

PHIL 110.001: Philosophical Texts That Changed the World: An Introduction to Philosophy Through Great Works

UNC Chapel Hill, Fall 2022

Class meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45pm, Caldwell Hall 105

Official Course Catalog Description. An introduction to philosophy focusing on several great books from the history of Western philosophy.

Semester-Specific Course Description. This course is an introduction to philosophy through the study of influential writings in its history. (EHP) We will cover a range of questions in epistemology, value theory, and metaphysics, focusing especially on the following: What is knowledge, and what can we know? What is it to live a good life, and does the pursuit of happiness support or conflict with the pursuit of virtue? (ECV) What is the makeup of fundamental reality, and how might it be different from what we initially take it to be? Is there causality in the world? What is the nature of the self? And do we have a self at all? We will study these questions by reading the works of Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, René Descartes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, early Buddhism, and the Aztec (Nahua) philosophical tradition.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Number	110
Title	Philosophical Texts that Changed the World: An Introduction to Philosophy through Great Works
Credit hours	3
IDEAs in Action Gen Ed	FC-PAST <u>or</u> FC-VALUES
Making Connections Gen Ed	PH
Grading Status	Letter grade
Course Description	This course is an introduction to philosophy through the study of influential writings in its history. We will cover a range of questions in epistemology, value theory, and metaphysics. Philosophers and traditions covered will include Plato, Aristotle, Sextus Empiricus, René Descartes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, early Buddhism, and the Aztec (Nahua) philosophical tradition.
Prerequisites	None
Target Audience	The course is designed to be accessible to students who have never taken a philosophy class before. Those with prior experience in philosophy are also welcome.
Instructor	Rosalind Chaplin Office: Caldwell Hall 207E Phone: (919) 962-3311 Email: rchaplin@unc.edu
Teaching Assistants	N/A
Course Website	https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/phil110f22
Days/Times/ Location	Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45pm, Caldwell Hall 105
Office Hours	Tuesdays 2-3pm and Thursdays 10-11am, Caldwell Hall 207E, or by appointment. Office hours are in person unless otherwise announced.

<p>Course Texts</p>	<p>All texts are available via Sakai (so purchasing these is not necessary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plato, <i>Five Dialogues</i> (trans. Grube, revised by Cooper; Hackett) - Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines of Skepticism</i> (trans. Annas and Barnes; Cambridge UP) - René Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from Objections and Replies</i> (trans. Cottingham, Cambridge UP) - Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (trans. Irwin; Hackett) - Immanuel Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (trans. Timmerman; Cambridge UP) - John Stuart Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (ed. Crisp; Oxford UP) - Mark Siderits, <i>Buddhism as Philosophy</i> (Hackett) - David Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (Oxford UP) - David Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature, Vol 1</i> (eds. Norton and Norton; Oxford UP) - James Maffie, <i>Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion</i> (UP of Colorado)
<p>Course Format</p>	<p>Class meetings will combine short lectures, whole class discussions, small group discussions, and small group or individual activities. Small group and individual activities will be aimed at practicing the skills of close reading, argument analysis, and argument construction. In small group activities, students will collaborate to complete a task and present the results to the group.</p>

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

All our philosophy courses aim at the acquisition and nurturing of basic philosophic skills. One of the main goals of our philosophy curriculum is to instill and enable the development of skills that are distinct to philosophy, but which are foundational to all forms of knowledge.

These **basic philosophical skills** involve being able to:

1. Think critically;
2. Deploy philosophical concepts and terminology correctly, in either a historical or contemporary setting;
3. Represent clearly and accurately the views or argument of particular philosophers, in either a historical or contemporary setting;
4. Identify the premises and conclusion(s) of a philosophical argument and assess both its validity and soundness;

5. Apply a philosophical theory or argument to a new topic, and being able to draw and defend reasonable conclusions about that topic;
6. Develop an argument for a particular solution to a philosophical problem in either a historical or contemporary setting;
7. Write clearly, precisely, and persuasively in defense of a philosophical thesis;
8. Participate in respectful, critical, and reflexive dialogues about difficult philosophical positions;
9. Read, interpret, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different philosophical texts and the philosophical positions presented in them.

