

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2023, PHIL-1010-02, 3 Credit Hours
9:30am – 10:45am, Tues. & Thurs., NH 201

Instructor: Jeffrey Colgan
Office location: 107 Newcomb Hall
Office hours: After class or by appointment
Email: jcolgan@tulane.edu

Course Description:

What is philosophy? In what sorts of human situations does it arise? What is philosophy intended to do, if anything? In this course, students will engage with major philosophical themes and questions as represented in the works of certain canonical authors of the Western philosophical tradition. Students will gain a basic facility with philosophical argument identification and evaluation as well as how these philosophical issues remain relevant to our contemporary lives. But most importantly, this course will provide students an opportunity to *do* philosophy—to engage in the practice of philosophy with fellow students and the instructor.

The guiding question for our course will be the fundamental ethical question: How is one to live? We shall use this question to explore various ethical systems (along with their metaphysical commitments and political consequences), meta-ethical concerns in psychology and language, and the various methods for *doing* philosophy.

Course Goals/Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will have:

- Developed strategies for engaging with challenging philosophical texts.
- Employed methods for identifying and evaluating philosophical arguments—in both their original contexts and applied to the student's own life and experiences.
- Articulated certain key concepts and themes in a variety of Western philosophical traditions.
- Expressed their own ideas clearly to both fellow students and the instructor.
- Articulated and defended philosophical positions in both writing and speech.
- Explored the contemporary relevance of certain major philosophical themes and questions.

Program-Level Outcomes (Major/Minor)

This course satisfies an elective requirement for the philosophy major or minor.

Core Curriculum Outcomes

This course counts for the core curriculum requirements of Global Perspectives, Textual & Historic Perspectives and Writing Tier-1.

Suggested Texts:

A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues, edited by C.D.C. Reeve. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 9781603848114

Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle. Translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226026756

[Note: all readings will be made available to students on Canvas. Students may use alternative translations of core texts.]

Grade Components

Attendance/participation (20%)

Reading responses (25%)

Midterm exam (25%)

Final oral exam (30%)

Attendance/Participation (20%)

Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are permitted, but each subsequent absence will be penalized with a reduction in the attendance/participation component of the course grade. Greater than 5 unexcused absences (i.e., 3 more than the 2 permitted) may result in failing the course. Arriving more than 10 minutes late to class will result in an unexcused absence.

Students are responsible for notifying instructors about absences that result from serious illnesses, injuries, or critical personal problems. Medical excuses are issued by the Student Health Center in the following instances: illnesses or injuries that involve hospitalization, a partial or complete withdrawal due to medical reasons, or a missed examination for a medical condition being treated by the Student Health Center. In all of these instances, medical information will be released only with the student's written permission. Instructors are authorized to lower the grades of students who are absent excessively without a satisfactory excuse. With the approval of the Newcomb-Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

Each student is expected to arrive to class on time, prepared to discuss the assigned reading, meaning that they have the reading materials with them and have carefully read the assigned texts in advance of the class meeting. Full participation points will require evidence of having thought through the material by being able to discuss the readings in class and to ask engaged questions relevant to the reading(s).

Reading Responses (25%)

Students will submit a short reading response before each class. The responses will have two components: (1) a three sentence summary of the reading that succinctly explains the author's position and (2) a short (~150 words) reflection on the reading. This short reflection can be a question that you have about the reading, a connection between the reading and some issue outside of class, or your philosophical evaluation of the author's position(s).

Reading responses must be submitted on Canvas by **11:59pm CT** the night before each class (i.e. Monday night before Tuesday classes and Wednesday night before Thursday classes). No late assignments will be accepted. Reading responses will be graded pass/fail.

Midterm Exam (25%)

A comprehensive exam covering the material from the first half of the semester will be administered in class on **February 28th**. Further information about this will be provided in class.

Final Exam (30%)

A comprehensive oral exam covering the material from the entire semester will be administered at the end of the semester. Further information about this will be provided in class.

Grading Scale

A = 100 – 93

A- = 92.99 – 90

B+=89.99–87

B=86.99–83

B- =82.99–80

C+=79.99–77

C=76.99–73

C- =72.99–70

D+ = 69.99 – 67

D = 66.99 – 63

D- = 62.99– 60

F = 59.99 - 0

Use of Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, computers, etc.) is strictly prohibited. You may not use electronic devices unless you receive written permission from the instructor. The use of any electronic device in class without permission will result in a substantial penalty to your attendance/ participation grade. Students with permission to use electronic devices must sit at the front of the class.

Students are required to have physical copies of the readings in class. As all readings will be posted on Canvas, please print out the readings before class.

Course Schedule

Week 1: What is Philosophy?

