

**CAS PH 110 A1 — GREAT PHILOSOPHERS — Summer II 2015**  
Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays 6:00-8:30 PM (Classroom: SHA 202)

Instructor: Jordan Kokot

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Office hours: Mondays 3:00-5:00 and Wednesdays 11:00-1:00 and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will take a somewhat unusual approach to engaging with Immanuel Kant's famous "three questions for philosophy" as outlined in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (A805/B833): "1. What can I know? 2. What ought I do? 3. What may I hope?" Rather than approaching these questions directly, we will take a somewhat meandering course through the history of philosophy, engaging with several of the most important philosophers of the Western tradition, most notably Martin Heidegger, and Friedrich Nietzsche. We will also be investigating (albeit more briefly) with the works of Plato, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Søren Kierkegaard. As will be demonstrated throughout the semester, the answers to the above three questions blur together quite interestingly for many of these philosophers.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Many of these texts have been translated and printed multiple times. While I strongly encourage you to purchase the texts listed below, you *may* opt to use other translations and editions. **HOWEVER**, such alternate texts **MUST BE APPROVED BY ME** and you will be responsible for determining the appropriate pagination for the reading assignments. The texts below are available at the BU bookstore and on Amazon. Other readings will be made available on blackboard.

- 1) *Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell (ISBN: 978-0-06-162701-9)
- 2) *The Portable Nietzsche*, Walter Kaufman (ISBN: 978-0-14-015062-9)
- 3) *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Peter Gay and Walter Kaufman (ISBN: 0-679-78339-3)
- 4) *Fear and Trembling*, Søren Kierkegaard (Penguin Classics, ISBN: 978-0140444490)
- 5) *Plato: Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (Hackett Classics, ISBN: 978-087-220633-5)
- 6) *Discourse on Method and Meditations of First Philosophy*, René Descartes (Hackett Classics, ISBN: 978-0872204201)

Additional readings will be made available electronically. The course Blackboard Learn site is available at <http://lms.bu.edu>

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:**

1) **Reading Questions (15%):** Every reading will be accompanied by a set of reading and reflection questions designed to help you engage with the text. These questions will be distributed at the end of each class period and will be available on Blackboard. For (almost) every class period, you must turn in an answer to one of the questions for that reading in no less than a half page and no more than a full page, beginning of each class period. Late assignments will not be accepted. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Over the course of the semester you **will be responsible for 10 of these assignments**. You can turn in more than 10, in which case, I will take your highest 10 grades. These assignments will be graded on a four point scale (a  $\sqrt{+}$  corresponding to full credit,  $\sqrt{}$  to an A-/B+,  $\sqrt{-}$  to a B/B-, 0 to no credit). This assignment is designed to check your engagement with the readings on a regular basis and, more importantly, provide you with an opportunity to explore the texts on your own. Though these assignments will be graded rather gently, they will not simply be free points. This is an important

opportunity for you to prepare for that day's material, so take advantage of it.

2) **Two in class exams (50%):**

Midterm: 25%, July 16

Final (cumulative): 25%

3) **One 3-6 page Paper (25%):** Topic TBD, due July 30

4) **Participation (10%):** This class will be very discussion (as opposed to lecture) oriented. As such, your participation will be very important. You are also strongly encouraged to visit my office hours at least once during the semester.

**POLICIES:**

1) Make-up exams will be permitted if a student can provide documentation for an excused absence (e.g. doctor's letter or documentation for other kinds of absences allowed under University policy). Make-up pre-class assignments are not allowed.

2) No cell phone use in class. Use of laptops and tablets is rather strongly discouraged, but will be permitted **for note taking purposes only**. As this class will be largely discussion oriented, I don't imagine that they will be that helpful. Regardless, I reserve the right to ban laptops if they become a distraction.

3) No eating in class. As this is a two and a half hour class, we will take a short break in the middle.

4) Students are expected to abide by all university and departmental standards on plagiarism and academic conduct. Consult the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code clarification of official standards. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in any form.

5). Short assignments will not be accepted late, nor will they be accepted on days that the student is absent. This means that if you miss a day, you will not be eligible to turn in a short assignment. It also means that short assignments cannot be emailed in after class. There are (almost) no exceptions to this policy. The term paper will be graded down a half letter grade (for instance, from an A to an A-) for EACH CALENDAR DAY that it is late. This means that if the paper is due Friday, and but you turn it in on Saturday, you will still be marked down a half a grade.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DIFFERING ABILITIES:** If you are on record with the university as requiring special accommodations, please stop by my office and let me know within the first week of the semester. If you find, during the course of the semester, that special accommodations are required, please bring me the relevant documentation from the university as soon as you acquire it.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Though outside research will not be necessary for this course, the following resources might prove useful. Please note that while most internet sources (INCLUDING SITES LIKE WIKIPEDIA) offer articles of dubious merit, the following links and can be generally trusted.

- 1) The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- 2) The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

- 3) The History of Philosophy Podcast: <http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/>
- 4) Nietzsche Source: <http://www.nietzschesource.org/>
- 5) The Purdue Online Writing Lab (formatting and citation info): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS [subject to change]

\* Please bring the reading for that day with you to class.

**Monday, June 29:** General introduction

**Tuesday, June 30:** Plato's *Meno* (Full text)

**Thursday, July 2:** Plato's *Apology* (Full text)

**Monday, July 6:** Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (Full Text)

**Tuesday, July 7:** Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Full Text)

**Thursday, July 9:** Kant's *What is Enlightenment*, and *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:393-4:446)

**Monday, July 13:** Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:446-end) Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (Preface-Preamble from the Heart)

**Tuesday, July 14:** Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (Problema I & II), Review session

**Thursday, July 16:** Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (Problema III-End) **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Monday, July 20:** Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* (Selections), Nietzsche's *Gay Science* and *Twilight of the Idols* (Selections)

**Tuesday, July 21:** Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections)

**Thursday, July 23:** Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* (Selections)

**Monday, July 27:** Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* (First Essay)

**Tuesday, July 28:** Heidegger's Introduction to *Being and Time* (Part 1)

**Thursday, July 30:** Heidegger's Introduction to *Being and Time* (Part 2) **MID-LENGTH PAPER DUE**

**Monday, August 3:** Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* (Sections 1 and 2)

**Tuesday, August 4:** Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* (Section 3, Epilogue, and Addendum) Review Session