

24.01: Classics of Western Philosophy

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Spring 2014

This is a HASS-Humanities/HASS-D Communication-Intensive (CI-H) course

Instructor: Daniel Hagen

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MEETINGS:

- Lectures: Tuesday/Thursday, 10–11, 32-144 (1st floor of the Stata Center)
- Recitations: Fridays, 10 (R01), 11 (R02), and 12 (R03)

DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce you to the Western philosophical tradition through the study of thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Cavendish, Hume, and Kant. You'll grapple with questions that have been significant to philosophy from its beginnings: questions about the nature of the mind, the existence of God, the foundations of knowledge, and the good life. You'll also observe changes of intellectual outlook over time, and the effect of scientific, religious, and political concerns on the development of philosophical ideas.

OBJECTIVES:

One of the aims of this course is to introduce you to some of the thinkers and themes from the history of Western philosophy. But another important aim of this course is to develop your skill at the kind of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking called for when working on the history of philosophy. There is a *historical* component to this latter aim: you'll learn to read historical texts closely and carefully. And there is a *philosophical* component to it: you'll learn to thoughtfully but critically assess the arguments we find in those texts. The readings, assignments, and class sessions will all contribute toward realizing these aims.

TEXT:

- Cahn, Steven, ed., *Classics of Western Philosophy*, Eighth Edition, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. (October 1, 2012), ISBN-10: 160384743X. Abbreviated as "CWP" on the schedule, below.
 - Available for purchase at the MIT COOP. There is also a copy on reserve in the Hayden Library.
- Other readings will be posted to Stellar.

READINGS:

Readings listed on the schedule below are required unless otherwise noted. You should plan to do the readings in advance of the session for which they are listed. Be sure to give yourself ample time to complete the readings. Philosophical writing often makes for—and benefits from—slow reading. This is especially so for historical texts. You should expect most of these readings to be difficult and dense. So plan ahead and when you do approach them, do so slowly and carefully.

READING SCHEDULE:

- **Session 1 (T, 2/4): Introduction**
 - *Reading*: This syllabus and the material linked in “Academic Integrity” (below).
- **Session 2 (Th, 2/6): Plato’s *Apology***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 27–39.
 - *Recommended*: CWP, pp. 1–2 (background on Plato).
- **Session 3 (T, 2/11): Plato’s *Euthyphro***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 18–26.
- **Session 4 (Th, 2/13): Plato’s *Meno***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 80–85 (through 80d).
- **Session 5 (Th, 2/20): Plato’s *Meno***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 85 (from 80d)–96 (the end).
- **Session 6 (T, 2/25): Plato’s *Phaedo***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 47–62 (through 84b).
- **Session 7 (Th, 2/27): Plato’s *Phaedo***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 62 (from 84c)–79.
- **Session 8 (T, 3/4): Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics***
 - *Reading*: *Post An* I.1–3, II.19 (CWP, pp. 205–207, 210–211)
 - *Recommended*: CWP pp. 193–194 (background on Aristotle).
- **Session 9 (Th, 3/6): Aristotle’s *Physics***
 - *Reading*: *Physics* I.1, 7–8. II.1–3, 7 (CWP, pp. 212–219, 221–222)
- **Session 10 (T, 3/11): Aristotle’s *De Anima***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 229–238

- **Session 11 (Th, 3/13): Aristotle's *De Anima***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 238–242 (Book III, selections)
- **Session 12 (T, 3/18): Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 275–283 (end just before Ch. 13 begins)
- **Session 13 (Th, 3/20): Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 283–290 (stop at end of sel. from Book II); 323–327 (begin with Ch. 6)

