

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 100.02

Instructor: Matt Stolick, Ph.D. (Philosophy--University of Tennessee-Knoxville, 1998)

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Course Information:

Time: 2:00-2:50pm

Days: MWF

Room: TLTC 001

Required Books:

Lao Tsu *Tao Te Ching* Vintage

Plato *The Republic* Hackett Pub. Co.

Pirsig *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* Harper Perennial

Course Description (Undergraduate Catalogue): Survey of important philosophical problems relevant to human life in an age of rapid social and intellectual change, including the ultimate nature of reality, belief in God, personal identity, freedom and responsibility, the search for meaning in life, theories of knowledge, and ethical considerations of right and wrong.

Three Overarching Goals of the Course:

GOAL 1. Further the mission of the University of Findlay

OUR MISSION: The mission of The University of Findlay is to equip our students for meaningful lives and productive careers.

This course will reveal your worldview (what I will call your “metaphysics”). You will learn more about where you stand and why you stand there. Knowing who you are will help lead you to an appreciation of what is most meaningful to you, thereby choosing wisely a life and career that promises first and foremost consistency with your metaphysical view.

GOAL 2. Meets the Mission and Goals of the General Education Program: The General Education Program at The University of Findlay will offer students a broad-based foundation of knowledge and skills that will help them become life-long learners as members of a profession as well as members of the global society.

Choosing this course to fulfill a GE – Humanities Requirement will have us begin building a broad base primarily through exposure to classic philosophical figures and issues. The foundation provided through such exposure prepares a student to interact with those who have alternative world views in the global society.

GOAL 3. Meets the goals of the philosophy department:

- Φ To cultivate self-knowledge.
- Φ To develop critical thinking skills.
- Φ To complement other specializations.
- Φ To strengthen career preparation.

This is the department of philosophy’s core course. Through a consideration of various positions and views in response to philosophical questions, students learn how to argue for their own point of view and expect others to do the same. Thinking critically, assessing claims made and arguments made to justify positions and actions, anticipating responses from alternative perspectives, and coming to demand consistency in our own and others’ positions, are beneficial skills for every specialization and career.

Introduction to Philosophy Learning Objectives:

You will be able to do the following by the end of the semester:

- Explain and elaborate upon the current relevance of Plato (and specifically *The Republic*) to U.S. and the world
- Articulate several basic beliefs of (and develop a general “feel” for) each Western (Plato) and Eastern (Lao Tsu) philosophy
- Explain and appreciate the meaning of the term “Quality” as used by Pirsig and as something to aspire to in your own life
- Explain the nature of the Tao (the Way) and compare/contrast this concept with Plato’s Form of the Good, your own religious point of view (e.g., Christ as “the Way”)
- Realize how unresolved philosophical issues lead to various types of behavior (e.g., shameless behavior)
- Explain the basic differences between worldview of Plato and Aristotle and how individuals can be roughly categorized as believing one or the other
- Give a basic explanation of the nature of doing philosophy, thinking philosophically, and contemplation of human existence.

Teaching Methodologies:

This class is essentially one of in-depth reading conducted together. It will be based upon student discussion and response to assigned readings. I will facilitate discussions that encourage a critical assessment of our text. You will get the most you can out of this course if you always have your reading done before class, engage in the text yourself and come with your own ideas of what took place, was argued, and the implications of these for current affairs, your own life. As we are reading several classic works together, I encourage you to come to class prepared to learn how to think philosophically.

Methods of Assessment/Grading Criteria:

280 points	<i>The Republic</i> Quizzes (14 at 20 points each): Quizzes will be short and of various types, including T/F, fill in blanks, short answer, personal response. These are open book, open notes and are based upon the reading assigned on the syllabus.
200 points	<i>The Republic</i> Exam (based upon quiz questions and points of emphasis in class discussion; more details TBA)
200 points	<i>Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</i> Final Paper (development of main themes as discussed in journals, as stressed in class; more details TBA)
100 points	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> Paper (based upon main points stressed in our reading of the Tao, your personal response to the Way introduced; more details TBA)
100 points	<i>Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</i> Journals (5 at 40 points each; student response to certain page numbers in the text, demonstrating an awareness of the events therein, giving a reflective personal response to the ideas explored; more details TBA)
120 points	Attendance (three or fewer unexcused absences, full points; over three unexcused absences, no points)

1000 Total Possible Points

Grading Scale:

A = 930 and above
A- = 929 to 900
B+ = 899 to 880
B = 879 to 820
B- = 819 to 800
C+ = 799 to 780
C = 779 to 720
C- = 719 to 700
D+ = 699 to 680
D = 679 to 620
D- = 619 to 600
F = 599 and below

Course Policies/Practices:

Attendance

Attendance is strongly encouraged. Four or more unexcused absences results in a 0/120 points for attendance portion of the grade.

Lateness- If you come to class late then you are responsible for the points and material you have missed. Please be courteous to the rest of the class and be minimally disruptive. Also, please let me know (on the student information sheet) of some reason for which you may be regularly late to class.

Make-Up Quizzes, Essays- Permitted only for legitimate excuses (e.g., sudden emergency); make-up quizzes are to be a one page, typed and single-spaced summary of the reading on which the quiz was based. Both Essays and Quizzes are due either the class period following the missed quiz or at a time arranged between student and professor.

Plagiarism- The work you do should be your own. Plagiarism includes copying in any substantial way another student's assignment, using any part of another student's essay answer as one's own. Always cite those authors whose thoughts and ideas you use. The negative consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include failure of the assignment for those involved, intentionally or negligently, in the event of plagiarized essays, possibly failure of the course and a report made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Cheating- Cheating on quizzes will result in at least failure of that particular assignment, if not failure of the course and a meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs for immediate review of the incident. During a quiz do not look at other people's quizzes, talk to others, look at others quizzes while completing your own, copy others' answers while quizzes are being passed in, etc.

Classroom Behavior- I encourage and attempt to model responsible and respectful classroom conduct. Consider *The University of Findlay Undergraduate Catalogue*:

The following are among the responsibilities recognized as incumbent upon every student: Responsibility for conducting himself or herself in a manner which helps to create and maintain a learning atmosphere in which the rights, dignity, and worth of every individual in the University community are respected.

In a philosophy course, reason is the tool used to resolve disputes. Nonverbal and merely emotional but non-substantive responses will be seen as irrelevant. Intentional emotional and nonverbal attacks on other students will not be tolerated. Sincere and open discussion done in a reasoned and civil way is the paradigm of this course and rooted in the expectations of this university.

Extra Credit – Upon discretion of the instructor.

Disability Statement: If you are a student with a disability it is your responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services and your instructor at least two weeks prior to a needed service so reasonable accommodations can be made.

Schedule of assignments and exams will be provided on the first day of class.