

# Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 151—Spring 2014  
Tuesday and Thursday 1-2:15  
1057 Swenson

Instructor: Sarah LaChance Adams  
Email: SLACHANC@uwsuper.edu  
Office: 3041 Swenson  
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30-3:45pm

## Course Description:

In this course, we will consider philosophy's oppressive and liberatory contributions to human life. We will do so by looking not only at what philosophy has to say in its reflection, but also in its practice and presentation. We will emphasize traditional canonical philosophy, non-canonical philosophy, including feminist and non-European philosophy.

## Learning Outcomes:

- 1) To understand and perform philosophy as a self-critical and dialogical practice.
- 2) To be familiar with some key figures in the history of philosophy, as well as some contemporary philosophical movements.
- 3) To practice strategies for reading philosophical texts, including: identifying the key argument(s) and supporting claims.
- 4) To explain philosophical concepts in written and oral form.
- 5) To begin to formulate a philosophical sensibility and questions.

## Required Texts (Available in the bookstore)

*Introducing Philosophy*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, Edited by Solomon, Higgins and Martin  
Course reader available in the bookstore and on D2L



This syllabus is subject to change at any time. Notification of any changes will be made with a minimum of 24 hours notice via UWS email. You will be held accountable for being aware of any changes.

# Policies

The University of Wisconsin-Superior is dedicated to a safe, supportive and nondiscriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding special accommodations, academic misconduct, religious beliefs accommodation, discrimination and absence for University- sponsored events. For details of the Student Disciplinary Procedures:

Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process (Chapter 14) can be found at

[http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin\\_code/uws/14.pdf](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14.pdf)

Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures (UWS Chapter 17) can be found at

[http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin\\_code/uws/17.pdf](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17.pdf) .

A comprehensive set of University policies can be found on D2L in “Content.”

- **CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

Classroom is a public space for serious work. Everybody in the classroom is thus expected to behave as a mature, respectful, thoughtful, and responsible person. The instructor reserves the right to take appropriate measures should this rule be violated.

- **DISABILITIES**

Individuals who have any disabilities, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this course are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester. (Contact also the Office for Disability Support Services.) Adaptations of methods, materials or testing may be made as requested to provide for equitable participation.

- **NO IN-CLASS ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE**

All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off or silenced AND stored out of sight. (Discuss with the instructor in advance if there is a reason to violate this rule.)

*Any student using such a device in class will be considered absent for the day.*

- **TIMELY SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Late papers or assignments will typically not be accepted. If you have a significant reason to do so, you may request an extension at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. In the case of illness or emergency, students should contact the instructor as soon as possible. It will be expected that you demonstrate proof of the illness or emergency. It is fully at the discretion of the instructor whether or not late assignments will be accepted.

- **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

The UW-System Board of the Regents rules that students' sincerely held religious beliefs shall be reasonably accommodated with respect to scheduling all examinations and other academic requirements. Students are responsible, however, for contacting the instructor in advance, so as to make an accommodation.

Communicating to the instructor any issue that may affect your learning is very important for your success. Visit the instructor during the office hours, e-mail the instructor with specific questions, or call the instructor particularly at the time of emergency. The instructor will do her best to accommodate the needs of the students. In the case of emergency, students should contact the instructor as soon as possible

- **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All work for this course must be your own, *produced exclusively for this class.*

# Evaluation Tools

**1) Quizzes 25%**

Quizzes will be in the form of one page essays in answer to a question about the reading de for the day. Your grade will be either P (pass) or NP (not passing). The final grade for this section will be the percentage of quizzes which you passed. Quizzes cannot be made up outside of class time without proof of disability, extended illness or emergency. It is fully at the instructor’s discretion whether or not make-up quizzes will be allowed. Therefore, if a student is absent for a quiz she/he will typically receive an N for the quiz.

**2) Final Paper 25%**

Late papers will not be accepted. Directions are available at the end of the syllabus.

