

## Syllabus

Historical Introduction to Philosophy —PHL 181—Fall 2009

Michael R. Baumer, Course Instructor

MWF 11:00 am—12:05 pm

Main Campus, MC 307B

## DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

This course will be a general survey of “Western” philosophy, from the beginning in Classical Greece to the mid-twentieth century.

The concept of “Western” thought and culture is a somewhat fuzzy one, but it encompasses the poetic, mathematical, medical, legal, scientific, philosophical, and theological literature of classical Greece and its cultural heirs, including the Hellenistic, Roman, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, European, and European-American traditions and civilizations.

Philosophy in the West is the parent discipline of the natural sciences. Certain other closely related disciplines, however, namely mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, seem to have had origins independent of philosophy and of the natural sciences. (Astronomy was not considered a natural science until early modern times.) The histories of all these disciplines are interwoven. In our survey of the history of philosophy, we shall have frequent occasion to refer to the histories of mathematics and of the natural sciences.

The figures we shall be principally discussing are Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, St. Anselm, William of Ockham, Descartes, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Russell, Husserl, Sartre, and Wittgenstein. We shall also be discussing some philosophical implications of modern physics as expounded by Einstein and Schrödinger.

## BOOKLIST (BOOKS AVAILABLE AT CSU BOOKSTORE (csubookstore.com))

Author/Editor	Title	Publisher	Year	Pages	Price	ISBN
Stephen M. Cahn	<i>Classics of Western Philosophy</i> , Seventh Edition	Hackett	2006	1237	\$44.00	9780872208599
Plato, translated by Benjamin Jowett	<i>Republic</i> , Dover Thrift Edition	Dover	2000	277	\$2.25 (used)	9780486411217
Aristotle, translated by S. H. Butcher	<i>Poetics</i> , Dover Thrift Edition	Dover	1997	60	\$2.00	9780486295770
	<i>Relativity: The Special and the</i>					

Albert Einstein	<i>General Theory</i>  Note: as of the beginning of the course, this book is out of stock in the bookstore. However, I believe that it is widely available at least used, and also as an online text.	Crown Trade Paperbacks	(original) 1916	(Crown edition) 188	?	?
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## ONLINE TEXTS

Book	URL
Einstein, <i>Relativity</i>	<a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5001">http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5001</a>
Plato, <i>Parmenides</i>	Online text: <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/parmenides.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/parmenides.html</a>
Erwin Schrödinger, "The Present Situation in Quantum Mechanics"	Online text: <a href="http://www.tu-harburg.de/rzt/rzt/it/QM/cat.html">http://www.tu-harburg.de/rzt/rzt/it/QM/cat.html</a>

## STUDENT COURSEWORK

The course will consist mainly of detailed reading and analysis of the philosophical works listed in the "Schedule of Readings and Assignments" below.

There will be four components of student coursework:

I. Regular class attendance and participation.

II. Short answers to study questions from the "Schedule of Readings and Assignments" below to be handed in on alternate class days. The class is to be divided into two Groups, A and B, and the respective members of each group are to hand in their answers as indicated in the "Schedule of Readings and Assignments" on alternate days as marked. The answers should be a half-page or less in length -- they are simply to be succinct answers to the questions asked. Group A will consist of students whose last names as registered begin with the letters A-L, and Group B with the letters M-Z. Please let me know if you would like me to use a name different from the one that appears on the class roster on campusnet.

III. Midterm writing assignment. This should be from 2000 to 3000 words in length (eight to twelve typewritten pages @ 250 words / page).

There are two options for the kind of paper you write, a philosophical dialogue and a book report about the biography or autobiography of some famous philosopher.

The midterm writing assignment is to be completed in three stages, a proposal, a preliminary draft, and a final draft. (I will give you my reaction to the preliminary draft in time for you to apply whatever of my

comments you find to be of value to the task of writing the final version.) You are asked to submit a one-paragraph topic proposal for the dialogue, due Monday, September 21. The preliminary draft will be due Monday, October 26, and the final version on the last day of classes, Friday, December 4. There may be an opportunity to read your preliminary draft to the class and get their comments as well.

The philosophical dialogue as a literary genre was created by the followers of Socrates, most notably Plato. By the time you need to submit your proposals, we shall have read some of Plato's dialogues. The *Parmenides* and the first book of the *Republic* are notable examples of the kind of interchange you are being requested to depict, except that these two examples are markedly one-sided. Many philosophers, emulating Plato, have written philosophical dialogues, but few have approached him in quality. This is partly due to the fact that Plato's dialogues depict Socrates, an especially "dialogic" person (and in fact the entire genre was inspired by the example of his mode of philosophizing), with the exception, in my opinion, of David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (a work that is included in Cahn but that is not among our scheduled readings).