Spring break: 3/22–3/30

- **Session 14 (T, 4/1): Nearly 2000 years of philosophy in only 50 minutes!**
 - *Reading*: TBD
- **Session 15 (Th, 4/3): Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 527–535 (Introductory material and Meditation One)
 - *Recommended*: CWP pp. 499–500 (background on Descartes).
- **Session 16 (T, 4/8): Descartes' *Meditations***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 535–539 (Meditation Two)
- **Session 17 (Th, 4/10): Descartes' *Meditations*; selections from *Objections and Replies***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 539–552 (Meditations Three–Five); selections from *Objections and Replies* [on Stellar]
- **Session 18 (T, 4/15): Descartes' *Meditations*; correspondence with Elisabeth of Bohemia**
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 552–559 (Meditation Six); selections from correspondence with Elisabeth [on Stellar]
- **Session 19 (Th, 4/17): Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy***
 - *Reading*: selections from Cavendish's *Observations* [on Stellar]
- **Session 20 (Th, 4/24): Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 835–841 (Sections I–III).
 - *Recommended*: CWP, pp. 832–833 (background on Hume). CWP, pp. 672–675 (selections from Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*).
- **Session 21 (T, 4/29): Hume's *Enquiry***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 842–854 (Sections IV and V).
- **Session 22 (Th, 5/1): Hume's *Enquiry***

- *Reading*: CWP, pp. 855–863 (Section VII).
- **Session 23 (T, 5/6): Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 976–986 (Preface and Preamble)
 - *Recommended*: CWP, pp. 974–975 (background on Kant).
- **Session 24 (Th, 5/8): Kant’s *Prolegomena***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 987–996 (First Part of the Main Transcendental Question and §§14–20 of the Second Part).
- **Session 25 (T, 5/13): Kant’s *Prolegomena***
 - *Reading*: CWP, pp. 1007–1018 [Third Part of the Main Transcendental]
- **Session 26 (Th, 5/15): Conclusions**

SOME IMPORTANT DATES:¹

- Thursday, February 13: Exercise #1 due by 10 a.m. (in lecture)
- Thursday, February 27: Exercise #2 due by 10 a.m. (in lecture)
- Thursday, March 20: Paper #1 due by 10 a.m. (in lecture)
- Thursday, April 17: Paper #2 due by 10 a.m. (in lecture)
- Friday, May 9: last day to turn in rewrites (due in recitation)
- Thursday, May 15: Paper #3 due by 10 a.m. (in lecture)
- Tuesday, May 20, 1:30–4:30: Final exam (in room 32-144)

Note: Instructions for assignments will typically be posted to Stellar one week in advance of their due dates.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Criteria for HASS CI-H subjects: “The CI-H subjects provide you with a foundation in effective expository writing and oral communication. CI-H subjects are writing classes or classes in the HASS curriculum in which you plan, organize, draft, and revise a series of sequenced assignments based on course material. These subjects require at least 20 pages of writing, typically divided among three to five assignments. At least one essay must be revised and resubmitted. CI-H subjects also offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression through presentations, student-led discussion, or class participation.”²

You will satisfy the HASS CI-H criteria and the course objectives through the following course components (each of which are described in more detail, below):

- Recitation (20% of final grade)

¹For other important college-wide dates, consult the Academic Calendar: <http://web.mit.edu/registrar/calendar/>.

²<http://web.mit.edu/commreq/cih.html>.

- Papers (totaling 60% of final grade)

Breakdown:

- Paper #1: 10% of final grade
- Paper #2 + Rewrite (compound assignment): 30% of final grade
- Paper #3: 20% of final grade

- Final exam (20% of final grade)

Note: you must pass each component of the course in order to pass the course.

RECITATION:

Your recitation grade will be based on your attendance (in both lecture and recitation), preparation, contributions to discussion, and any other written or oral assignments your TA arranges for section. You should come to recitation prepared to discuss the readings from class. There are also two short writing exercises that will count toward your recitation grade:

- Exercise #1: Exegesis—a short (1–2 page) paper interpreting and explaining a bit of text.
- Exercise #2: Analysis—a short (1–2 page) paper critically assessing an argument.

