

Philosophy 201: The Classical Mind

Syllabus

Fall 2009

The Catholic University of America
School of Philosophy

PHIL 201 Section 3 (3 credits): MWF 9:10-10:00

First Year Experience Course, Learning Community 46

Instructor: Mr. Gregory Canning, M.A.

Room: 027 Regan Hall

Office: 200B Aquinas Hall

Office Hours: _____ (and available by appointment)

Office Telephone: x5636 (only available during office hours)

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Instructor Background: Educated at UNC-Charlotte in Philosophy with minors in History and Western Antiquity and Classical Languages, B.A. 2005. M.A. in Philosophy from the Catholic University of America, 2007. ABD (“all but dissertation”) for the Ph.D.—currently writing my dissertation on the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. My research interests include: English philosophy, German philosophy, philosophy of history, and phenomenology.

Course Description and Objectives: “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.” This course is the pre-requisite for PHIL 202 (“The Modern Mind”), both of which an undergraduate must pass in order to graduate.

Ancient and medieval philosophy are important for understanding the intellectual development of the West. Modern philosophy is (somewhat) incomprehensible without prior familiarity with the origins of the Western intellectual tradition. The goals of this course are as follows: 1) to prepare you for the following course on modern philosophy; 2) to show why philosophy is integral to the Catholic tradition; and, 3) to help you begin to develop the ability to read, write, and think philosophically, which will be useful in any field of study. In order to accomplish these goals we will read some of the works of the ancient and medieval philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas. By the end of this course you should be able to discuss intelligently the reasons for the harmony of faith and reason that persist in the Catholic tradition to this day.

Some of the important questions that will be addressed in the course include: What is philosophy? What is the ancient understanding of nature (and, more specifically, human nature)? What makes philosophy different from theology? Is there a philosophical understanding of God? How are faith and reason harmonious?

Required Texts:

Each student **must** have his or her own copy of each of these books and bring them to class on the appropriate days.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles. Book One: God*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

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

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Plato. *The Republic*, 2nd ed. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1991.

_____. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, 3rd ed. Translated by G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

Recommended Texts:

You do not have to have this text, but it is a good idea to consult this manual for style when writing your papers. You can find it in the reference section of the library on the first floor.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. [CU Mullen Reference: LB2369.T8 2007]

Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation. Attendance is required and will be checked on a daily basis. 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. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class. If the student is not present at that point, then he or she will be counted as "absent." Do not make it a habit of leaving class early or arriving late—I will start marking you as "absent" without warning you. If it is necessary for you to leave early or you know you will be arriving late one day, please let me know ahead of time. Also be sure to have read the section of the book indicated in the **Course Schedule** (below), so that you will be prepared to contribute to the discussion of the text in class.

2. DC excursion. As part of the First Year Experience, we will be trying to make use of the vast resources of Washington to help understand philosophy better. The details of this trip will be made available as soon as possible. Most likely the excursion will be coordinated with one of the papers. This will count as part of the **Attendance** grade below.
3. Service Learning. As part of the First Year Experience, you will be required to perform some service project for the DC community. The details of this trip will be made available as soon as possible. Most likely the service project will be coordinated with one of the papers. This will count as part of the **Attendance** grade below.
4. Papers. Details concerning the content of the papers will be discussed at the appropriate time. These papers will be more like short essays in which you answer a question from a list distributed a week beforehand in class. These papers are meant to challenge you to write philosophically (i.e., make a point about something a philosopher said *with supporting evidence* from the text and to do so with an economy of words). All papers must be printed in 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins must be 1-inch. Except for the beginning matter (title/author/class) and footnotes all text must be double-spaced. Papers must be stapled by the student. Papers are turned in on off-class days (Tuesday or Thursday see the **Course Schedule**) to me in my office by 5:00 p.m. I will deduct 5 points per day for late papers (papers are considered late if not turned in on the date assigned). Late papers will only be accepted as follows: E-mail me a copy of your paper and then turn in a hardcopy to me. This will reduce the severity of the deduction to your grade.
5. Tests. Tests take the form of in-class essays. They give you the chance to show that you understand all of the aspects of the philosopher's teaching and explain to me intelligently how everything is connected. Should you miss a test *for a good reason* you may make it up a week after the assigned date in the course schedule. I reserve the right to determine whether or not the reason is valid for missing the test.
6. Quizzes. Quizzes take the form of short answer questions. These questions will be distributed beforehand, so that you will already know what I will ask; however, the questions I choose to put on the quiz will be random (usually 2-3 short answers). **Please note:** I will not allow you to make up any of the quizzes if you should miss the class on the assigned date.
7. Final Exam. There will be a cumulative final that covers the material of the semester, which will consist of two essays. The final exam will take place in the regular classroom Friday, December 18th (8:00-10:00 a.m.).

-Breakdown of Final Grade

Tests (4)	10% each (40% total)	Attendance	14%
Quizzes (8)	2% each (16% total)	Final	15%
Papers (3)	5% each (15% total)		

Grading Scale:	Quality Points:	Numerical Range:	Grading Equivalence:
A	4.0	100%-93%	Excellent
A-	3.7	92%-90%	
B+	3.3	89%-87%	Good
B	3.0	86%-83%	
B-	2.7	82%-80%	
C+	2.3	79%-77%	Satisfactory
C	2.0	76%-73%	
C-	1.7	72%-70%	
D	1.0	69%-60%	Passing
F	0.0	below 60%	Failure

Plagiarism and Cheating: 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, consult the School of Philosophy “Statement on Plagiarism,” which will be distributed in class.

No form of cheating will be tolerated in my class. In accordance with university policy, I will fail you if I should catch you cheating on any assignment.

Miscellaneous Information:

-Campus Resources: When needed, be sure to take advantage of the student support services offered by The Writing Center (319-4286) and The Counseling Center [personal] (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).

-Learning Disabilities: Accommodations will be made for students with learning disabilities according to the needs specified for each student by the Office of Disability Support Services and which the instructor has received in sufficient time to make the accommodation. Please contact Emily Singer for assistance in this matter—207 Pryzbyla Center, 319-5211—or visit the office’s website: <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu>.

-Nota Bene: I will not offer extra credit at any point in the semester (though I usually put an extra credit question or two on all of my tests/quizzes). If you think that you need help, please schedule an appointment with me so that we can meet. The halfway point in the semester is *not* the time to schedule an appointment (after you find out that you’re failing)—do it when you get your first grade that you find unsatisfactory or when you think you need some extra assistance in order to understand something.