Your dialogue should represent two philosophers of opposing viewpoints initially summarizing their viewpoints and then subjecting each other to questioning in a way that is genuine and potentially revealing of weaknesses in each. You may include other characters, and you may have one viewpoint win out, both characters change their minds, or the characters depart at the end remaining in their state of disagreement.

Since some of the suggested pairs of interlocutors in the topics list could never actually have met, you may create a fantastic setting in which this is somehow possible.

There are a number of suggested topics listed below. In some cases it is initially unclear to what extent the interlocutors are in general agreement. In these cases the task of the dialogue is a bit different from what has just been stated--namely the task in these cases is to explore this question and to compare and contrast. The Nietzsche-Sartre topic is like this.

The second kind of paper you may write is a book report on a biography or autobiography of a famous philosopher. As models you may consult the book reviews in the *New York Review of Books* or the *New York Times*, except that your review should adhere to the scholarly standard of impartiality, a suitable degree of scepticism, and proper citation of references.

The elements of such a report are the following:

1. A complete specification of the book, including title, author, publisher, edition, date, and ISBN.
2. A brief sketch of the basic facts about the author.
3. An account of the occasion of writing of the book--what need or want on his/her part or anyone else's was the author trying to fulfill--what axes, if any, did he or she have to grind?
4. An account of the basic facts insofar as they are known about the person who is the subject of the book (this may be the author): when, where, and in what circumstances was he or she born, what came to be his or her station or position in life, what were his or her characteristic activities, acts, or sufferings, what hagiographic or other iconic stature did he or she attain in posterity?
5. A summary of the book.

6. A critical appraisal.

7. Your own reaction.

IV. Final exam with questions handed out one week in advance. Approximately 250-word answers to a choice of two out of ten or more possible essay questions, and additionally a multiple choice / matching / fill-in-the-blank section, which altogether will be worth as much as one essay question. These non-essay questions will be either based on the daily study questions or of such a general nature that knowledge of the answers could plausibly be considered a requisite for basic "literacy" in the history of Western philosophy. Written without notes. This will take place during the scheduled final exam period for this block, which is Friday, December 11, 8:30-10:30 am. The questions will be handed out on Monday, November 30. Reading the assignments, paying close attention to the study questions, and attending class regularly will be good preparations for this exam. Answers will be evaluated on factual knowledge of philosophical arguments and positions and clarity of philosophical analysis.

Each of the four components of student coursework will be worth 25% of your grade.

#### DESIDERATA FOR A GOOD PAPER

I. You should use good spelling and grammar.

II. For the philosophical dialogue: The point of departure for the dialogue should be what you take to be the essence of the philosophical positions of the specified interlocutors on your chosen topic. You may have the discussion broaden to include other relevant positions of other real or imagined interlocutors.

III. For the philosophical dialogue: You should try to think through the progress of the arguments prior to the actual writing. After becoming acquainted with the interlocutors' basic viewpoints, you should reflect on what they would say to each other if they could actually have met. This is analogous to Aristotle's injunction to writers of tragedy to imagine the action unfolding before their eyes.

IV. For both types of writing assignment: use good citation practice, which means documenting factual claims, including the views of philosophers you are citing. Use Wikipedia or other encyclopedias to inform yourself (maintaining a due degree of scepticism), but for documentation use the sources cited by Wikipedia or the other encyclopedias instead. For online texts include date consulted by you.

#### DIALOGUE TOPIC LIST

Socrates/Plato vs. Aristotle on the Forms.

Socrates/Plato vs. Aristotle on the Socratic constitution.

Socrates/Plato vs. Aristotle on the moral and intellectual value of tragedy.

Zeno vs. Aristotle (vs. Bertrand Russell in *Our Knowledge of the External World*) on the Achilles paradox.

Anaxagoras vs. Aristotle on "all things together."

Aristotle vs Galileo (in *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*) on the dimensions of physical space.

Aristotle vs. Galileo on the natural motions of bodies.

Galileo vs. Einstein on the addition of velocities and the transformation of co-ordinates.

Kant vs. Einstein (vs. Aristotle vs. Timaeus, a Platonic character) on the nature of space and time.

Einstein and Schrödinger vs. Bohr on the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics.