**3) Assignments 30%**

Assignments will be graded P/NP (pass or not passing) based primarily on completion and perceived effort. Your final assignment grade will be based on % passed. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**4) Attendance 10%**

Attendance grade will be calculated based on percentage of class sessions you attend. Absences will not be excused without proof of illness or emergency. It is fully at the professor’s discretion whether or not absences will be excused. In order to be considered fully in attendance, you must bring the printed reading with you to class and have completely read it before class. Anyone using a cell phone or other electronic device will be considered absent. **Every student must attend 70% of class sessions or more, or she/he will fail this course.**

**5) Participation 10%**

Philosophy is learned best via dialogue with others. For this reason your participation is critically important. Participation will be graded based on the rubric below:

Level	Criteria
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Present, not disruptive.</li> <li>▪ Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates sporadic involvement in discussion.</li> </ul>
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrates adequate preparation.</li> <li>▪ Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the reading).</li> <li>▪ Regularly contributes to discussion</li> </ul>
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrates good preparation</li> <li>▪ Offers interpretations and analysis</li> <li>▪ Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.</li> </ul>
A+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrates excellent preparation.</li> <li>▪ Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.</li> </ul>

# Course Calendar

## WEEK 1

- 1/21 *Tuesday* Course Introduction  
Handout: “How to Read & Write Philosophy”
- 1/23 *Thursday* What is Philosophy?  
Assignment #1—Your Philosophy due in hard copy in class

## WEEK 2

- 1/28 *Tuesday* A Brief History of Philosophy  
Due: Read pages 10-22
- 1/30 *Thursday* Introduction to Logic  
Due: Read pages 23-35 & “No, you’re not entitled to your opinion”  
<https://theconversation.com/no-youre-not-entitled-to-your-opinion-9978>

## WEEK 3

- 2/4 *Tuesday* Introduction to Logic  
Due: Read pages 35-39  
Assignment #2—Fallacies due in class
- 2/6 *Thursday* Introduction to Argument  
Due: Read *Elements of Argument* 3-12 & 30-33

## WEEK 4

- 2/11 *Tuesday* Film: *A Clockwork Orange*
- 2/13 *Thursday* Film: *A Clockwork Orange*  
Assignment #3—Clockwork Orange due SUNDAY at noon in Dropbox on D2L

## WEEK 5

- 2/18 *Tuesday* Religious & Atheist Freedom  
Due: Read pages 387-388, 75-81
- 2/20 *Thursday* Due: Read pages 436-443

## WEEK 6

- 2/25 *Tuesday* Political Freedom  
Due: Read pages 581-597
- 2/27 *Thursday* Due: Read “The Compassionate Instinct” & *The ABC of Anarchism* (pages 21-36)

## WEEK 7

- 3/4 *Tuesday* Freedom & Human Nature  
Due: Read “BF Skinner”
- 3/6 *Thursday* Viewing: PBS documentary *Happiness Machines* (Episode 1 of *Centuries of the Self*)  
Due: Read “Sigmund Freud” (pages 4-16 & 24-29)

## WEEK 8

- 3/11 *Tuesday* Social Inquiry Conference Attendance required during our class time. Location TBD  
Assignment #4—Evocative Objects hard copy due in class
- 3/13 *Thursday* Due: Read “The Evocative Power of Things,” McCracken

## SPRING BREAK

- WEEK 9 Freedom & Manipulation  
3/25 Tuesday Viewing of Frontline's *The Persuaders*  
Due: Read Elements of Argument 47-56  
**Assignment #5—Visual arguments hard copy due in class**
- 3/27 Thursday Due: Read "Freedom and Truth" from *The Use of Pleasure*, Michel Foucault
- WEEK 10 Freedom & Addiction  
4/1 Tuesday Due: Read *12-Step Buddhist*  
4/3 Thursday Due: Read *Mindful Way Through Depression*
- WEEK 11 Freedom, Character, and Education  
4/8 Tuesday Due: Read "Introduction to an Ethics of Ambiguity" (Including essay by Gail Weiss and essay by Beauvoir) from *Philosophical Writings*, Simone de Beauvoir  
4/10 Thursday Due: Read "Claiming an Education," Rich
- WEEK 12 Freedom, Character and Education  
4/15 Tuesday Due: Read "Virtue Ethics" Aristotle & "The Virtues," MacIntyre  
4/17 Thursday Due: Read "A Nation of Slaves," "How not the Teach," "Who are You?" & "Walking on Water" from *Walking on Water*, Derrick Jensen
- WEEK 13 Ethical Freedom  
4/22 Tuesday Due: Read "Living from" & "Enjoyment and Independence," Levinas & "Compassion and the Reverence for Life," Schwitzer  
4/24 Thursday Paper Writing Workshop
- WEEK 14 Love and Happiness  
4/29 Tuesday Due: Read: "The Fear of Happiness," Alain de Botton & "Brokenhearted Zen" & "Attached to Nonattachment" from *Sex, Sin, and Zen*, Brad Warner  
5/1 Thursday Pages 1-34 from *Travels with Epicurus*, Daniel Klein
- WEEK 15  
5/6 Tuesday Course Evaluations & Film: Happy  
5/8 Thursday Paper Writing Workshop
- Final Paper due: Tuesday, May 13 at 2pm in Dropbox on D2L**

