

Sichuan University

School of Pittsburgh

Introduction to Philosophical Problems

Course Number (课程号): 312213030

2023 Spring

Instructor: Dong Minglai

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Office Hour: Thursday 10:00-11:30, 14:00-16:30

Place: 文科楼 1 区 3 楼立面咖啡

Course Description:

What is justice? What is knowledge? And more importantly, what is a good life? Questions like this have been haunting not only people like us, but also philosophers for centuries. Philosophical works not only offer us possible solutions to such questions, but more importantly, ways of thinking through which we can approach them ourselves.

Course Objectives:

Through the lectures and reading of texts assigned, students will learn the skill of close reading, and ability of abstracting arguments from texts with different rhetoric styles. They will also be trained in basic familiar with some typical approaches towards philosophical questions in the history.

Texts for the course:

1. Solomon, Robert C. and Higgins, Kathleen M. *The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy* (9th Edition). Wadsworth, 2014.
2. 冯友兰: 《中国哲学简史》, 《三松堂全集》第 6 卷, 郑州: 河南人民出版社, 2001 年。
3. Plato. *Five Dialogues*. Translated by M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002.
4. Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (4th Edition). Translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.
5. Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
6. Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980.
7. Locke, John. *A letter Concerning Toleration*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.
8. Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.
9. Citations from other materials will be presented on blackboard.

Requirements:

1. Homework.
2. Reading Quizzes.
3. Essay and Paper.
4. Attendance.

Policies:

1. Grades Breakdown:

Reading Quizzes and Homework are worth 40%, Essay and Paper 45%, Attendance 15%.

2. Reading Quizzes: there will be two simple quizzes during the semester. Each worths 5%. They will be on some simple facts regarding the reading assignments.

3. Homework: students are expected to submit THREE homework for the whole semester. There will be one assignment for each month (March, April and May). They should be reading notes for one reading assignment for the same month. Each assignment is worth 10%. The assignments will be posted **ON THE BLACKBOARD. NO LATE HOMEWORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

4. The essay should be a simple argument on an assigned topic. It is supposed to be a preparation for further, more complicated writings. A workshop will be given after the essay is submitted and the lecturer will offer his opinions one each student's work. The essay will be due sometime in April and is worth 15%.

5. The paper will be a complete academic writing on a given topic. More details will be given when it is assigned. The paper is worth 30% and will be due on the last class day.

6. Notice: Students are expected to give a hard copy of their essays and papers. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED**, except in some extreme cases where standard documents are available.

7. Attendance: Absence **MUST** be excused. Every unexcused absence will cause the student to lose 5% from his or her final grade. The lecturer may call your names in any time during the class.

8. 15 minutes after class time is late. Three lates without documented excuse will be considered as an absence.

9. Cheating and Plagiarism: the first Plagiarism in a paper will result at an F of that paper. The second Plagiarism will make the student **FAIL THE COURSE DIRECTLY**. The first plagiarism in a homework will reduce 10 points directly from the **WHOLE** credits of the course. The second Plagiarism in a homework will **FAIL** the **COURSE**. **ANY plagiarism in the final paper will result an F of the COURSE.**

10. Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retrospectively.