

PHIL 110 (Sections 5 and 12), Fall 2001
MWF 12:10-1:00 or 2:10-3:00
Dr. Jeffrey Paris
Office Hours: T 3:30-4:30 a.m.; W 3:30-5:30 p.m.; by appt.

Great Philosophical Questions
Office: Campion D-108H
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SYLLABUS

Hello, and welcome to **Great Philosophical Questions**. In this course we will explore both classic and contemporary works of philosophy, with particular attention to issues of subjectivity and knowledge. How is it possible to have knowledge of the world around us, and what does knowing about this world require in terms of self-knowing? What coherent account of the social, raced, desiring self can be developed that gives us access to a world of complexity, chaos, and indifference? No prior experience in philosophy is required. What is required is a willingness to engage in honest and respectful dialogue, a curiosity regarding the world around us and as seen through the eyes of others, and a commitment to completing both reading and writing assignments in a timely and engaged fashion.

TEXTS

- Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. New York: Penguin.
- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon. (Reprinted: Vintage.)
- Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race & Rights: Diary of a Law Professor*. Cambridge: Harvard U. Press.
- Optional Supplementary Reading: I.F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Optional Supplementary Reading: Susan Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity*. New York: SUNY.
- Optional Supplementary Reading: Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*. W.W. Norton.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

It is possible for every student in this class to receive an "A". You are not in competition with any other students. Your grade will depend on your effort, comprehension, writing skills, and meeting the specific demands of each assignment.

- (1) **Study Guides (25 points)**. For each reading, I will provide a Study Guide (or Guides) intended to assist students in identifying core concepts and main arguments from the reading. Study Guides are due at the beginning of class the day that the reading is discussed in class (see Reading Calendar below for specific dates). Incomplete Study Guides will be returned and may be revised for credit. A total of 15 Study Guides must be completed by the end of class. No late Study Guides will be accepted. The *Analysis Question* portion of the Study Guides must be typed (one page). 15 Study Guides are required for full credit=25 points; 13/14=20 points; 11/12=15 points; 9/10 =10 points; >9=0 points.
- (2) **Essays (3 at 15 points and 1 Final Essay at 25 points) and Peer Comments (5 points)**. We will write four essays in this class. On September 21, students will turn in a 1500 word Draft Essay (approximately 4 pages) on a topic provided by the Instructor. Within one week after this Draft Essay is returned, the student will rewrite the Essay in *less than* 1000 words, incorporating the Comments of the Instructor. The same process will be followed for the next two Essays, with the exception that Comments will be provided by your classmates in the form of Peer Comments. (All students are therefore required to write at least one set of Peer Comments on another's Essay.) Though we will read five texts during the semester, you are required to write only on four; however, the first (on Plato) and the Final Essay (on Williams, which will not go through the Draft process) are each required. The Final Essay of approximately 2000 words (5-6 pages) is due at the time of (and in lieu of) our scheduled final examination. The Instructor has been known to accept Late Essays under the condition that the student speak with me before arriving at class the day it is due. Finally, additional assignments for replacement or extra credit on the Supplementary Reading will be available.
- (3) **Attendance & Participation**. Since the Study Guides must be turned in at the beginning of class, they help to ensure consistent attendance. The Instructor also reserves the right to take attendance at any point during a class session. Any student who misses four classes (almost 10% of the course) will have their final grade reduced by ½ grade, and every absence after four will result in an additional ½ grade reduction. Absences can be excused by means of an appropriate and verifiable reason, at the discretion of the Instructor and only if notification precedes the class (i.e., a message on my phone or email). In-class participation will be evaluated at the end of the quarter by the Instructor and used to determine borderline grades.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- (1) You should expect to work three hours out of class for every hour spent in class, thus a total of about ten hours each week.
- (2) All writing submitted (with the sole exception of the “core concepts” section of the Study Guides) must be typed; double-spaced or space-and-a-half; 1” margins; type size no bigger than 12 point. Do not attach cover sheets or plastic bindings, which are merely the gratuitous destruction of trees or petroleum resources.
- (3) The Instructor reserves the right to adjust reading and writing assignments described in this syllabus with notice provided in class to the students.
- (4) Please come to class on time, prepared to engage in attentive and active listening and respectful commentary. Please turn off all electronic communications equipment (beepers, phones, etc.) which would provide a distraction to others in the class. Lateness may be counted as an absence, at the discretion of the Instructor, and repeated disruptions can lead to removal from the class.
- (5) I am available throughout each week for consultation, questions, concerns, etc. Refer to the office hours and contact information at the beginning of this Syllabus, but also feel free to drop by my office any time, or call to see if I am there. If not, leave a message and I’ll be back with you shortly to arrange a time to meet. You may contact me through email, as well.
- (6) This is not a composition class. I expect that all students have a basic proficiency in reading and writing. I encourage all students who are concerned about their writing ability to contact the Writing Center in Cowell Hall, Room 227 (422-6713). Additional inquiries and training regarding study habits may be obtained from the Learning Center (422-6715).
- (7) Gender-neutral writing in philosophy is the accepted practice recommended by the American Philosophical Association. The words “man” and “mankind” do not refer to humanity; phrases such as “everyone has a right to his own property” contain a faulty pronoun reference (substitute ‘abortion’ for ‘property’ to see why). Appropriate language use includes, for example: “humanity”, “humankind”, “her/his”, “his or her”, etc. When quoting writers who utilize non-inclusive language, leave their words in the original. Gender specific language is, of course, appropriate when referring to a gender class such as “men” or “women.” Contact the instructor if you have additional questions. I strongly encourage you to read *Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language* by Virginia L. Warren, originally published in the *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* in February 1986 (Vol. 59, Number 3, pp. 471-482); it can be found at the APA web site <<http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/publications/texts/nonsexist.html>>.
- (8) From the *Catalog*: “The University expects students to be honest in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is viewed as an ethical issue and a violation of the principles of justice and personal responsibility inherent in the University’s ideals as expressed in its Statement of Mission and Goals. In particular, students must refrain from plagiarism [the misuse of published or unpublished works of another by claiming them as one’s own], cheating and collusion in connection with examinations and must acknowledge fully all sources and all assistance received in work submitted to the faculty for evaluation. In the event of academic dishonesty in class assignments or examinations, the instructor will normally assign an “F” with no possibility of making up the grade by means of additional work. In serious cases the instructor will normally assign an “F” for the course and will notify the Academic Honesty Committee. Specific information on the policy and procedures regarding Academic Honesty are available in the Offices of the Deans and Vice President for Academic Affairs and in the Policies section of this catalog.”
- (9) Students with demonstrated disabilities are encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible in order to identify any ways in which your disability may be accommodated, and to contact Disability Related Services, University Center, Room 310 (422-2613).
- (10) Students experiencing any kinds of personal and/or academic difficulties are encouraged to utilize the free services of the Counseling Center, located on the ground floor of Gillson Hall (422-6352), which can assist you with interpersonal relationship problems, family difficulties, depression, stress, sexual concerns, substance abuse, time management, self-esteem, eating problems, anxiety, and acquaintance rape. Individual, couples, and group counseling are available, as well as referrals for longer-term counseling or a more specialized approach.
- (11) After Census Day (September 14), students who withdraw from the class will receive a “W” on their transcript. If you expect to withdraw from the class, I encourage you to decide prior to that date. The final date for all withdrawals is November 2.

