

*The Catholic University of America*  
*School of Philosophy*

**First-Year Experience**  
**The Classical Mind**  
**Fall 2009**

Course: PHIL 201, section 11 [LC 101, section 14] (3 credit hours)  
Meetings: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays 11:10 - 12:00 pm  
Location: Maloney 018

Instructor: Mr. Nicholas Kruckenber, M.A.  
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**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to philosophy, using the original writing of several philosophers from the ancient and medieval periods, with a more general consideration of the history of philosophy.

First, a word about what philosophy is and why it is important. Philosophy is, in general, a love of and search for wisdom (roughly, complete knowledge about ourselves and the world). Man becomes wise in two ways, through reason and through faith. Knowledge gained through faith and reason is desirable on its own—it's good just to know, even if nothing useful comes from it. Knowledge is also desirable because happiness and moral excellence seem to depend on or consist in knowing. We study philosophy, then, to know and we know because it is good to know and because knowing will make or will help make us happy.

Our common task this semester is to try to answer (with the help of texts by Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas) the most pressing philosophical question: what is the right way to live? We cannot be indifferent to this question; it is obviously important. Along the way, we'll have to reflect on how we are looking for the answer. We'll need, that is, to figure out what reason and faith are, how they are alike, and how they are different. To do that, we'll have to think (at least a little bit) about what it means to know and finally what we and the world must be if we can know and the world can be known. In searching for wisdom, we'll be "doing philosophy." I don't think we'll come to any final answers, and that may be frustrating to some of you. Good. It should be. You cannot be a human being and not care about finding a satisfactory answer to the question about the right way to live. Satisfactory answers, though, are not easily had.

**Course Objectives**

Having "done philosophy," you will know from experience what philosophy is, what kinds of questions it asks, and how it tries to answer them. You will learn to articulate and evaluate the answers that Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas give to the question about the right way to live. By preparing for and participating in class discussions and by writing the assigned essays, you will learn to thoughtfully read difficult philosophical texts and to discuss and write about philosophical topics and texts: reading, writing, thinking, and discussing are the practical skills you'll acquire. Through class discussions, essays, a service-learning project, and a DC excursion, you will learn to reflect philosophically about the world and your own life. If we do things well, you'll also acquire in some measure intellectual and moral virtue.

## Required Texts

Aquinas, Saint Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles: God, Vol. 1*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997. (ISBN: 0-268-01678-x)

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated with an introduction, notes, and glossary by Terence Irwin. Second Edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000. (ISBN: 0-87220-464-2)

Augustine. *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Translated with an introduction and notes by John K. Ryan. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1960. (ISBN: 0-385-02955-1)

Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Translated with an introduction, notes and an interpretative essay by Allan Bloom. Second Revised Edition. New York: Basic Books, 1991. (ISBN: 0-465-06934-7)

Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Death Scene from Phaedo*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube. Third Edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001. (ISBN: 0-87220-554-1)

If you have not already purchased it for Rhetoric and Composition (ENG 101), you will also need to buy: Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. Sixth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. (ISBN: 0-312-45025-7)

## Course Requirements & Policies

### *Attendance Policy*

Come to class. Class is important—very important—and you cannot make-up what we learn through in-class discussions on your own no matter how smart you are. Surely you won't want to miss class since we'll be working on such important questions.

In case you need extra motivation, I will tell you that attendance is required and will be checked daily. Your attendance will count toward the assessment of your final grade. All sections of PHIL 201 follow a uniform attendance policy: "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. In general, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences." Three late arrivals will equal one absence. Should you come late to class, it is your responsibility to see me at the end of class to ensure that I have marked you as present. If you miss more than half of class, you will be marked absent.

### *Class Preparation & Participation*

Our work together this semester consists in the common reading of five philosophical texts and conversation about those texts. You are expected to have read each assignment, preferably twice, before the class for which it is assigned. These texts are difficult but not impossible; your diligence and fortitude will be rewarded. To read a philosophical text well means to read it philosophically. Such reading requires that you do very many things at once. As you read you should constantly analyze, summarize, compare, contrast, remember, anticipate, distinguish, assess, review and reconsider the words on the page. Above all else, however, we must put questions to these texts. Only by posing questions to the author will we ever begin to understand him. It is nearly impossible to read in this way without a pencil in hand: as you read you should be taking notes, outlining, and jotting down questions. To help orient your reading, I will provide reading questions for each assignment. While I will not collect these questions, having thoroughly answered them will prepare you for class discussions, essays, and exams.

Active, regular participation is expected. Your class participation grade is based on your contribution to class discussions and your attentiveness to our common task. You should come to class prepared to ask and answer questions. That means in the first instance having carefully read and considered the assignment. To contribute to the class you need not have understood everything perfectly; since a great

deal of philosophy consists in refining the questions one wants answered, posing thoughtful questions is a very great contribution indeed. I expect you to have the text we are reading with you each class.

