

PHIL 110H: Honors Introduction to Philosophy: Great Works

UNC Chapel Hill, Philosophy, Fall 2016

Syllabus

Instructor: Prof. Alex Worsnip

Contact Details: aworsnip@unc.edu / 919-962-3320 (office phone) / www.alexworsnip.com

Class Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5-6:15pm, Caldwell Hall (CW) 103

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-3pm and Thursdays, 3:30-4:30pm, Caldwell Hall (CW) 202A

Course Goals

This course has two main goals. First, it aims to introduce you to some classic works of philosophy. By the end of the course, you should be familiar with the key ideas of a number of important texts, and have thought about how the ideas of these texts relate to and have influenced modern social and political ideas. Secondly, it aims to introduce you to the skill of reading, understanding and philosophically engaging with historical works of philosophy. By the end of the course, you should be more comfortable reading and interpreting older texts, and have learnt the art of critically engaging “canonical” thinkers as interlocutors in an ongoing philosophical debate.

Course Topics

We will focus particularly on classic works of social and political philosophy, but it will be an aim of our course to set these ideas in the context of the systematic philosophical doctrines about knowledge, reality, thought and language, out of which they grew. We will read texts from Plato, Hobbes, John Locke, Wollstonecraft, Mill, Rousseau, Marx, and Alain Locke, with supplementary readings from other important thinkers.

Target Audience/Enrollment

This class is an honors course, so it is open only to Honors Carolina students. It is designed as an introductory philosophy class, so there are no prerequisites and it is aimed at students who have never studied philosophy before. Enrollment is capped at 24.

Requirements/Assessment

- **Participation.** Including attendance of all classes, having done adequate preparation AND participation in discussions. 15% of grade.
- **Regular short-answer reading comprehension question sets,** to be completed at home. Each question set will cover the readings for a number of class sessions, and will be released well in advance. **I recommend that you complete the question sets bit by bit, as you do the reading for each class; this will save you a lot of time.** The answers to each set should amount to at least two double-spaced pages. 20% of grade (all together).
 - Question Set 1 (on Plato) due Mon, 9/5, 11:59pm.
 - Question Set 2 (on Hobbes) due Wed, 9/14, 11:59pm.

- Question Set 3 (on John Locke & Wollstonecraft) due Mon, 10/3, 11:59pm.
- Question Set 4 (on Hume & Mill) due Mon, 10/17, 11:59pm.
- Question Set 5 (on Leibniz, Kant & Rousseau) due Wed, 11/2, 11:59pm.
- Question Set 6 (on Marx) due Mon, 11/14, 11:59pm.
- **Short papers (prompts will be provided):**
 - Paper 1 (on Plato or Hobbes; 750-1000 words (≈2-3 double-spaced pages); 15% of grade): due Sun 9/25, 11:59pm.
 - Paper 2 (on John Locke, Wollstonecraft or Mill; 1000-1400 words (≈3-5 double-spaced pages); 15% of grade): due Sun, 10/23, 11:59pm
 - Paper 3 (on Rousseau or Marx; 1400-1800 words (≈5-7 double-spaced pages); 20% of grade): due Sun, 12/4, 11:59pm
- **Final exam** (on the pragmatists, Du Bois, and Alain Locke). To be held **Tues, 12/13, 4-6pm**, in our usual room. Primary texts are permitted in the test, but other materials (such as lecture notes) are not. 15% of grade.

Grading

I will grade all of your assignments in *anonymized* form: that is to say, without knowing your identity at the time that I assign the grade. To facilitate this, please do not include your name on any of your assignments. Use your UNC PID instead, and in the title of the file, write the assignment name (e.g. ‘Question Set 1’ or ‘Paper 1’) followed by your PID. After I have finished grading a batch of question sets or papers, I will match up the PIDs to names before returning them to you.

- Your **participation** will be graded on the basis of 5 criteria:
 - *Attendance record (including punctuality)*. You are expected to attend every class meeting unless you have an *outstanding* excuse that you inform me of before class. You are also expected to be punctual: to be in the room, sat down, and ready to learn when class is scheduled to begin.
 - *Alertness/ attentiveness*. During class hours, you are expected to be fully awake. You are also expected not to be on your computer, tablet or phone.
 - *Frequency of participation in discussion*. You are expected to participate in class discussions frequently. **If you do not participate in class at all, your overall participation grade can be no higher than a C (and that’s if your attendance and alertness are perfect).**
 - *Respectfulness of participation*. You are expected to be respectful to the instructor and to other students. This includes not talking over others or drowning them out, as well as listening to others and responding to what they say.
 - *Preparedness*. Your participation should reflect having done all the required reading and thought about it. You can demonstrate this by referring to specific parts of the readings in your comments, and by answering questions where I ask the class to recall something from a reading. This component also includes bringing the text that we are discussing that day to class, when it is in hard copy.