PHIL110 also satisfies the **history of philosophy** requirement for our philosophy major and minor, and as such aims at developing the following learning outcomes:

1. Develop knowledge of different philosophical figures, movements, traditions, systems, and schools from the past. Knowledge of these figures, movements etc. must also reflect knowledge of their respective historical periods, such as ancient, early modern, 19th century, etc.
2. Evaluate primary source material and/or other historical evidence of past philosophical figures and/or systems (e.g., behaviors, events, and social, cultural, economic, and/or political structures); assess divergent or complementary methods, materials, and/or methodologies in interpreting the history of human thought, thinking, and self-understanding.
3. Assess, when needed, conflicting historical narratives based on evidence and methodologies.
4. Generate and evaluate philosophical arguments based on the analysis of primary and scholarly sources.
5. Apply historical methods and knowledge in conjunction with philosophical methods and knowledge in order to make informed judgments about past and current developments in the history of philosophy.

In addition, PHIL110 offers a first introduction to a selection of issues in **value theory** and aims at developing the following learning outcomes:

1. being familiar with some of the leading normative theories in philosophy, such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics;
2. being able to identify and explain the various contexts in which philosophical questions of justification arise;
3. being able to assess ethical values in terms of the philosophical and non-philosophical reasons offered;
4. being able to recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value;
5. being able to evaluate ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities;
6. being able to analyze and evaluate the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic domains.

Finally, Phil 110 also covers a selection of topics in **metaphysics and epistemology**, and does so while aiming at developing the following learning outcomes:

1. being familiar with some of the most important ancient and early modern philosophical answers to fundamental questions about what is real and what we can know;
2. Recognize and use distinctly historical philosophical approach(es) to developing and validating knowledge of the unfamiliar world;
3. Being able to evaluate ways that temporal, spatial, scientific, and especially ancient and early modern philosophical categories structure knowledge;
4. Interrogate assumptions that underlie our own perceptions of the world by recognizing that these presuppose 'ontological' and 'metaphysical' claims that are not always warranted or sustainable and by recognizing that our knowledge is limited;
5. Apply (ancient and early modern) philosophical insights to understand patterns of experience and belief.

Specifically, this course will enable students to develop:

- Familiarity and competence with some of the most important texts in the history of philosophy, and an understanding of how these texts relate to and continue to shape ideas and inquiry today.
- The skills of reading, understanding, and philosophically engaging with historical works of philosophy.
- The skills of reconstructing arguments presented by others, identifying and articulating objections to arguments, and defending arguments against objections in clear, cogent writing.

This course is part of the IDEAs in Action General Education curriculum:

Ethical and Civic Values

Students develop their capacity to think carefully and critically about how to make and justify private and public decisions.

Questions for Students

1. How can people think fruitfully (individually and together) about how they should live their lives?
2. What is required to judge a standard or value as worthy of support?
3. How should we distinguish between prejudices and reasonable grounds for value judgments?
4. What considerations – stories, reasons, testimony, documents, data, etc. – can justify our values and commitments, whether personal or social?

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the contexts in which questions of justification arise.
2. Assess ethical values in terms of reasons offered

3. Recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value, evaluating ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities.
4. Analyze the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic spheres.

Engagement with the Human Past

Students acquire knowledge through evidence about human experience in one or more eras of the human past and learn to evaluate, synthesize, and communicate that evidence, applying it to their lives in the present.

Questions for Students

1. What events, conflicts, and continuities shaped an era of the human past?
2. What distinctive kinds of evidence do we use to interpret and understand the human past?
3. How have people made decisions and acted in light of historical knowledge?
4. How does the material and historical past survive in the present and affect our perception of both the past and the present?
5. What conditions and processes shape our approach to the human past?