#### *Learning Community Dinner, D.C. Excursion, and Service-learning Project*

We will meet twice outside of our regular class meetings. Near the beginning of the semester, we will eat dinner together as a Learning Community; details will be provided soon. Later in the semester, we will take a trip together into Washington, DC. An essay assignment will be set in connection with the DC excursion. More information about the excursion and the assignment will be provided soon.

One goal of the First-Year Experience program is for all students to engage in some form of community service and to reflect on it in a serious way. You will need to take part in a service project through the Office of Campus Ministry and then, later in the semester, subject your experience to philosophical analysis. Mrs. Emmjolee Mendoza Waters in the Office of Campus Ministry coordinates these service projects; contact her or stop by the Campus Ministry office to find a service project that interests you. You can find information about service projects at <http://service.cua.edu/CUAServiceOpportunities>. Your service project must be completed by November 2<sup>nd</sup> and an essay assignment related to your service project will be due after that date.

Your participation in the DC excursion and the service-learning project will in part determine your participation grade.

#### *Exams*

A midterm and final examination will be held according to the schedule below; an optional review session will be scheduled before each. The final will be held at the time and location appointed by the university. Barring extraordinary circumstances, students are required to take these exams as scheduled. Know now that badly planned travel at the end of the semester does not constitute an extraordinary circumstance. If you cannot make a test date, please tell me *well before* the test date. I reserve the right to refuse a make-up exam if I do not think the circumstances warrant it.

#### *Essays*

You will write four essays; topics will be assigned. Your papers will be graded primarily on the accurate and precise use of philosophical terms and concepts, the thoughtfulness, cogency, and sophistication of your argument, and the careful and faithful interpretation of philosophical texts. I will also consider the quality of your writing, including style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. I encourage you to submit drafts. To allow time for me to read and return your paper, you must submit typed, hardcopy drafts at least 3 class periods before the due date.

I do not accept papers electronically; all papers must be printed, stapled and handed to me. Papers are due at the beginning of class (printed and stapled) and late papers will be marked down ten percentage points (one letter grade) per day late. Late papers will only be accepted for one week after the due date—after that you will receive no credit for the assignment. Late papers must be submitted in hardcopy to me personally; I will not grade your paper until you give me a printed copy. Because I am not on campus everyday, you may email me an *identical* version of your paper to establish the day the paper was finished and then hand in the hardcopy at our next meeting.

## Grading

Your grade will be determined according to the rubrics below. I do not grade on a curve and I do not offer extra credit.

Class Participation	15%	A	94-100%	4.0	Excellent
First Essay	5%	A-	90-93%	3.7	
Second Essay	10%	B+	87-89%	3.3	
Third Essay	15%	B	83-86%	3.0	Good
Fourth Essay	20%	B-	80-82%	2.7	
Midterm exam	15%	C+	77-79%	2.3	
Final exam	20%	C	73-76%	2.0	Satisfactory
		C-	70-72%	1.7	
		D	60-69%	1.0	Lowest passing
		F	0-59%	0.0	Failing

### \*\*\* Important Qualification \*\*\*

You must submit all four essays to pass the course. I've set the value of each essay low so that you will not sink yourself by poor performance on any one essay, particularly those essays assigned near the beginning of the semester before you have really figured out what you're doing. Mathematically, then, it is possible to skip one, two, or even three essays and still pass the course provided you perform well enough in class and on the exams. That is a most unfortunate consequence of a policy intended to benefit you. Because all four essays are important, I require that you write them all. Failure to submit any of the essays will result in a final grade of "F."

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic honesty is expected of all CUA students. Faculty are required to initiate the imposition of sanctions when they find violations of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, improper use of one's own work, 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 texts of the University policy and procedures regarding Student Academic Dishonesty, including requirements for appeals, see <http://policies.cua.edu>. Also consult the School of Philosophy "Statement on Plagiarism" (attached). It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this information. No further warnings will be given.

## Campus Resources

CUA offers many helpful resources: the Writing Center (111 O'Boyle Hall, 319.4286), the Counseling Center [personal] (127 O'Boyle Hall, 319.5765), tutoring and academic support from the Center for Academic Success (Pryzbyla Center, 319.5655), and the library (319.5070). Make full use of these resources.

## 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 I have received this information in sufficient time to make the accommodation.

## Schedule

\*Schedule of readings and assignments is subject to change at my discretion as circumstances warrant. Sufficient notice will be given.

