

History of Philosophy

Phil 26 • Fall 2019

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Course Materials

An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy, Anthony Kenny
Additional readings will be available online

Catalog Description

Introduction to the history of philosophy, emphasizing such themes as the foundations of knowledge, the nature of reality, the basis of a good life and a just society, the existence of God, and the nature of self, and tracing the development of these themes from antiquity to the modern period.

This course satisfies Area C2 (Humanities), which prescribes that students be able to:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
- B. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
- C. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

Course Objectives

Students will be expected to:

- Describe how philosophical questions about the nature of the mind, the existence of a divine being, and the trustworthiness of human perception are answered,

and those answers criticized and defended by a representative sample of important Western philosophers;

- State clearly the claims made by those philosophers and distinguish them from each other;
- Articulate the philosophers' arguments for their claims, and the methods of philosophical argumentation generally;
- Defend with reasons a variety of one's own claims concerning facets of each philosopher's position.

Course Delivery

This is a fully online course. All course content will be delivered on [Canvas](#). You will find video lectures there, as well as links and dropboxes for all assignments.

COURSE GRADE

A basic requirement for passing this course is that the student make an evident attempt to complete all of the assignments listed below. Assuming this requirement is met, the following cutoff scheme represents the maximum course total required for each letter grade. Target scores for the individual assignment totals are also provided.

The instructor will be following [the Philosophy Department's grading standards](#). There will be a handout on Canvas providing a general rubric for your exam essays.

Canvas will automatically calculate your percentages for each assignment. Assignments will be weighted as follows:

Quizzes:	35%
Discussion Posts:	30%
Exams:	35%

The maximum scores for each letter grade are as follows. "Maximum score" means e.g. that if you score 80%, you are *guaranteed* at least a B- in the course, though you may do better; these cutoffs may be lowered, i.e. changed in your favor, at the end of the semester.

A-	88%
B-	80%
C-	70%
D-	60%

Description of Requirements

Quizzes: Students will be expected to complete a short quiz on each lecture video. Each quiz will consist of about 8-10 questions, depending on the length of the video, and each question will normally be worth one quiz point. You will be allowed two attempts at each quiz. If you make a second attempt at a quiz, you will keep the second score, even if it is lower than the first. (If you kept the higher of the two scores, there would be no incentive to review the material before making a second attempt. I strongly recommend that you review the material before re-taking any quiz.)

Discussion Forum Posts

Introductory post: During the first week, please make two discussion posts to the Introduce Yourself forum. In the first post, you should introduce yourself in 180 words. In the second, please comment on someone else's post; the comment should be at least 40 words.

Weekly posts: Two discussion posts focusing on the course material will be due each week. The first should be an original post of 180 words. Normally this will be in response to a prompt.

The second post should be a 40-word comment on someone else's post. Please comment on a post that no other student has commented on, if one is available. (Instructor comments don't count.) Your comment may be a response to something they said, an answer to a question they asked, a reasoned agreement, or a question about their post. The format is open, but this is important: *Please be courteous and respectful at all times.*

The total value for each set of posts will be 22 forum points maximum: 18 points for the original post, and 4 points for the comment. Scores for your discussion posts will be based entirely on effort. Assuming your post is coherent, is on topic, and does not violate the rules of courteous exchange, your score will be assigned based on word count. You will receive partial credit for posts that fall short of the assigned number of words, and late posts will be penalized. A separate rubric will be provided to explain the scoring.

Midterm and Final: Each of these will consist of two essays, written in response to questions that will be published in advance. The recommended length for each exam is 1000 words; that would be about 2 pages for each of the two questions, or four pages total for each exam. Your exams will be submitted through the Turnitin.com module on Canvas and checked for originality.

IMPORTANT: In order to pass the class, you must make a serious attempt to complete both exams. This means that if you do not submit a final exam, you will receive a grade of F in the course, even if your course total would otherwise qualify you for a higher grade.

Each of the four essays you will write for the course will be scored on a scale of 0-100 exam points. If your essay is plagiarized, or shows no familiarity with the lecture videos, you will receive a score of 0. The exams are a test of your mastery of the course material,

not of your ability to use Google.