***Note:* The two Exercises together must total at least 3 pages.**

LECTURE AND RECITATION POLICIES:

- As noted, attendance at both lecture and recitation is required. If, for whatever reason, you cannot attend lecture or recitation, you should contact your TA as soon as possible in advance of that class session. Your TA will have discretion to set policies for making up excused absences.
- You should bring all readings with you to both lecture and recitation. Throughout the course we will be consulting these texts closely and it will be important to have your copy on hand.
- You should expect to disagree from time to time—with things we read or discuss, with other people in class (including me or your TA), and perhaps on occasion even with yourself. These disagreements may be *vigorous* but must always be *reasoned* and *respectful*.
- *A note on gadgets:* laptops, iPads, and so forth are permitted in lecture as long as you're using them to take notes, to refer to assigned readings, or to run software that assists with either of these functions. **If you plan to use gadgets in such a fashion, I ask that you sit in the front rows of the classroom.** If you are found to be using gadgets for impermissible activities, you will no longer be able to use them in class, unless you have an accommodation (see below under "Assistance.") If you have an accommodation and are found using gadgets for impermissible activities, we will have a meeting with Student Disability Services to determine an appropriate resolution.
- Your TA may set additional policies for recitation (including policies regarding gadgets).

PAPERS:

Over the course of the semester you will write three papers. I will post to Stellar more detailed instructions for each assignment (along with more detailed grading criteria). You will revise Paper #2 in light of feedback from your TA. The rewrite will be graded as an independent assignment. Paper #2 and the rewrite together

with make up a compound assignment. **Your grade on the compound assignment will be equal to a weighted average of your grades on paper #2 and the rewrite ($1/3 \times \text{Paper \#2} + 2/3 \times \text{Rewrite}$).** Note that revised papers will be held to a higher standard.

- Paper #1 (2–4 pages)—this paper will combine the activities of Exercises #1 and #2.
- Paper #2 (5–7 pages)—this paper will involve exegesis and analysis, but will require you to engage even more deeply with some text(s) and theme(s) studied in the course.
- Rewrite of Paper #2
- Paper #3 (7–9 pages)—this paper will be similar in form to Paper #2 but, as you’ll note, a bit longer.

Note: Papers #1, #2, and #3 together must total at least 17 pages. (This does not include the rewrite.)

EXTENSION POLICY:

- Three “no-questions asked” 24-hour extensions per semester. (For use on Exercises or Papers.)
- These may be combined for a three-day extension on one assignment or broken up among multiple assignments. *You must ask your TA for an extension in advance of the deadline.*
- No other extensions (except for exceptional circumstances)
- Unexcused late work will lose 1/3 grade per day or portion thereof (*e.g.*, an “A” paper turned in during the first 24 hours after a deadline will receive an “A–”).

FINAL EXAM:

There will be a three-hour, comprehensive final exam. The exam will be closed notes and closed books and will consist primarily of short essays. The essays will be drawn from a list of topics distributed in advance. The time and date for the exam will be set by the Schedules Office and will be posted on February 20 at 5:00 p.m. Additional details (from the Registrar’s website):

“Students are expected not to finalize travel plans for the end of the term until after the exam schedule is posted. While faculty may offer conflict exams to accommodate travel plans, they are not required to do so.

The final exam schedule, which is designed to accommodate faculty preferences and to minimize student conflicts, is prepared in accordance with faculty rules. As such, the schedule may not be altered once it is posted. The Schedules Office notifies students directly of conflicts for final examinations; the conflict schedule is posted as soon as possible after Drop Date. In addition, any requested exceptions to the rules must be approved by the Chair of the Faculty before the schedule is posted.”³

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. If in doubt about what counts as plagiarism, or about how to properly reference a source, consult the instructor or your TA. Other forms of academic dishonesty include: cheating on exams, double submission of papers, aiding dishonesty, and falsification of records. If academic dishonesty is proven, this will result in severe disciplinary consequences, which could include any or all of the following: a redo of the assignment for a reduced grade;

³<http://web.mit.edu/registrar/classrooms/exams/finals/>.

failure on the assignment; failure of the course; a letter in the student's file in the Office of Student Citizenship or referral to the Committee on Discipline. If you are tempted to plagiarize because you are in crisis, it is always better to speak to your TA, the professor, your advisor, the academic deans, the counseling center, or another trusted authority on campus who can help you handle the crisis. The following (slightly modified) was distributed to HASS-D instructors by the HASS Committee for use in their classes:

STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

To put it bluntly, plagiarism is theft and fraud—it is the theft of someone else's ideas, words, approach, and phrasing; it's fraud because the writer is trying to profit (a grade) by claiming as his/her own someone else's work.