# Assignments

When the assignment is an essay they should always be:

- ✓ typed
- ✓ double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 Point Font
- ✓ Proofread for spelling, grammar and clarity
- ✓ Word format (if submitted on D2L)

Assignments will be graded P/NP (pass or not pass) based primarily on completion and perceived effort. Your final assignment grade will be based on % passed.

---

## Assignment #1—Your Philosophy

**\*If you have already done this assignment for PHIL 160, you can turn in the same paper.**

**Due: January 23 as a hard copy in class**

Length: 3 pages. This is an *exploratory* writing assignment.

Describe your personal philosophy. In doing so address the at least 5 of the following questions:

- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- What does it mean for something to be real?
- Why do human beings exist?
- Does everything have a cause?
- What is the mind? What is knowledge?
- How do I know I am not dreaming?
- Can you think without language?
- Can I control what I think?
- What is the difference between a thought and a feeling?
- What does it mean to live a good life?
- Why should we be good to other people?
- What is friendship?
- Does art have to be beautiful?
- What is beauty?
- What is freedom? Are humans free?

---

## Assignment #2—Fallacies

**Due: February 4 as a hard copy in class**

- Bring in examples found in the popular media (for example, an advertisement; an article from a newspaper, magazine or internet; brief video clip from movie, TV or internet) of **three** of the fallacies listed on pages 35-38.
- Be prepared to explain how the example fits the fallacy.

---

## Assignment #3—A Clockwork Orange

**Due: SUNDAY 2/16 at noon in Dropbox on D2L**

Length 2-3 pages WORD format only

This is an *exploratory* writing assignment.

Reflecting on the movie *A Clockwork Orange* write an essay answering the following questions:

- Do you think that Alex is free?
- Is he more or less free in the first half of the movie or second?
- What in your view makes him more or less free at any given point in the movie?
- What factors influence the way that he behaves?

---

## **Assignment #4—Evocative Objects**

**Due: March 11 as a hard copy in class**

Length: 2-3 pages

This is an *exploratory* writing assignment.

In this assignment we will consider the *meanings* that we attribute to certain objects.

Select a website advertising a product that you strongly desire. Provide the URL, and bring a color print out of the webpage to class. Answer the following questions in as much detail as you are able:

- Do you associate this product more with the past, present, or future?
- What emotional condition (possibly well being or hopefulness), social circumstance, or lifestyle might this object represent?
- Does this object seem like something that is attainable for you? Why or why not?

Consider another object that you strongly desired in the past but now own and are not longer so excited about:

- Why did you originally want this item?
- Describe how your feelings have changed?
- How do you explain this change in your feelings?

Consider something that you collect or have collected in the past:

- Why did/does this particular collectible appeal to you?
- What was/is it that you found/find satisfying about this collection.

---

## **Assignment #5—Visual Argument Analysis**

**Due: March 25 as a hard copy in class**

Length: 2-3 pages

This is an *exploratory* writing assignment.

After reading pages 47-56 of Elements of Argument, analyze the website that you provided for assignment #4. In a coherent essay address the following:

- 1) How does the website:
  - a) Attracts attention
  - b) Arouses your interest
  - c) Stimulates desire
  - d) Creates conviction and
  - e) Gets action

(Assignment continues next page)

- 2) What interactive features does the website use in order to achieve the things in question 1?
- 3) In specifically considering the images on the website, answer questions 1-5 on page 49.

---

## **Final Paper**

**Due: May 13 at 2pm in Dropbox on D2L**

Length: 5-6 pages

WORD document only

This is a *thesis defense* (argumentative) paper.

Write a paper that makes a coherent argument regarding the following questions:

- What is freedom (provide a definition that you would support)?
- What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?
- How can our freedoms paradoxically entangle us in obligations to others?
- How does one know if she/he is free?
- How free do you think you are?
- What factors increase your freedom?
- What factors decrease your freedom?
- Describe times when you have felt the most and or the least free (These examples may be used as evidence for some of the above claims.)

In the course of your paper, mention at least 5 of the philosophers we read concerning freedom arguing for or against their central claim(s) about freedom.