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
M, Aug 31	Introduction; syllabus; is there a right way to live or is it all just relative?	---
W, Sept 02	Some remarks about reading the <i>Republic</i> ; outline of the dialogue and major themes foreshadowed; persuasion and power: founding the right kind of political community; preliminary definitions of justice (Cephalus's and Polemarchus's)	<i>Republic</i> 1 (327a – 336c)
F, Sept 04	Thrasymachus's definition; justice is the advantage of the stronger; Socrates's refutation	<i>Republic</i> 1 (336c – 347a)
M, Sept 07	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY	
W, Sept 09	Glaucon's choice: is a life of justice or injustice better?	<i>Republic</i> 1 (347a – 354c)
F, Sept 11	Glaucon's and Adeimantus's challenge: prove that justice is better <i>in itself and not for its consequences</i>	<i>Republic</i> 2 (357a – 368c)
M, Sept 14	Socrates's answer; founding a city; the analogy between the city and the soul; the healthy city and the feverish city	<i>Republic</i> 2 (368c – 383c) <b>*first essay due*</b>
W, Sept 16	Education (gymnastics and music); authority (justified power—who should rule?); guardians	<i>Republic</i> 3 (All, especially 410b – 417b)
F, Sept 18	Adeimantus's accusation and Socrates's apology: happiness; virtues in the city and virtues in the soul	<i>Republic</i> 4 (All)
M, Sept 21	Obstacles to the realization of the city-founded-in-speech; the public and the private; philosopher-kings	<i>Republic</i> 5 (449a – 474a)
W, Sept 23	The soul of the philosopher; knowledge and opinion; the proper object of knowledge (what do we know when we know?)	<i>Republic</i> 5 (474a – 480a) <i>Republic</i> 6 (484a – 502c)
F, Sept 25	The Good; three images: the sun image, the divided line image, and the cave image; philosophy and the city	<i>Republic</i> 6 (502c – 511e) <i>Republic</i> 7 (514a – 521c)
M, Sept 28	Doubts about the soul	<i>Republic</i> 9 (588b – 592b) <i>Republic</i> 10 (608b – 614a) J. Klein, "The Divisions of the Soul in Plato's <i>Republic</i> " [available through BlackBoard]
W, Sept 30	The Myth of Er; the praise of the private life	<i>Republic</i> 10 (614b – 621d)
F, Oct 02	Concluding remarks about the <i>Republic</i> ; catch-up day	[no new reading] <b>*second essay due*</b>
M, Oct 05	Philosophy and politics	<i>Apology</i> (All)
W, Oct 07	Happiness; reason in human action, as specific difference and criterion of excellence	<i>NE</i> 1.1-5 and 1.7-8
W, Oct 07	OPTIONAL: midterm exam review 7:00 – 8:30 pm (room TBA)	
F, Oct 09	MIDTERM EXAM	
M, Oct 12	NO CLASS: COLUMBUS DAY	
W, Oct 14	The two-part soul; virtue as excellence and right-ordering of the soul	<i>NE</i> 1.13
F, Oct 16	Virtue, vice, continence, and incontinence (four degrees of moral excellence)	<i>NE</i> 2 and 7.1
M, Oct 19	Some virtues considered: bravery, temperance, and magnanimity	<i>NE</i> 3.6-4.3
W, Oct 21	Justice	<i>NE</i> 5
F, Oct 23	Voluntary and involuntary action, choice, and moral responsibility	<i>NE</i> 3.1-5 and <i>NE</i> 7.2-3
M, Oct 26	Three kinds of friendship; friendship as the peak of moral excellence	<i>NE</i> 8
W, Oct 28	Friendship, self-love, and selfishness	<i>NE</i> 9
F, Oct 30	The intellectual virtues; prudence, in particular; relation of intellectual to moral virtues	<i>NE</i> 6
M, Nov 02	A final argument about happiness; the contemplative life	<i>NE</i> 10 <b>*third essay due*</b>
W, Nov 04	God, that he is the ultimate good and the proper end of human action	<i>Confessions</i> 1
F, Nov 06	Sin; the will (cf. w/ <i>NE</i> 3.1-5 and 7.2-3)	<i>Confessions</i> 2
M, Nov 09	God, philosophy, and the search for wisdom	<i>Confessions</i> 3
W, Nov 11	Friendship (cf. w/ <i>NE</i> 8-9)	<i>Confessions</i> 4
F, Nov 13	False conceptions about God; happiness and knowledge	<i>Confessions</i> 5
M, Nov 16	Scepticism and scripture; on the reasonableness of faith in scripture; search for happiness	<i>Confessions</i> 6
W, Nov 18	Philosophy and faith (or, what the pagan philosophers don't know)	<i>Confessions</i> 7
F, Nov 20	Providence; the <i>act</i> of faith	<i>Confessions</i> 8
M, Nov 23	Death: Augustine and Plato; concluding remarks on Augustine	<i>Confessions</i> 9
W, Nov 25	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING	
F, Nov 27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING	
M, Nov 30	Aristotle and Augustine compared; God, philosophy, and happiness	reread <i>Confessions</i> 1.1 and <i>NE</i> 10.7 <b>*fourth essay due*</b>
W, Dec 02	Faith and reason	<i>SCG</i> 1-9
F, Dec 04	- continued	[no new reading]
M, Dec 07	Whether the existence of God can be proven	<i>SCG</i> 10-12
W, Dec 09	Proofs for the existence of God	<i>SCG</i> 13
F, Dec 11	- continued	[no new reading]
M, Dec 14	The kind of knowledge we can have about God; analogy between God and creatures, way of remotion	<i>SCG</i> 14, 28-30, 34
M, Dec 14	OPTIONAL: final exam review 7:00 – 8:30 pm (room TBA)	
W, Dec 16	FINAL EXAM, 1:30 - 3:30, Maloney 018	