Philosophy 125 (Section 3) – Great Philosophers
Washington University in St. Louis
Fall 2012

Essential Items
Instructor: Martin Turner

Class Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30 – 4:00, Eads #102

Office Hours: Monday 1:30 – 3:00, Tuesday 4:15 – 5:30, or by appointment, in Wilson Hall #107

Contact Information: Email (preferred): mturner@wustl.edu
Phone: 314.363.9519

Overview
In this course, students will be introduced to some of the enduring questions of philosophy via a study of primary texts written by some of the most important figures in philosophical history. The course assumes no background in philosophy, and requires only that students be prepared to read and consider difficult material carefully, and come to class everyday prepared to participate in discussion. Among the central issues we will hit upon in this course are: What justifies a government in using force to coerce citizens to follow the laws? What do we really know about the world outside of ourselves? Is morality based upon religion? Is morality a human construction? Is it practically rational to live a just, moderate life? What makes an action the right thing to do, or a morally good thing to do?

The goals of the course are:

1) To give students an appreciation for the work of a few of the greatest thinkers in philosophical history;

2) To give students a basic acquaintance with some of the central, ongoing debates in philosophy;

3) To develop students’ ability to construct and communicate philosophical arguments, both orally and in writing.

The exact set of “great philosophers” studied in the Washington University Great Philosophers course varies a bit from one term to another. For this incarnation of the course, we will read the following five:

Plato (428/427 BCE – 347 BCE, Greece)
René Descartes (1596–1650, France)
John Locke (1632–1704, England)
David Hume (1711-1776, Scotland)
John Stuart Mill (1806–1873, England)

Texts
The books should all be available in the Washington University bookstore (and likely more cheaply online). Students are very strongly encouraged to acquire the listed editions of the texts.


**Grading Procedures**

There are four written assignments in this course – three in-class tests and one paper. Additionally, a small percentage of the grade will be determined by attendance and class participation. The weighting breakdown is as follows:

- **Test #1:** 20%
- **Test #2:** 20%
- **Test #3:** 25%
- **Paper:** 30%
- **Attendance/Participation:** 5% (bonus points for excellent participation at instructor’s discretion)

The grading scale is as follows:

- A+ 97-100%
- A 93-96%
- A- 92-90%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 83-86%
- B- 80-82%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 73-76%
- C- 70-72%
- D+ 67-69%
- D 66-65%
- F <64%

Students must turn in all graded work in order to pass this class. Students taking the class pass/fail must earn a grade of 73 (C) or higher in order to pass. Please note this means that a C minus is not a passing grade for those taking the course pass/fail.

Auditors must miss no more than five class meetings in order to receive credit.

**Tests:**

The tests will be administered in class and students will be given the entire period. The tests are primarily designed to see whether students understand the readings, and will consist mainly of short answer questions. However, the final test will also include an essay, in which students will be asked to discuss and critically evaluate an important issue in some detail.

The first test will be on October 2, and will cover the material on Plato and Descartes. The second test will be on November 15, and will cover the material on Locke and Hume. The final test will be on December 6 (the last day of class). The short answer questions on the final test will only cover the material on Mill. However, students will be expected to bring together material from throughout the course in writing an essay on the third test, so this test will be to some extent cumulative. There will not be an additional final examination in this class.
Any student who misses a test without contacting the instructor ahead of time will receive a grade of zero on that test. Exceptions to this policy will be granted only in cases of genuine, documented emergency (sudden extreme illness, family emergency, automobile accident, etc.). It is acceptable to reschedule a test due to a normal illness, but only if the instructor is contacted about this before the test. Students are also forewarned that make-up tests are likely to be more difficult than the original tests.

Lastly, the instructor apologizes that he is not able to return tests. The reason for this is simply to reserve the ability to reuse some test questions at some point in the future, and unfortunately there are people who would make this impossible by creating test files. Students will be given adequate opportunity to review their tests in class, and may review them as much as they wish in the instructor’s office. However, students are hereby informed that removing a test from the classroom or the instructor’s office is grounds for receiving a zero on that test.

Papers:
The paper should be 1000-1300 words in length, which is roughly 4 pages of text in 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. The paper is due on Thursday, November 1. However, students are very strongly encouraged to start working on their papers well before this deadline!

Papers must include a word count – there will be an automatic 10 point deduction on papers that lack a word count and/or which fall outside of the assigned range of 1000 to 1300 words.

Papers must also include citations and a works cited page. Students are permitted to use secondary sources for the papers if they wish, but this is absolutely not necessary; an A+ paper can be written for this course without using any sources beyond the primary texts.

Papers are to be submitted electronically, and will be returned electronically. Students should send their papers to the instructor as email attachments, and should be Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) files. Papers must be sent by 6:00 PM on the listed due dates. Students will be penalized 5 points for every 24 hours (or fraction thereof) which papers are late. Extensions without penalty will be granted only in extreme circumstances.

The instructor will hand out a list of suggested topics approximately two weeks before the paper is due. Students are also encouraged to develop their own topics. However, any student who wishes to select his or her own topic must speak with the instructor no later than 72 hours before the paper due date (this can be done either in person or via email), just to confirm that the proposed paper topic is appropriate and workable.