T_1.17_Class overview. Introduction to the question: How is one to act?

R_1.19_Plato, *Euthyphro*, 2a–9e

Week 2: A Defense of Philosophy

T_1.24_Plato, *Euthyphro*, 10a–16a

R_1.26_Plato, *Apology*, 17a–35d

Week 3: The Philosopher and Death

T_1.31_Plato, *Apology*, 35e–42a

R_2.2_Plato, *Crito*

Week 4: What is Virtue? Can it be taught? And a Theory of Knowledge

T_2.7_Plato, *Meno*, 70a–80e

R_2.9_Plato, *Meno*, 81a–89d

Week 5: What is Virtue? Can it be taught? And a Theory of Knowledge

T_2.14_Plato, *Meno*, 89d–100c

R_2.16_Plato, *Phaedo*, selections

Week 6: Review Week

T_2.21_NO CLASS (Mardi Gras)

R_2.23_ Review Class

Week 7: Midterm Week

T_2.28_Midterm Exam

R_3.2_NO CLASS

Week 8: Eudaimonia

T_3.7_Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I. 1–6

R_3.9_Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I. 7–13

Week 9: Moral Virtue

T_3.14_Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II. 1–5

R_3.16_Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II. 6–9

Week 10: The Supreme Principle of Morality

T_3.21_Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface

R_3.23_Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Selections

Week 11: Nietzsche and the Natural History of Morals

T_3.28_Nietzsche, Selections

R_3.30_Nietzsche, Selections

Spring Break

T_4.4_NO CLASS

R_4.6_NO CLASS

Week 12: Existentialism and Existentialist Feminism

T_4.11_Sartre, “Existentialism Is a Humanism”

R_4.13_de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction

Week 13: Contemporary Topics: Environmental Ethics

T_4.18_Leopold, “The Land Ethic”

R_4.20_Leopold, “The Land Ethic”

Week 14: Contemporary Topics: Environmental Ethics

T_4.25_Berry, “The Idea of a Local Economy”

R_4.27_Routley, “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?”

Week 15

T_5.2_Oral exams

R_5.4_Oral exams

Exam Week (5.9–5.11)

Oral exams

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Tulane University is committed to offering classes that are accessible. If you anticipate or encounter disability-related barriers in a course, please contact the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility to establish reasonable accommodations. If approved by Goldman, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. **Goldman Center contact information:** Email: goldman@tulane.edu; Phone (504) 862-8433; Website: accessibility.tulane.edu

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

Unless I indicate differently on instructions, all assignments and exams are to be completed individually and without any study aid, including textbooks, class notes, or online sites. If you have any question about whether a resource is acceptable, you must ask the instructor rather than assume.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement (EDI).

"Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are important [Tulane values](#) that are key drivers of academic excellence in our learning environments. In our drive for academic excellence, we seek to ensure that students, faculty, and staff across diverse social identities, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences can thrive - especially those from underrepresented and underserved communities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, social class, international, veterans, religious minorities, age, and any other classification protected by applicable law - see [Tulane's Nondiscrimination Policy](#)). In order to build a supportive culture and climate for every member of our community, we recognize that we each of have unique EDI strengths to share with others and that we also have areas for EDI growth, learning, and change. This EDI commitment and cultural humility helps us collectively build a university community and culture where everyone experiences belonging."

Religious accommodation policy

Per Tulane's religious accommodation policy as stated at the bottom [Tulane's academic calendar](#), I will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are able to observe religious holidays without jeopardizing their ability to fulfill their academic obligations. Excused absences do not relieve the student from the responsibility for any course work required during the period of absence. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester about their intent to observe any holidays that fall on a class day or on the day of the final exam.

Title IX:

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either "Confidential" or "Private" as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

Confidential	Private
<p><i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277 ▪ The Line (24/7) (504) 264-6074 ▪ Student Health Center (504) 865-5255 ▪ Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) (504) 654-9543 	<p><i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case Management & Victim Support Services (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu ▪ Tulane University Police (TUPD) Uptown - (504) 865-5911 Downtown – (504) 988-5531 ▪ Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration (504) 865-5611 or titleix@tulane.edu ▪ Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7) (504) 920-9900

Emergency Preparedness & Response:

<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and/or phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens ▪ Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given ▪ Do not use elevators ▪ Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe <p>Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>RUN</u> – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible ▪ <u>HIDE</u> – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT ▪ <u>FIGHT</u> – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort ▪ For more information or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Download the Everbridge app from the App Store or Google Play store ▪ The Report feature allows you to silently and discreetly communicate with TUPD dispatchers ▪ The SOS button allows you to notify TUPD if you need help ▪ The Safe Corridor button serves as a virtual escort and allows you to send check-in notifications to TUPD

From: Tulane Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response