Socrates/Plato and Aristotle on first principles (a compare and contrast topic).

Socrates vs. Nietzsche on Socratic decadence.

Ockham vs. Russell (vs. Aristotle vs. Scotus) on universals.

Anselm vs. Aquinas on the proof of God.

Aquinas vs. Hume on miracles.

Berkeley vs. Hume on matter.

Plato and Hobbes on the state (a compare and contrast topic).

Kant vs. Russell on the nature of number.

Wittgenstein I vs. Wittgenstein II on philosophy.

Hume vs. Kant on causality.

Kant vs. Hegel on the Thing-in-Itself or the Absolute

Kant vs. Aristotle on categories.

Descartes vs. Schrödinger on causality among bodies.

Nietzsche and Sartre on Sartre's "atheistic existentialism" (a compare and contrast topic).

Aquinas vs. Aristotle on "the eternity of the world."

Husserl vs. Descartes on the *epoché*.

## HISTORICAL FIGURES AND THEIR (AUTO-) BIOGRAPHIES

Hypatia of Alexandria--two options:

*Hypatia of Alexandria*, by Maria Dzielska (translated by F. Llyra).

*Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr*, by Michael A. B. Deakin.

Boethius

*Consolation of Philosophy*, Book I, by Boethius.

Peter Abelard

*History of my Calamities*, and *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*

Galileo Galilei

*Galileo* (play), by Bertoldt Brecht. Movie version: American Film Theater.

Simone de Beauvoir

*The Mandarins*, by Simone de Beauvoir

Heisenberg and Bohr on the German nuclear weapons program in World War II

*Copenhagen* (a play), by Michael Frayn.

Bertrand Russell

*Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, Volume 1, 2, or 3.

#### SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Topic Number	Date	Topic	Reading	Study Question	Important words and concepts
1	Aug 24	Syllabus and Introduction			
2	Aug 26	Classical Greek philosophy, presocratic philosophy, Socrates and Plato, Socrates' encounter with Parmenides and Zeno)	Plato's <i>Parmenides</i> , to the the sentence, "But, then, what is to become of philosophy? Whither shall we turn, if the ideas are unknown?" (online text, see list)	How does Socrates summarize the first thesis of the first argument?	Classical Greece, the Ionian philosophy, Heraclitus, the Eleatic philosophy, Parmenides and Zeno; the Logos, the Parmenidean One, Zeno's Paradoxes, Form or Idea (an eternal archetype of something that

					exists in our world
3	Aug 28	Socrates encounter with Parmenides and Zeno continued	same reading	According to Parmenides, is Mastery Itself master of Slavery Itself, or of the slaves in our world?	Mastery Itself, Slavery Itself
4	Aug 31	Plato's <i>Republic</i> I	Plato's <i>Republic</i> I	Why isn't justice to benefit your friends and harm your enemies?	justice (righteousness, or acting rightly)
5	Sept 2	Plato's <i>Republic</i> II-IV	Plato's <i>Republic</i> II-IV	What was the ring of Gyges? How did it enable Gyges to be situated with respect to justice?	justice, courage, temperance, wisdom
6	Sept 4	Plato's <i>Republic</i> V-VII	Plato's <i>Republic</i> V-VII	Why are men and women to have the same functions, allowing for their differences with respect to child-rearing?	knowledge, opinion, intelligible, visible, Divided Line, Allegory of the Cave
	Sept 7—Labor Day Holiday				
7	Sept 9	Plato's <i>Republic</i> X	Plato's <i>Republic</i> X	On what basis is it proved that Homer was ignorant?	imitation ( <i>mimêsis</i> ), imitation by means of nouns and verbs, Myth of Er, Spindle of

					Necessity, Whorl, the Fates (Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos), the River of Forgetfulness.
8	Sept 11	Plato's <i>Apology</i>	Plato's <i>Apology</i>	According to Socrates, what were the accusations of his old accusers?	Socrates' divine sign; Meletus, Anytus, Lycon; the Delphic oracle; cultivation (or improvement) and corruption; Sophists; Minos, Radamanthus, Aeacus, Triptolemus; Orpheus, Musaeos, Hesiod, Homer.
9	Sept 14	Aristotle's theory of predication	Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Categories</i> ; also, Aristotle's <i>Topics</i> I, 9 (Electronic Course Reserve)	According the last sentence of Chapter 5, what is distinctive of substance?	said of a subject, in a subject, category, substance, quality, quantity, relative, where, when, being in a position, having, acting, being affected,
10	Sept 16	Aristotle's theory of knowledge	The following Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Posterior Analytics</i> : Book I, Chapters 1, 2, and 3, and Book II, Chapter 19.	How does Aristotle define "demonstration"?	knowledge, deduction, demonstration, immediate principles
11	Sept 18	Aristotle's theory of nature	Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Physics</i>	What are the four senses of cause?	matter, form, agent, end, motion, change,