Because plagiarism can have severe disciplinary consequences, it is crucial to understand the concept. Just as scientists demand complete and accurate information about experiments so that they duplicate and check those experiments, so scholars and readers demand complete information so they can check your use of sources and accuracy in reporting what others said. In all academic writing, then, you must give complete citations (e.g., author, title, source, page) each time you use someone else's ideas, words, phrasing, or unusual information. An insidious form of plagiarism is the "patchwork paper"—some words and ideas taken from source A are stitched together with words and ideas from source B and source C and...

Your essays should be your own work, although you are encouraged to seek writing advice from the Writing and Communication Center (12-132, 617-253-3090). If there is any question about whether the student's paper is his or her own work, TA's have been directed to bring the paper directly to the professor. Every effort will be made to determine whether the paper is plagiarized. This is an attempt to be fair to the teachers and the other students in the course.

There are four guidelines for using sources in your essays: (i) There is never a good reason to paraphrase a source—either summarize it in your own words or quote it exactly (citing the source in either case)⁴; (ii) When you quote, quote exactly, use quotation marks, and cite the source; (iii) When you use information that might not be considered common knowledge, cite the source; (iv) When in doubt about whether or not to give a citation, always give a citation.

Important links:

- <http://writing.mit.edu/wcc/avoidingplagiarism>
- <http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/handbook/AcademicIntegrityHandbookColor.pdf>.

NOTE: *We will assume that you have carefully read the WCC page on Avoiding Plagiarism and the Academic Integrity Handbook. This is assigned reading (see schedule, below).*

HOW TO CITE A SOURCE:

If your essay discusses a single source that was assigned for the course and if you make clear, in the body of your text, which source you are discussing, then you may cite any quotations or discussions of that source by giving, in the body of your writing, the page number of the quotation or paraphrase in parentheses next to the stretch of text. *E.g.*,

⁴See the Academic Integrity Handbook for a discussion of the difference between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

In his “Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,” David Hume writes that “All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, namely, *relations of ideas* and *matters of fact*” (842).

If your essay discusses multiple sources or if you use *or consult* sources not assigned for the course, you need to provide full references in a bibliography. Citations of those sources in the body of your paper should follow a standard format, such as that of the APA, MLA, or CMS. *NOTE: You should not, in general, consult sources beyond those assigned for the course unless you have the express permission of your TA.* For other questions about bibliography and citation format, speak with your TA, the Writing Advisor, or review the MIT Libraries resources page on citing sources: <http://libguides.mit.edu/content.php?pid=80743&sid=598619>.

ASSISTANCE:

- You should always feel free to contact me or your TA about any questions or concerns you have about the course. Write us emails, visit our office hours, intercept us on campus (within reason)!
- This course also has a dedicated writing advisor. You should contact the writing advisor for help with papers. You can meet to discuss ideas, work on an outline, go over a draft in detail, and more.
- The *Writing and Communication Center* can provide assistance with your writing and communication. The WCC can also provide assistance to students for whom English is a second language. You can schedule an appointment for an in-person consultation or you can arrange an online consultation. See the WCC website (<http://writing.mit.edu/wcc>) for additional details about the resources and services they can provide.
- If you have a disability, then you have a right under Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act to reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request accommodations, please contact *Student Disabilities Services* (5-104, 617-253-1674, uaap-sds@mit.edu).⁵ If you are eligible, they will give you an accommodation letter which you should bring to me as soon as possible. That way we can work together to make sure all of the course content is accessible to you.⁶
- The Academic Integrity Handbook (linked above) lists (pp. 34–35) numerous other resources that might assist you in various ways.

Some of the content of this syllabus is drawn, with permission, from syllabi prepared by Profs. Sally Haslanger and Rae Langton.

⁵SDS website: <http://web.mit.edu/uaap/sds/index.html>.

⁶For information about requesting accommodations, see: <http://web.mit.edu/uaap/sds/students/procedures.html>.