date, but 5 points per day late will be deducted.*

### Service Learning Project

As part of the First Year Experience, we will be tying in a service project with our class. Details about this will be decided and announced once the nature of the service learning project itself is known. It is most likely that you will be asked to write a one page reflection on your experience with the service learning project and how this illuminates a question or theme raised in one of our texts.

### Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative for the semester, and will most likely combine short answer questions with one or two brief essay questions. I will give you specifics regarding its structure and my expectations closer to the final exam date. *\*The final exam must be taken on the scheduled exam date, with no exceptions.*

**Please note that no extra credit assignment will be given during the course of the semester.** I typically include a bonus question on exams, but your grade is to be earned based upon the factors listed above. Make it a point to meet with me at the first sign of difficulty. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following numerical scale and corresponding grade equivalents.

|               |     |            |                    |     |           |
|---------------|-----|------------|--------------------|-----|-----------|
| A (Excellent) | 4.0 | 93% - 100% | C+                 | 2.3 | 77% - 79% |
| A-            | 3.7 | 90% - 92%  | C (Satisfactory)   | 2.0 | 72% - 76% |
| B+            | 3.3 | 87% - 89%  | C-                 | 1.7 | 69% - 71% |
| B (Good)      | 3.0 | 83% - 86%  | D (Lowest Passing) | 1.0 | 60% - 68% |
| B-            | 2.7 | 80% - 82%  | F (Unsatisfactory) | 0.0 | < 60%     |

### Miscellaneous but Important Information

#### \*Special Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for students with learning disabilities according to the needs specified for each student by the Office of Disability Support Services (207 Pryzbyla Center; 202-319-5211; <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu>) provided that the instructor has received this information in sufficient time to make the accommodation.

#### \*Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in my class. This is supported by University policy, which states the following:

“Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions where violations of academic honesty have been found, such as plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication. For undergraduate students the presumed sanction for academic dishonesty will be failure for the course. Circumstances may warrant a more serious sanction, such as suspension or expulsion. In exceptional cases, mitigating circumstances may warrant a lesser sanction than the presumed sanction. For the complete text of the university policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, see <http://policies.cua.edu>.”

Also, please consult the School of Philosophy’s “Statement on Plagiarism”, attached to this syllabus.

#### \*Campus Resources

Be sure to take advantage of the student support services offered by The Writing Center (319-4286) and the Counseling Center [personal, not academic] (319-5765), both in O’Boyle Hall; The Center for Academic Success in 204 Pryzbyla Center, which provides a variety of workshops to assist study and learning, test-taking, time management, memory improvement, and writing papers, as well as tutoring services (319-5655); and the Library (319-5070).

Course Schedule (may be changed according to instructor's discretion)

| Date               | Assigned Reading  | Assignments Due                  | Main Points & Themes   |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| M, 08/31           | N/A   |                                  | Syllabus<br>Course Intro<br>First look at <i>Apology</i>   |
| W, 09/02           | <i>Apology</i> , (to 28b)   |                                  | The position of philosophy in society<br>How philosophy differs from other studies and sciences  |
| F, 09/04           | <i>Apology</i> , to the end   |                                  | Philosophy and virtue (esp. wisdom, justice and courage)   |
| M, 09/07           | NO CLASS  |                                  |  |
| W, 09/09           | <i>Republic</i> , Book I (all)  |                                  | Relation of the <i>Republic</i> to the <i>Apology</i><br>Failed attempts to define justice<br>Thrasymachus and Socrates  |
| F, 09/11           | <i>Republic</i> , Book I  | <b>QUIZ 1</b><br>Guide Questions | Class discussion and textual analysis  |
| M, 09/14           | <i>Republic</i> , Book II (to 369b)                                     |                                  | The objections of Glaucon and Adeimantus<br>Appearances vs. reality<br>Introducing the city as a metaphor  |
| <b>Tue., 09/15</b> | <b>NO CLASS</b>   | <b>PAPER DUE BY 1:00 PM</b>      |  |
| W, 09/16           | <i>Republic</i> , Book II (to end)                                      |                                  | The truly ideal city of Socrates and the “feverish” city finally established in speech<br>“One man, one art”<br>Initial comments on warriors and their education |
| F, 09/18           | <i>Republic</i> , Book III (to 403c/d)                                  | Guide Questions                  | The “musical” education of the warriors<br>Censorship  |
| M, 09/21           | <i>Republic</i> , Book III (to end)                                     |                                  | The gymnastic education of the warriors<br>The need for balance and harmony of training<br>Guardians and Auxiliaries<br>The “noble” lie                          |
| W, 09/23           | <i>Republic</i> , Book IV (to 434d)                                     |                                  | Emphasis on the good of the whole<br>Wealth and poverty<br>The four cardinal virtues of the city   |
| F, 09/25           | <i>Republic</i> , Book IV (to end)                                      | Guide Questions                  | Socrates’ hesitation – his conditional acceptance of the definition of justice<br>Matching the city to the soul<br>Virtues and the soul                          |
| <b>Sat., 09/26</b> | <b>***Class trip to National Gallery of Art, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm***</b> |                                  |  |
| M, 09/28           | <i>Republic</i> , V (471c to end) and VI (to 487b)                      | <b>QUIZ 2</b>                    | Is the city in speech possible?<br>Philosopher kings<br>Knowledge vs. opinion  |
| W, 09/30           | <i>Republic</i> , VI (to 506c/d)  | <b>PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS</b>      | Philosophic nature<br>Philosophy vs. sophistry<br>Relation between philosophy and the city revisited   |
| F, 10/02           | <i>Republic</i> , VI (506d/e to end) and VII (to 521b/c)                | Guide Questions                  | The sun as metaphor for the Good itself<br>The divided line<br>The allegory of the cave  |
| M, 10/05           | <i>Republic</i> , IX (all)  |                                  | Tyrannical nature<br>Proofs that the philosopher (perfectly just man) is truly happier than the tyrant (perfectly unjust man)                                    |
| W, 10/07           | Review  |                                  |  |
| F, 10/09           | <b>TEST</b>   |                                  |  |
| M, 10/12           | NO CLASS  |                                  |  |
| W, 10/14           | <i>Ethics</i> I (cc. 1-5, 7-9)  |                                  | Brief intro to Aristotle   |