					continuous, infinite, actuality, potentiality, unmoved mover, everlasting
12	Sept 21	Aristotle's theory of the science of being insofar as it is being	Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i> , except for Book VII, Chapters 4-12.	What is the firmest axiom, or principle of deduction?	cause, principle, science, substance, substratum, essence, genus, universal, object of understanding, object of thought
13	Sept 23	Aristotle's theory of poetry	Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> , Chapters I-XI	What are the six "parts" of tragedy? (Chapter 6)	imitation, poetry, drama, narrative, tragedy, comedy, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song
14	Sept 25	Aristotle's theory of the good	Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I	What does Aristotle say that happiness is?	good, wealth, pleasure, honor, happiness, activity, virtue
15	Sept 28	Aristotle's theories of moral virtue and decision	Cahn selections from Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book II and Book III, Chapters 1-5	What does Aristotle say that decision is? (Book III, Chapter 3)	excess, defect, intermediate, pleasure, pain, voluntariness, decision
16	Sept 30	St. Anselm's philosophical theology	Anselm, <i>Proslogion</i> and other Cahn selections	What is the description of God that serves as the central concept in Anselm's reasoning?	that than which nothing greater can be thought

17	Oct 2	St. Anselm's philosophical theology II	same reading	What is the apparent contradiction between justice and mercy?	Gaunilo, the perfect island
18	Oct 5	The problem of universals: the nominalism of William of Ockham I	Cahn selections from William of Ockham	What are Ockham's two sense of "particular"?	universal, particular
19	Oct 7	The problem of universals: the nominalism of William of Ockham II	same reading	How does Ockham summarize Scotus' position on universals?	formal distinction
20	Oct 9	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> I	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> I-III	What is the first thing that Descartes finds that he cannot find a hypothesis for doubting?	
	Oct 12— Columbus Day Holiday				
21	Oct 14	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> II	Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> IV-VI	What does Descartes determine to be the cause of his errors in judgement?	
22	Oct 16	Hobbes	Cahn selections from Hobbes' <i>Leviathan</i>	How does Hobbes describe the "Natural Condition of Mankind"?	
23	Oct 19	Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> I	Hume's <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human</i>	In Section I, what two "philosophies" does Hume	

			<i>Understanding, Sections I-IV</i>	distinguish?	
24	Oct 21	Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> II	Hume's <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Sections V-VIII</i>	In Section VII, what is Hume's analysis of the idea of necessary connection?	
25	Oct 23	Hume's <i>Enquiry</i> III	Hume's <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Sections IX-XII</i>	According to Hume, what credence ought we to have in miracles?	
26	Oct 26	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> I	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason, "Preface" and "Introduction"</i>	What is Kant's proposed "Copernican revolution" in philosophy?	analytic, synthetic, <i>a priori</i> , <i>a posteriori</i> , transcendental
27	Oct 28	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> II	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason, "Transcendental Aesthetic"</i>	What are the "forms of intuition"?	space, time, representation, aesthetic
28	Oct 30	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> III	Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason, "Transcendental Analytic"</i>	What are the twelve items in the Table of Categories?	transcendental deduction, unity of apperception, law of causality
29	Nov 2	Hegel	Cahn selections from <i>The Phenomenology of Spirit</i>	Why must two instances of self-consciousness engage in a life-or-death struggle (in "Mastery and Slavery")?	Absolute, consciousness, truth, essence, appearance, sense-certainty, master, slave
30	Nov 4	Nietzsche	Cahn selections from <i>The Twilight of the Idols</i>	In the twelve sections of "The Problem of Socrates," what is Socratic "decadence"?	
31	Nov 6	Relativity I	Einstein, <i>Relativity: The Special and the General Theory</i> ,	What is a "rigid body of reference" and	general law, relativity, system of co-ordinates,