Extra Credit: You will be offered extra credit for giving an instructor evaluation. No other extra credit assignments will be offered.

Communication: A fully online course like this one requires you to stay in close communication with the instructor. Please check online for course updates at least twice each week. I will try to minimize the amount of email I send you, but there may be time-sensitive announcements that need to go out over email; please be sure you check your Saclink email regularly while the course is in progress- I recommend that you check it at least twice each week on days that you do not log on to our Canvas page. I post announcements using the Announcements tool on Canvas, and also on the main course content page; please check those locations regularly.

Outside Assistance: If you feel you need help with the course material, your first recourse should be to contact me, rather than seeking outside assistance from a source of undemonstrated competence who may even charge a fee for this service. Due to concerns about the reliability of the assistance you may receive, you are specifically forbidden from seeking assistance from an outside source- for example, an online service- without my approval.

Help with Writing: On the other hand, you are encouraged to seek help with your writing skills. An excellent resource is our campus [Reading and Writing Center](#).

Crisis Support: There are resources on campus to assist students who are in crisis, or who face unique challenges. [Contact CARES](#), Crisis Assistance and Resource Education Support.

Instructor Plan: I try respond to emails and to questions posted to the “About The Course” discussion forum within 24 hours. Weekends may be an exception, particularly if I am away from home. I normally check my CSUS email between the hours of 11:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Discussion forum posts are normally scored within 7-10 days. Exams will be graded and commented on within 2 weeks. How soon you receive your comments may depend on how early you turn in your exam. Those turned in immediately prior to the deadline are likely to take longer to grade, since that is when most of the exams usually come in.

Technical Support: If you have trouble with Canvas, you can go to AIRC, 2nd Floor, Room 2005, email the help desk at servicedesk@csus.edu, or call them at 916-278-7337.

Disability Accommodation: If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to [Services to Students with Disabilities](#), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

Instructor Drops: Students who do not complete at least half of the work assigned for credit during the first two weeks of the semester will be considered to have

abandoned the course and may be administratively dropped by the instructor. Thus e.g. if there are eight assignments due for course credit during the first two weeks, you will be expected to complete at least four of them. Re-enrollment will not be permitted. Do not, however, rely on me to drop you. If you do not plan to complete the course, you are responsible for your own drop/withdrawal.

Withdrawal from the course: Please be mindful of drop deadlines. After the end of the second week of classes, you will be asked to justify any request to withdraw, and if your explanation is not satisfactory your petition to drop will be denied. (The criteria are on the back of [this form](#).) In the majority of cases, if a student does not withdraw during the first two weeks, she is committed to finishing the class.

Communication: Please check your Saclink email at least once each week. Please also check weekly for announcements on our Canvas page; it's wise to check on Sundays to see if there are any announcements relevant to our work during the coming week.

Academic Dishonesty: This usually involves using unauthorized notes during an exam or plagiarism, which is presenting the work of someone else—whether copied or paraphrased—as one's own. When material is copied without use of quotation marks, plagiarism is presumed. Please understand that it is not enough simply to reword material you find online to avoid the charge of plagiarism. You are responsible for what you turn in; check to be sure all appropriate citations are included in your work. If unauthorized notes are found to be accessible to you during an exam, you will be presumed to be using them. Those who permit others to cheat are considered accomplices and are guilty of cheating as well.

Please review the [University's policies regarding academic dishonesty](#). The library also maintains [a very useful page on plagiarism](#).

Anyone caught cheating will lose credit for the assignment on which they cheated, with no possibility of make-up. The minimum penalty will normally be 15% of the course grade, which is likely to drop the offender at least one letter grade in the course. The normal penalty may be mitigated when there is reasonable concern that it is grossly disproportionate to the offense. Egregious cases (e.g. multiple infractions, failure to cooperate with an investigation into academic dishonesty) may result in a student's failing the course. Please be aware that I am required to report all cases of cheating to the University's Office of Student Conduct, which may take further action.