

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Introduction to Philosophy  
Philosophy 1050: ABCD11  
Spring 2008  
Office Hours: by appointment

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## DESCRIPTION

How do you introduce students, many confronting it for the first time, to a discipline practiced by people for nearly three millennia? Rather than providing a selective survey of the history of philosophy or undertaking an analysis of the various and distinct ways philosophy has been studied and practiced in the West since the time of the ancient Greeks, this course will explore one possible answer to a question philosophers have asked from ancient times to the present, namely, how is knowledge of the world and ourselves possible? The centrality of this question makes it appropriate for an introduction to this subject, and the active testing in class discussion of reasons for accepting or rejecting answers to this question will have the added benefit of introducing students to the practice of philosophizing. This practice will include an evaluation of the implications of the answers proposed and an examination of what might count as examples of answers as they would be realized in our own lives and the representation of those lives in the contemporary visual arts.

## OBJECTIVES

The goal in this course, then, will be to situate the classical Greek and Christian philosophical traditions in the context of philosophy as it has been practiced from the dawn of modern humanism, roughly from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the present day. The relevant philosophical practice, as described above, will be an evaluation of responses to the question, how is knowledge possible? In the course of this exploration, students will learn, in addition, to master the art of making and evaluating arguments in their abstract articulation as philosophical theories, in the flesh as they might be realized in actual experience and in their concrete expression in the lives of individual human beings.

## PROCEDURES

The class will be structured around presentations given Monday and Wednesday with seminar style discussion sections that meet on Friday. Students will have been assigned to one of these sections, and students are required to attend both the lectures and that section. Since the presentations will be based on the readings and will not be, in most cases, an explanation of them, students are required to complete the assigned readings prior to coming to class and to come to some conclusions about the readings that can be tested against what is presented about them. Students are also required to participate in the discussions in their sections by asking questions and responding to questions posed by the Instructor and other students in that section.



TEXTS (titles with publishers and ISBNs are available for purchase in the bookstore)

Plato, *Republic*, Book X (available from e-reserve) and *Symposium* (Hackett ISBN 0872200760)  
Aristotle, *Poetics* (Hackett ISBN 0872200337)  
Augustine, *Against the Academicians and The Teacher* (Hackett ISBN 0872202127)  
Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett ISBN 0872201929)  
Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions (e-reserve)  
Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (handout)  
Jean-Paul Sartre, “Intentionality” (e-reserve)  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Body” (e-reserve)  
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove ISBN 0802143006 or 0802150845 )  
Maurice Natanson, “Phenomenology and Existentialism” (e-reserve)  
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage ISBN 0679752554)  
Luce Irigaray, “This Sex Which is Not One” and “Sorcerer Love” (both e-reserve)  
Joseph Margolis, “Cinematic Humanism” (e-reserve)  
Alexander Nehamas, “Plato and the Mass Media” and “Serious Watching” (both e-reserve)

## REQUIREMENTS

Three 1200 word papers and a cumulative final exam. Grades for the papers and final exam will be weighted equally. Participation will be graded separately and figured into your final grade at your Instructor’s discretion. University standards for class attendance will be strictly enforced. Plagiarism constitutes grounds for failure.

## READING ASSIGNMENTS (\* = recommended)

Monday, Jan 14 Introduction: What is Philosophy?

Wednesday, Jan 16 Russell, “The Value of Philosophy,” 112-17

Monday, Jan 21 MLK Day (no class)

Wednesday, Jan 23 Descartes, *Meditations*, Dedication, Preface, Synopsis and Meditation 1, 1-16

Monday, Jan 28 Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation 2, 17-23

Wednesday, Jan 30 Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditation 6, 45-56  
PAPER 1 ASSIGNED

Monday, Feb 4 Augustine, *The Teacher*, 94-146

Wednesday, Feb 6 Augustine, *The Teacher*, 94-146

Friday, Feb 8 PAPER 1 DUE

Monday, Feb 11 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 99-105 (e-reserve)

Wednesday, Feb 13 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 106-24 (e-reserve)  
PAPER 1 RETURNED  
PAPER 2 ASSIGNED

Monday, Feb 18 Sartre, “Intentionality,” 4-5 (e-reserve)

Wednesday, Feb 20 Natanson, “Phenomenology and Existentialism,” 26-33 (e-reserve)\*

Friday, Feb 22	PAPER 2 DUE
Monday, Feb 25	Merleau-Ponty, "Experience and Objective Thought. The Problem of the Body," 65-72 (e-reserve)
Wednesday, Feb 27	Merleau-Ponty, "The Experience of the Body and Classical Psychology," 90-97 (e-reserve)
Friday, Feb 29	PAPER 2 RETURNED

Spring Break

Monday, Mar 10	Irigaray, "This Sex Which is Not One," 23-33 (e-reserve)
Wednesday, Mar 12	Irigaray, "This Sex Which is Not One," 23-33 (e-reserve)

Monday, Mar 17	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , "The Negro and Language," 17-40
Wednesday, Mar 19	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, white Masks</i> , "The Negro and Language," 17-40

Monday, Mar 24	Easter Break (no class)
Wednesday, Mar 26	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> , "The Fact of Blackness," 109-40
	PAPER 3 ASSIGNED

Monday, Mar 31	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , 32-77 (195a-223d)
Wednesday, Apr 2	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> , 32-77 (195a-223d)
	Irigaray, "Sorcerer Love: A Reading of Plato, <i>Symposium</i> " (e-reserve)*
Friday, Apr 4	PAPER 3 DUE

Monday, Apr 7	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , "Docile Bodies," 170-230
Wednesday, Apr 9	Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> , "Docile Bodies," 170-230
Friday, Apr 11	PAPER 3 RETURNED

Monday, Apr 14	Plato <i>Republic</i> , Book X, 264-92 (595a-621d)
Wednesday, Apr 16	Plato <i>Republic</i> , Book X, 264-92 (595a-621d)
	("The King of Queens" and Nehamas, "Plato and the Mass Media") *

Monday, Apr 21	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> , 1-42 (47a8-62b20)
Wednesday, Apr 23	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> , 1-42 (47a8-62b20)
	("The Sopranos" and Nehamas, "Serious Watching") *

Monday, Apr 28	Margolis, "Mechanical Reproduction and Cinematic Humanism" (e-reserve)
Wednesday, Apr 30	Margolis, "Mechanical Reproduction and Cinematic Humanism" (Toddd Haynes, <i>I'm Not There</i> (2007))

Wednesday, May 7	FINAL EXAM 1:30-4:00
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