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop knowledge of different spatiotemporal scales, patterns, ideas, figures, and events from the past.
2. Evaluate primary source material and/or other historical evidence of past conditions (e.g., behaviors, events, and social, cultural, economic, and/or political structures); assess divergent or complementary methods, materials, and/or methodologies in interpreting the human past.
3. Assess conflicting historical narratives based on evidence and methodologies.
4. Generate and evaluate arguments based on the analysis of primary and scholarly sources.
5. Apply historical methods and knowledge to make informed judgments about the past and the present.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Assignments	Percentage of Total Grade
Class participation	5%
Reading Worksheets (collectively, at least 2-3 pages)	10%
Writing Assignment 1 (4 pages)	20%
Writing Assignment 2 (6 pages)	30%

Collaborative end-of-semester oral group presentations	10%
Final exam	25%

Grading Scale

Converting your final average to a letter grade:

93% or higher: A

90-93%: A-

87-90%: B+

83-87%: B

80-83%: B-

77-80%: C+

73-77%: C

70-73%: C-

67-70%: D+

63-67%: D

Below 63: F

Note: these boundaries should be interpreted so that 93.0% is an A, but 92.99% is an A-, and similarly for each other boundary.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Class Participation. Active participation is a required part of the course. Your participation mark will be determined by the following factors: (i) your attendance record, including arriving on time; (ii) how regularly you contribute to class discussion; (iii) being engaged when you are not actively speaking and not letting yourself get distracted by unrelated things on your phone or computer; (iv) engaging with everyone in the classroom respectfully and charitably; (v) showing in your contributions that you have prepared for class (e.g., by having questions about the readings, by being willing to share your thoughts on the views presented in the readings, by being willing to answer the questions that I ask to help kick off discussion, etc.).

Note: If you are showing symptoms consistent with Covid-19, please do not attend class. Instead, email me before the start of class, and we will figure out a reasonable plan.

Note also that you will *not* be graded on the philosophical quality of your contributions to class discussion—the goal is simply for you to practice participating in philosophical discussions. With this in mind, try to remember that it is okay (and even ideal!) to ask questions and contribute to discussions while you are still feeling confused and unsure about things. All this said, if you are finding it difficult to

participate, please email me and we can talk about strategies. Some preliminary ones to try out are the following. Before class, come up with at least one question or issue that you'd like to discuss (note: your reading worksheets will present a natural opportunity to do this). Keep in mind that when studying difficult historical texts, there is really no question that is too basic to ask out loud. The questions that seem simple often end up being the most helpful for everyone to think about. In a similar spirit, remember that asking clarificatory questions can be an excellent way to participate and a huge help to everyone in the class.

Reading Worksheets. Your readings will be accompanied by reading worksheets, which are to be completed on Sakai and *submitted by 8:00am on the day class meets*. The purpose of these worksheets is to help you learn to read more effectively, and as such you will receive full points just for completing them. There will typically be 3 or 4 questions that will help you gauge if you are understanding the reading, plus a final question that will ask you to share what you'd like to discuss further in class. If Sakai technology allows for it, your answers to this final question will be shared with the entire class.

- *Readings Worksheets Late Policy: late submissions are not accepted.*

Writing Assignment 1. Early in the term, and as preparation for Writing Assignment 2, you will write a short, purely expository piece of roughly 4 pages (double spaced). This assignment will concern our readings on Descartes. Your goal in this assignment is simply to explain how Descartes's argument works on the assigned topic. The specific topic and further instructions will be distributed two weeks before assignment is due.

- *Writing Assignment 1 Late Policy: Late submissions receive a 3 point grade deduction per day late (i.e., a paper that is one day late moves from an 87 to an 84, a paper that is two days late moves from an 87 to an 81.). All this said, if you have a medical, family, or other true emergency, email me as soon as you can, and we will figure out a reasonable solution.*

Writing Assignment 2. Several weeks before the end of the term, you will submit an argumentative paper of roughly 6 pages (double spaced). You will be able to choose between a topic from our value theory unit and a topic from our metaphysics unit. Specific topic choices and further instructions will be distributed at least two weeks before the assignment is due.

- *Writing Assignment 2 Late Policy: same as Writing Assignment 1 (see above).*

Collaborative End of Semester Group Presentation. At the end of the semester, you will work in small groups to give a roughly 10 minute presentation. Your task will be to choose some specific issue and two philosophers we studied in the course and put those philosophers into conversation with one another concerning that issue. Presentations will occur in class during our last two class meetings, and you will be graded as a group. Further instructions will be announced in the second half of the semester.