Note: you will not be graded on the philosophical quality of your contributions, as I want people to be able to speak freely and try out new ideas without fear of judgment. I also want to add that asking

questions can be a great way to participate. If you are unsure or feel confused about something, either in a text or in lecture, that shows that you are thinking about, interrogating, and trying to understand the ideas. And if you're confused, chances are that others are too. So asking for more clarity in these situations is a great service to the class discussion. Finally, I understand that participation can be difficult or intimidating for many students. I want to create an environment in which you feel comfortable participating. If you are having difficulty, please come to office hours or email me and we can set up a meeting to discuss strategies.

- The **question sets** will be mainly composed of comprehension questions about the texts. Each question will be worth a set number of points, displayed on the question set, and the number of points you get will be based on the accuracy of your answers. You should give enough detail to answer each part of the question, but should also be concise and not include irrelevant information. Sample answers will be provided for each question set when I return your question sets to you.
- **Papers** will be graded on a rubric that includes 5 criteria: (i) approach; (ii) cogency & argumentation; (iii) conclusion; (iv) originality; and (v) writing. I will assign a number for each category and base the total grade off of these numbers. A more detailed grading rubric for papers will be available on Sakai.
- The **final exam** will feature questions that are somewhere between the question sets and the papers. They will ask you to explain and assess particular parts of the texts, and will be graded on their clarity, their accuracy and their cogency of argumentation. More information will be provided shortly before the exam.

For the purposes of our class, the grade scale (i.e. the translation between numbers and letters) will be slightly different to what you may be used to. It is as follows:

- A: 85% or higher
- A-: 80-85%
- B+: 75-80%
- B: 70-75%
- B-: 65-70%
- C+: 60-65%
- C: 55-60%
- C-: 50-55%
- D+: 45-50%
- D: 40-45%
- F: 40% or lower
- Assignment not completed or plagiarized: 0%

This different grade scale does not mean that this class is easier than other classes; it just means that the numbers mean something different to what they mean in other classes. For example, getting anything over 85% on assignments in this class is *excellent* work, which is why it translates to an A. Getting 70-75% on assignments in this class is *good* work, which is why it translates to a B. And so on.

In addition to communicating them to you directly, I will post all grades for the course on the Gradebook feature of Sakai. If you want to understand a grade you have received, and the reasons for it, you are more than welcome to meet with me. However, all grades are final: I will not negotiate grades.

Honor Code

UNC's honor code, which is available at honor.unc.edu, applies to all class assignments. Violations of the honor code will be taken very seriously and will be reported to the Student Attorney General. Consequences will include, at minimum, a 0 for the assignment, and could potentially be much more serious. In addition, please take note of the following points:

- You are not permitted to work in groups on the question sets.
- Reusing a paper that you have written for another class qualifies as academic dishonesty.
- Summarizing ideas or arguments that you have found in articles or on the internet, without citing your sources, qualifies as academic dishonesty. **It doesn't matter if you put them into your own words.** If you have got an idea from a source, you must acknowledge the debt by citing the source.

If you are in any doubt at all about whether something contributes academic dishonesty, **err on the side of caution** and talk to me **before** you submit the assignment to clarify the policies.

Other Class Policies

- *Electronic Devices.* The use of laptops, tablets and cell phones in class is forbidden, unless they are required for class participation due to a disability.
- *Extensions.*
 - For the question sets, I will only grant extensions under absolutely extraordinary circumstances. These are regular check-ups to make sure you are doing the readings before class.
 - For the papers, I am somewhat more flexible. If you have a good reason and make a reasonable extension request in advance of the deadline, I will usually grant your request. However, I will not grant (i) extensions after the deadline, when the paper is already late; (ii) very lengthy extensions; (iii) more than one extension on any one individual paper; (iv) extensions when you have had to ask for extensions on multiple previous assignments; (v) extensions where I judge that you are simply looking to put off the work rather than to put extra care and attention into it; (vi) extensions that will get in the way of your ability to keep up with other required work for the class; or (vii) extensions that get in the way of my ability to submit your final grades in a timely manner.
- If any assignment is late without my having agreed to an extension, it will lose 1/3 of a letter grade per day.
- In exceptional circumstances, I may permit rewrites, but only when you have a clear strategy for substantially improving your paper and I judge that it will not interfere with other assignments that are coming up. You must always seek my permission first if you want to do a rewrite. Rewrites that simply incorporate comments I make on your paper, put into your own words, will not improve your grade.