|   |   |                                   |   |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
|   |   |                                   | Introductory discussion of the human good and happiness   |
| F, 10/16  | <i>Ethics</i> I (13) & II (1-6)             | Guide Questions                   | Virtue – what it is and how it is achieved  |
| M, 10/19  | <i>Ethics</i> II (9), III (1-5)             |                                   | Virtue as voluntary activity<br>The relationship between the human will and reason  |
| W, 10/21  | <i>Ethics</i> VII (1, 11-14) and X (1, 3-5) |                                   | Consideration of pleasure and pain in relation to happiness and the human good<br>Pleasure is an activity   |
| F, 10/23  | <i>Ethics</i> VII (3-9)                     | <b>QUIZ 3</b><br>Guide Questions  | Contenance and incontinence   |
| M, 10/26  | <i>Ethics</i> III (6-12)                    |                                   | Temperance and bravery, the cardinal virtues of character   |
| W, 10/28  | <i>Ethics</i> V (1-2, 6-8, 10-11)           | <b>PAPER 3 DUE IN CLASS</b>       | Justice<br>Consider similarities with and differences from Plato’s concept of justice   |
| F, 10/30  | <i>Ethics</i> VI (1-2, 5-7, 9, 11, 13)      | Guide Questions                   | The virtues of thought<br>The relationship between rational virtue and moral virtue   |
| M, 11/2   | <i>Ethics</i> VIII (2-5) and IX (9)         |                                   | Friendship! Different kinds of friendship<br>The role of friendship in the happy life.  |
| W, 11/4   | Review                                      |                                   |   |
| F, 11/6   | <b>TEST</b>                                 |                                   |   |
| M, 11/9   | N/A   | <b>SERVICE PAPER DUE IN CLASS</b> | Introduction to Medieval Philosophy   |
| W, 11/11  | <i>FCWI</i> (1-7)                           |                                   | The root of evil<br>Defining evil<br>Human law/justice vs. Divine/law justice<br>Freedom of the will  |
| F, 11/13  | <i>FCWI</i> (8-16)                          | <b>QUIZ 4</b>                     | The role of reason<br>Wisdom defined<br>The proper ordering of the soul and happiness<br>The four cardinal virtues of the soul  |
| M, 11/16  | <i>FCWII</i> (1-10)                         |                                   | Our responsibility for our free will<br>Augustine’s discussion of number and wisdom   |
| W, 11/18  | <i>FCWII</i> (11-20)                        |                                   | Continued discussion of number and wisdom<br>Proving God’s existence<br>Is God the source of all things good?<br>The relation of God to creatures<br>Is free will a good thing? |
| F, 11/20  | Review                                      | Guide Questions                   |   |
| M, 11/23  | <b>TEST</b>                                 |                                   |   |
| W, 11/25  | NO CLASS                                    |                                   |   |
| F, 11/27  | NO CLASS                                    |                                   |   |
| M, 11/30  | <i>Gentiles</i> , 1-9                       |                                   | Brief intro to Aquinas<br>The relationship between faith and reason   |
| W, 12/2   | <i>Gentiles</i> , 10-13                     |                                   | Proving God’s existence   |
| F, 12/4   | <i>Gentiles</i> , 15-18, 21-22              | Guide Questions<br><b>QUIZ 5</b>  | Not just what God is, but the way in which God exists   |
| M, 12/7   | <i>Gentiles</i> , 28-34                     | <b>PAPER 4 DUE IN CLASS</b>       | The relation of God to creatures<br>How we can speak of God, analogical predication   |
| W, 12/9   | <i>Gentiles</i> , 37-42                     |                                   | (Some of) God’s attributes  |
| F, 12/11  | <b>IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>                       |                                   |   |
| M, 12/14  | Wrap up!                                    |                                   | Discussion regarding your final exam<br>Looking ahead to PHIL 202   |
| <b>*** FRIDAY, 12/18, 8:00am-10:00am - FINAL EXAM ***</b> |   |                                   |   |