

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy
Long syllabus, Autumn 2022

Instructor: Rose Novick
Pronouns: she/her
TAs: Kade Cicchella
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Course Time: MW, 11:30am-12:50pm
Course Location: Condon Hall 109
Office Hours: Th 3:00-5:00pm
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1. Course description

Philosophy, in its most basic form, involves stopping to reflect on what one is doing: Why am I doing it? Should I be doing it? Could I be doing it better? Philosophical reflection is frequently occasioned when something we normally take for granted breaks down – at this point, we can no longer take it for granted, but must *reflect* on it. In this sense, everyone does philosophy *sometimes*, but not everyone does it *consciously, regularly, or rigorously*. This class, as in introduction to philosophy, aims to help you recognize the philosophical issues that will inevitably arise in your lives, and to equip you to address them. To this end, we will spend the quarter considering two concepts that we all rely on in our lives, but which are more complex than we often realize: ‘freedom’ and ‘death’. We will consider these complexities by reading and discussing primary texts from various of the world’s philosophical traditions.

2. Course texts

- (required) Plato (tr. Brann, Kalkavage, and Salem), *Meno* ([Hackett Publishing](#), \$11)

This text will be available from the bookstore; you will need it by October 3. There are many translations of the *Meno* available. It is fine to use a different translation than the one assigned, but note that this will make it harder to locate the passages I am discussing. You can find the [Jowett translation](#) free online – it is reputable, if a bit old-fashioned.

All other required readings will be posted to the course Canvas page.

3. Grading system

Each assignment is worth a set number of points, summing to 100. Your total points received will be converted to a grade between 0 and 4.0 according to the following scale:

A-range:	4.0: 95+	3.5: 90
B-range:	3.0: 85	2.5: 80
C-range:	2.0: 75	1.5: 70
D-range:	1.0: 65	0.7: 60-62

The minimum passing grade is 60pts. Each point you earn (above 62pts, up to 95pts) adds 0.1pts to your final grade.

4. Assignments

Discussion questions (10 points). Course readings will have a devoted lecture (MW) and discussion section (TTh). For the discussion section, you must bring a *paper copy* of a question based on the reading, to be turned in at the end of the section. These questions will be used to spark discussion. Graded for completion, but questions must be *good* questions. **Eighteen** assigned; complete fourteen for full credit. **Purpose:** section attendance, discussion prep.

Initial writing assignment (5 points). You will turn in an initial writing assignment on October 06, in which you will provide an initial answer to the questions “what is freedom?” and “is it bad to die?”. Graded for completion, so long as basic guidelines are met. **Purpose:** establish a starting position, to revisit at the end of each unit.

Ten-sentence papers (60 points; 5 x 12 points each). For the unit on freedom, **four** ten-sentence papers will be assigned; you must complete *three*. For the unit on love, **three** ten-sentence papers will be assigned; you must complete *two*. You must complete **FIVE** ten-sentence papers total. **Purpose:** display understanding of readings, develop clear and concise expression, recognize argument structure, learn to critique arguments.

Final paper outline (5 points). Before your final paper is due, you will turn in an outline, again in the form of a ten-sentence paper. This will be a revision of one of your six short papers, based on TA feedback. Graded for completion, so long as a good-faith effort at revision is made. **Purpose:** improve final paper, incorporate feedback.

Final paper (20 points). At the end of the course, you will write a short paper (1000-1200 words; appr. 3-4 pages) on one of the topics discussed. The ten-sentence papers ask you to identify just the argumentative core of a paper; the final paper asks you to expand one of these to a complete argument. **Purpose:** synthesize course material, develop full arguments.

5. Grading policies

Extensions. For the *initial writing assignment*, the *ten-sentence papers*, and the *final paper outline*, you may take an extension of **up to three days**, no questions asked; longer extensions must be requested *in advance*. For the *final paper*, short extensions will be available, but must be requested. Extensions are not available for the *section assignments*.

Late assignments. If no extension has been granted, a late penalty of **0.5pts/day** will be assessed. This applies to all assignments except section assignments; because the purpose of section assignments is to help you prep for discussion, they **must** be turned in by the start of section to receive credit.