			Part I	what is the principle of relativity in the restricted sense?	Galilei and Lorenz transformations, relativity of simultaneity, length contraction, time dilation, space-time
32	Nov 9	Relativity II	Einstein, <i>Relativity: The Special and the General Theory</i> , Part II	What is the principle of relativity in the <i>unrestricted</i> sense?	the equality of inertial and gravitational mass, Euclean and Gaussian co-ordinates, reference "mollusc"
	Nov 11— Veterans Day Holiday				
33	Nov 13	Russell I	Russell's <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , Chapters I-IV	According to Russell, what is all that we can know about physical apace?	indubitable reality, appearance vs. reality, matter, ideas, sense-data, instinctive belief, private spaces, idealism
34	Nov 16	Russell II	Russell's <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , Chapters V-VII (for chapters beyond V, online text)	According to Russell, what is the principle of induction?	knowledge by acquaintance, knowledge by description, induction
35	Nov 18	Russell III	Russell's <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , Chapters VIII and IX (for chapters beyond V, online text)	According to Russell, what is the distinction between particulars and universals?	a priori, universal, quality, relation
		Husserl	Cahn selection	According to	<i>epoché</i> ,

36	Nov 20		from Husserl's <i>Paris Lectures</i> (1931)	Husserl, what is <i>epoché</i> ?	intentionality
37	Nov 23	Schrödinger's Cat	Erwin Schrödinger, "The Present Situation in Quantum Mechanics" Parts 1-5 (online text)	What is the example of the cat meant to illustrate?	model, classical mechanics, quantum mechanics, wave-function (psi-function), statistical distribution, blurring
38	Nov 25	Jean-Paul Sartre	<i>The Humanism of Existentialism</i>	According to Sartre, what does atheistic existentialism state?	
	Nov 27— Holiday— Friday after Thanksgiving Day				
39	Nov 30	Wittgenstein I	Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> through 2.225 (online text)		
40	Dec 2	Wittgenstein II	Cahn selections from <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> through paragraph 151		
41	Dec 4	Wittgenstein III	Cahn elections from <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> to end		

## POLICIES

Plagiarism or cheating are unacceptable and if detected may result in the student plagiarizing or cheating

receiving a failing grade for the course.

## GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

This course counts towards satisfaction of the “Arts and Humanities” requirement.

## OFFICE DATA

Location: RT 1920

Hours: MWF 12:15-1:20

Phone: 687-3902

## INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE POSTED ON SYLLABI REGARDING THE GEN ED REQUIREMENTS:

### Criteria for Arts and Humanities Courses:

1. Courses must be offered at the 100/200 level in an arts and humanities discipline including but not limited to English, History, Philosophy, Art History, Music History, Religious Studies, or Modern Languages. Courses offered in other disciplines may be approved if they meet the other conditions indicated below.
2. Courses must provide students with background knowledge and analytical skills that will allow them to:
  - Demonstrate understanding of how human beings interpret, translate, and represent diverse experiences of the world through language, literature, the historical record, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances.
  - Apply that understanding to the study of the human condition, cultural heritage, cultural artifacts, creativity, and history.
- **\*\*Additional criterion for courses NOT specifically focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa or the Middle East:**
  - Courses must be survey courses that provide an overview of a broad topic or field of knowledge.
- **\*\*Additional criteria for courses focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East:**
  - The primary focus of the course must be on a society or societies in Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East. Courses that compare these societies to those of North America and/or Europe may be approved only if the majority of the course material concerns the first group of societies and the principal purpose of the course is to improve students' understanding of those societies.
  - Content must be presented from the perspective(s) of the societies being studied, not simply European and/or American perceptions of those societies.

### Criteria for the “Writing” skill area:

To qualify in the skill area of writing a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of writing.
2. Include writing assignments that directly relate to the course goals.
3. Include instruction in writing-to-learn and/or writing-to-communicate . While writing-to-learn emphasizes the student's experience, writing-to-communicate highlights the reader's experience. Both are necessary to produce a thoughtful text that observes academic writing's conventions. [4](#)
4. Require that students write a total of 2,000 words (8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1” margins) in multiple assignments.
5. Assign writing throughout the semester.

Criteria for the “Critical Thinking” skill area:

To qualify in the skill area of critical thinking a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
2. Require students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring:
  1. higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); **OR**
  2. skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem); **OR**
  3. the recognition of the importance and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the course (e.g. recognize the ability to and importance of working with others to solve intellectual problems).
1. [\[back\]](#)The word count may only include one preliminary draft for each final draft.
2. [\[back\]](#) Exceptions to this criterion may be granted in disciplines or courses where students do a substantial amount of writing, but the course structure and/or content does not create opportunities for an assignment of this length.
3. [\[back\]](#) Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.
4. [\[back\]](#) Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.