- I am very happy to meet with you at any time to discuss your progress in the class, to discuss assignments (before or after they are submitted) or simply to talk more about the topics of the class. Please come to my office hours, or if those times don't work, email me to set up an appointment. You are particularly encouraged to meet with me in the early stages of planning your papers. This is free advice and almost always improves your paper (and the grade of the paper) considerably.
- I will distribute further guidelines on writing philosophy papers with the first paper prompts.
- I am committed to making class fully accessible regardless of disabilities. Students who require extra time on exams will be accommodated. If I can do anything to help make the class more accessible to you, please do let me know, or (if you would prefer) have the Accessibility Office contact me on your behalf.
- I am also committed to making the class a safe space for everyone irrespective of gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, religion, or other individual or group identity. As should go without saying, personal attacks or discriminatory treatment of others on any of these bases will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Course Materials

There are eight set texts, which have been ordered into the UNC bookstore. Since there are a lot of books, I have tried to select affordable editions. (In some cases, cheaper copies can be found online, e.g. on Amazon, but if you order your books this way, **be sure to get the correct edition/translation as listed below.**) Here is the list, in the order we'll read the texts, with the abbreviations used in the schedule of readings in bold:

- Plato, *Republic* (trans. Grube, revised by Reeve; Hackett) (**R**)
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed. Curley; Hackett) (**L**)
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (ed. Macpherson; Hackett) (**STG**)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and a Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford UP, Oxford World's Classics edition) (**VRW**)
- J.S. Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (Oxford UP, Oxford World's Classics ed.) (**OLUOE**)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings* (trans. & ed. Cress; Hackett, 2nd ed.) (**BPW**)
- Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (ed. Simon; Hackett) (**SW**) **NB: not to be confused with the Oxford University Press edition of the same name, edited by McLellan. Make sure you have the right book.**
- Alain Locke, *The Philosophy of Alain Locke* (ed. Harris; Temple UP) (**PAL**)

There will also be a number of supplementary readings outside of these texts; these will be posted on the Sakai page for the course.

Schedule of readings

Tues 8/23 (Introduction.) Read syllabus.

Part One: Ancient Foundations: Plato's *Republic*

- Thurs 8/25 Plato, *Republic*, Book I-Book II 369b (**R** pp. 1-44)
Tues 8/30 Plato, *Republic*, Book II 369b-376c, Book III 412b-414b, Book IV-Book V 466d (**R** pp. 44-51, 88-90, 95-141)
Thurs 9/1 Plato, *Republic*, Book V 466d-Book VII 521b, 533d-end (**R** pp. 141-193, 205-212)
Tues 9/6 Plato, *Republic*, Books VIII and IX, Book X 608b-end (**R** pp. 213-63, 279-92)

Part Two: Empiricism and Classical Liberalism

- Thurs 9/8 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, introduction and chs. I-IX (**L** pp. 1-50)
Tues 9/13 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. X-XVI (**L** pp. 51-105)
Thurs 9/15 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. XVII-XXI, XXV §1-5, XXVI (**L** pp. 106-45, 165-7, 172-89)

Tues 9/20 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, selections (Sakai)
Thurs 9/22 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. I-V, VI up to §65 (**STG** pp. 7-36)
Tues 9/27 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. VII-XI (**STG** pp. 42-75)

Thurs 9/29 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, introduction and chs. I-III (**VRW** pp. 71-120)
Tues 10/4 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chs. IV, VI, IX, XI, XIII sec. VI (**VRW** pp. 121-49, 191-7, 221-31, 235-40, 280-3)

Thurs 10/6 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, §2, 12 (Sakai)
David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, §1 (Sakai)

Tues 10/11 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, §I-II (**OLUOE** pp. 5-54)
Thurs 10/13 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, §III-V (**OLUOE** pp. 55-112)
Tues 10/18 J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, §II-III, VI (**OLUOE** pp. 191-224, 249-263)

Thurs 10/20 *No class – Fall Break*

Part Three: Rationalism, Radical Freedom and the Will

- Tues 10/25 Gottfried Leibniz, brief extract from the Preface to *New Essays on Human Understanding* (Sakai)
Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Introduction §I-VI (Sakai)

- Thurs 10/27 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (excluding the notes) (**BPW** pp. 45-92)
- Tues 11/1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Books I-II (**BPW** pp. 156-90)
- Thurs 11/3 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Books III-IV (**BPW** pp. 191-252)
- Tues 11/8 Karl Marx, extracts from “On the Jewish Question” (**SW** pp. 1-21)
Karl Marx, extracts from “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts” (**SW** pp. 56-79)
- Thurs 11/10 Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, extracts from “The German Ideology” (**SW** pp. 102-32, 147-53, plus additional extracts on Sakai)
- Tues 11/15 Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” (**SW** pp. 157-86)
Karl Marx, extracts from “Critique of the Gotha Programme” (**SW** pp. 318-22, 327-9)

Part Four: Pragmatism and the Philosophy of African-American Emancipation

- Thurs 11/17 William James, *Pragmatism*, selections (Sakai)
- Tues 11/22 John Dewey, extract from ‘The Ethics of Democracy’ (Sakai)
Jane Addams, extract from ‘A Function of the Social Settlement’ (Sakai)
- Thurs 11/24 *No class – Thanksgiving break*
- Tues 11/29 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ch. I (Sakai)
W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, selections (Sakai)
- Thurs 12/1 Alain Locke, Essays 1-3 from **PAL** (pp. 31-78)
- Tues 12/6 Alain Locke, Essays 16-17 from **PAL** (pp. 187-206)
- Tues 12/13 Final Exam
4-6pm