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READING CALENDAR:

Introductory Meeting: August 24

Week Two: August 27, 29, & 31

- Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*

Week Three: September 5, & 7

- **Labor Day Holiday: September 3 (No class)**
- Plato, *Apology*, *Crito*

Week Four: September 10, 12, & 14

- Plato, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Allegory of the Cave* (handout)

Week Five: September 17, 19, & 21

- Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* Books I, II, & III
- **Draft Essay #1 Due September 21**

Week Six: September 24, 26, & 28

- Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* Books IV & V

Week Seven: October 1, 3, & 5

- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*—Meditation One & Two
- **Draft Essay #2 Due October 5**

Week Eight: October 8, 10, & 12

- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*—Meditations Two and Three

Week Nine: October 15, 17, & 19

- Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*—Meditations Four, Five, and Six

Week Ten: October 22, 24, & 26

- Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*—Preface(s), Introduction, and Chapters 1-3
- **Draft Essay #3 Due October 26**

Week Eleven: October 29 & 31, November 2

- Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*—Chapters 4-7

Week Twelve: November 5, 7, & 9

- Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*—Chapters 8-11

Week Thirteen: November 12, 14, & 16

- Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*—Chapters 1-4
- **Draft Essay #4 Due November 16**

Week Fourteen: November 19 & 21

- **Thanksgiving Holiday: November 23 (No class)**
- Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*—Chapters 5-6

Week Fifteen: November 26, 28, & 30

- Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*—Chapters 7-9

Week Sixteen: December 3 & 5

- Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*—Chapters 10-12
- **Study Day: December 6 (No class)**