Students should be aware that writing a good philosophy paper is unlike writing a good paper in many other disciplines. Above all, it is essential to present an argument of one’s own in a philosophy paper. Writing a good paper requires locating some particular claim from the reading that one finds interesting, and then providing arguments for why it is or is not plausible. Some very good advice (from a very good philosopher) about writing philosophy papers is available online at: http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

Three points of particular emphasis:

1) Whenever discussing or critiquing a position held by another author, it is absolutely essential to establish, by using citations, that the other author does in fact hold that position.
2) The paper should not be merely a summary of another author’s argument.
3) One should not think that writing a philosophy paper simply involves voicing one’s opinions about “deep” questions, without needing to justify them.
Attendance and Participation:
Discussion is by far the most enjoyable and productive way of doing philosophy. To that end, students are expected to attend class regularly, and to have completed all assigned reading prior to class. Attendance grades are relatively easy to earn; any student who attends all classes and makes some effort to speak in class on a regular basis will receive a 100% attendance/participation grade.

However, students who miss multiple classes and/or who never attempt to participate will have their attendance grades decline rapidly. For each unexcused absence after the third, students will automatically lose 6 points from their attendance/participation score. Additionally, students who are reading outside material in class, playing games on their laptops and/or cell phones, texting, sleeping, etc. will see their participation grades suffer greatly. It is better not to come to class at all than to come and spend the period engaged in an activity that will simply serve to distract other students.

Finally, acting in a disrespectful manner toward other students is absolutely unacceptable and will be grounds for a drastically lowered participation grade.

Attendance grades are assigned at the instructor’s discretion.

Grading Disputes and Appeals
In the instance that a student feels that he or she has been graded unfairly on a paper or test, disputes are to be handled as follows:

First, the student should schedule to meet with the instructor to explain how he or she believes that the item was graded improperly. The instructor will then consider the disputed grade and, within 48 hours, contact the student and indicate whether the grade will be adjusted.

If, after the above steps are taken, the student still feels that the grade is unfair – either because the instructor judged that the original grade was appropriate, or because the instructor judged that the grade should indeed be changed, but not to as great an extent as the student believed – the student may then request to appeal the grade.

In the event that a grade is appealed, the instructor will obtain an unmarked copy of the paper or test, and will ask a colleague to grade it. The instructor will not tell the colleague what grade was originally given, nor any of the particular issues leading up to the student’s decision to appeal the grade, in order that the colleague will grade in an unbiased manner. However, whatever grade the colleague assigns to the appealed assignment is final – there is no further appeal available – and the student is required to accept the colleague’s grade even if this results in a lower grade than the original grade. The colleague also will not be expected to give any comments on the paper or test, but only to assign a grade.

Policy on Academic Integrity
Any students suspected of any form of academic fraud or plagiarism will be summarily reported to the Washington University Judicial Board. Information is available online at:
http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html

In addition, the instructor hereby informs students that anyone found guilty of academic fraud on any graded assignment will automatically receive a grade of F for the entire course – not merely for the assignment in question.
# Schedule of Readings (Subject to Change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author/Topic</th>
<th>Reading to Be Completed Before Class</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Plato: Euthyphro</td>
<td>Euthyphro</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Plato: Gorgias</td>
<td>Gorgias, Lines 447a-461b</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Plato: Gorgias</td>
<td>Gorgias, Lines 461b-481b</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Plato: Gorgias</td>
<td>Gorgias, Lines 481b-527e (Get as far as possible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Plato: Gorgias</td>
<td>Gorgias, Lines 481b-527e (Finish)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Introductory Material, First and Second Meditations*</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Third and Fourth Meditations*</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Descartes</td>
<td>Fifth and Sixth Meditations*</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td><strong>Test #1 (in class)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Catch-up/Review</td>
<td>No Additional Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/4</td>
<td><strong>Test #1</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters I-IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters V-VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters VII-VIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters IX-XIII</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters XIV-XVI</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>Second Treatise, Chapters XVII-XIX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Enquiry, Sections I-III</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Enquiry, Sections IV-V</td>
<td><strong>Paper due by 6PM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Enquiry, Section IX, Appendices I and II</td>
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<td>11/8</td>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>Enquiry, Appendices III and IV, and Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Catch-up/Review</td>
<td>No Additional Reading</td>
<td><strong>Test #2 (in class)</strong></td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td><strong>Test #2</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, Chapters I-II</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, Chapters III-IV</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, Chapter V and Appendix</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>Catch-up/Review</td>
<td>No Additional Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td><strong>Test #3</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td><strong>Test #3 (in class)</strong></td>
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* For the readings of Descartes’ Meditations, students should read both the Meditations themselves and the selections from the “Objections and Replies” that apply to those Meditations. (For example, with the First and Second Meditations, read also the material from the Objections and Replies that relates to the First and Second Meditations. In this case, that would comprise pp. 1-23 as well as pp. 63-77)