Regrade requests. If you do not understand why a particular assignment received a particular grade, you are encouraged to attend your TA’s office hours to discuss it. If, after doing so, you are still concerned, you may ask me to regrade your assignment. If you choose this option, I will discard the old grade and regrade your assignment from scratch. *The grade I assign is final, and may be higher or lower than your initial grade.*

6. Reading Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings <i>due before discussion section</i>	Assignments <i>due on specified dates</i>
<i>Unit 1: Introduction, Meno</i>			
Week 1 Sep 28	Introduction	<i>No reading</i>	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 2 Oct 03	What is philosophy?	Plato, <i>Meno</i> pp. 1-34 (70A-87C)	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 2 Oct 05		Plato, <i>Meno</i> pp. 34-55 (87C-100B)	Initial writing assignment (due Friday, Oct 07)
<i>Unit 2: Freedom</i>			
Week 3 Oct 10	Free will	Augustine, <i>On the Free Choice of the Will</i> (selection)	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 3 Oct 12		David Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity" (selection)	Short paper #1 (due Friday, Oct 14) (do <u>three</u> of SP1-4)
Week 4 Oct 17	Freedom and slavery	Epictetus, "On Freedom" (selection)	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 4 Oct 19		Malcolm X, "Prospects for Freedom in 1965"	Short paper #2 (due Friday, Oct 21) (do <u>three</u> of SP1-4)
Week 5 Oct 24	Freedom and others	Zhuangzi, "Free and Easy Wandering"	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 5 Oct 26		De Beauvoir, "Personal Freedom and Others" (selection)	Short paper #3 (due Friday, Oct 28) (do <u>three</u> of SP1-4)
Week 6 Oct 31	Free speech	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> (selection)	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 6 Nov 02		Tzesis, <i>Destructive Messages</i> (selection)	Short paper #4 (due Friday, Nov 04) (do <u>three</u> of SP1-4)

Date	Topic	Required Readings <i>due before discussion section</i>	Assignments <i>due on specified dates</i>
<i>Unit 3: Death</i>			
Week 7 Nov 07	Is it bad to die?	Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of Things</i> (Selection)	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 7 Nov 09		<i>The Debate Between a Man Tired of Life and His Soul</i>	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 8 Nov 14		Thomas Nagel, "Death"	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 8 Nov 16	Would it be good to live forever?	Williams, "The Makropulos Case" (selection)	Short paper #5 (due Weds, Nov 16) (do <u>two</u> of SP5-7)
Week 9 Nov 21		Bortolotti & Nagasawa, "Immortality without Boredom"	Short paper #6 (due Tuesday, Nov 22) (do <u>two</u> of SP5-7)
Week 9 Nov 23	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING		
Week 10 Nov 28	Death and grief	Plutarch, "A Consolation to his Wife"	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 10 Nov 30		Moller, "Love and Death"	Short paper #7 (due Friday, Dec 02)
Week 11 Dec 05	Death and philosophy	Montaigne, "To Philosophize Is to Learn to Die"	<i>no assignments</i>
Week 11 Dec 07	Final papers and wrap-up	<i>no readings</i>	Final paper outline (due Thursday, Dec 08)
Week 12 EXAMS	<i>NO FINAL EXAM</i>		FINAL PAPER DUE WED, DEC 14

7. Further course policies

Disability and accommodation policy. It is my intention that this course be made accessible to all students. This means, minimally, that I will grant any accommodations required by the Disability Resources Center. However, some of you may need accommodations not formally certified by that office. If any aspect of the class poses a hardship for you, please talk to me, and we can work together to develop a plan for you to fulfill the course requirements.

Course etiquette. Philosophy is a social endeavor, and much of our class time will be devoted to discussion. You are encouraged to disagree with each other, but must do so respectfully. We will collectively determine a set of classroom discussion norms early in the term.

Group work. Group work is permitted for all assignments in this course, so long as *the final product you turn in is your own work*. In other words, you may discuss assignments with your peers, you may compare your work and give each other feedback, and so forth. However, you must write up the final assignment yourself; failure to do so is one form of plagiarism.

Plagiarism. You are expected to turn in work reflective of your own effort. I encourage you to discuss assignments with other students, but what you turn in must ultimately be your own work. You must also cite any sources that inform your work. We will talk more about expectations for this in class, and I will work with students to correct minor violations. Major violations (such as purchasing essays online) will be reported to the school's university office.

Religious accommodation. Students are entitled to reasonable accommodation for religious holidays. Accommodation requests must be made through the Office of the University Registrar Religious Accommodations [request process](#) within the *first two weeks* of the term.

UW face covering policy. As of September 9, UW mask policy is that masks are *optional, but strongly recommended* for the first two weeks of term (09/28 to 10/11), then *optional, but recommended* thereafter. You can read the full policy [here](#).