Final Exam. There will be a final exam at the end of the term. All the readings and lecture contents are fair game, and the exam may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The exam will be closed-book, but you will receive a study guide to help you determine which things are most

important to review. Further details about the exam's format will be announced in the second half of the semester.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

<i>Accessibility Resources</i>	<p>The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including academic adjustments, resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.</p> <p>Accommodations for students are determined through Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.</p> <p>Please refer to the ARS Website for contact information or email ars@unc.edu.</p>
<i>University Attendance Policy</i>	<p>Attendance is required, and missed classes will be factored into your participation grade, unless you have a University Approved Absence, involving one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Authorized University activities2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC). <p>Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.</p>

University Testing Center	The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/ .
Counseling and Psychological Services	UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The Heels Care Network website (https://care.unc.edu) is a place to access the many mental resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website https://caps.unc.edu/ or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more.
Title IX Resources	Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/ . Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu ; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu .

<i>Honor Code Statement</i>	<p>Students are bound by the Honor Code in taking exams and in written work. The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please take note of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reusing a paper that you have written for another class qualifies as academic dishonesty. - Summarizing ideas or arguments that you have found in articles or on the internet, without citing your sources, qualifies as academic dishonesty. It doesn't matter if you put them into your own words. If you have gotten an idea from a source, you must acknowledge the debt by citing the source. <p>If you are in any doubt at all about whether something constitutes academic dishonesty, err on the side of caution and talk to me before you submit the assignment to clarify the policies. Please also be aware that papers submitted to Sakai may be automatically checked for authenticity by Turnitin. You can read more about the honor code at studentconduct.unc.edu.</p>
<i>Technology Use</i>	<p>You will need to have the course readings and your notes with you during class meetings, and depending on how you take notes, this may mean you will want to bring your computer or tablet to class. However, out of consideration for yourselves and others, please turn off all notifications, do not check email, and stay off of unrelated websites and apps during class. Please also keep your cell phones put away.</p>
<i>Email and Sakai Announcements</i>	<p>I will make every effort to answer your emails within 48 hours, and if 48 hours have passed and you still have not heard from me, feel free to resend your message—your email was probably pushed down to the bottom of my inbox, and I will be grateful for the reminder. Generally speaking, it is best to reserve email for logistical matters rather than for substantive philosophical discussions. Come to office hours if you would like to have a substantive discussion about course material. Finally, please do not forget to check your own emails and Sakai messages — I'll often be sending out important announcements electronically.</p>

SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

*I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including assignment due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

— UNIT 1 - EPISTEMOLOGY —

Plato - *Meno*

- Week 1 Day 1 - Aug 16
 - Introductory meeting. No readings.
- Week 1 Day 2 - Aug 18
 - Read → *Meno*, pp 58-78.
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 1.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 2 Day 1 - Aug 23
 - Read → *Meno*, pp 78-92.
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 1.2 due by 8:00am**
- Week 2 Day 2 - Aug 25
 - Listen → <https://historyofphilosophy.net/plato-meno>
 - (In class philosophical writing exercise tied to *Meno*)

Sextus Empiricus - *Outlines of Skepticism*

- Week 3, Day 1 - Aug 30
 - Read → *Outlines of Skepticism*, Book I, pp 3-53 (but per the notes in the margins of the pdf, skim parts of section xiv, skim all of sections xv-xvi, skip section xvii, and skim sections xxix-xxxiv).
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 2.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 3, Day 2 - Sept 1
 - Read → review Tuesday's readings.
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 2.2 due by 8:00am**

Descartes - *Meditations on First Philosophy*

- Week 4, Day 1 - Sept 6
 - - NO CLASS. Well-being day.
- Week 4, Day 2 - Sept 8
 - Read → First and Second Meditations
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 3.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 5, Day 1 - Sept 13
 - Read → Third and Sixth Meditations
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 3.2 due by 8:00am**

- Week 5, Day 2 - Sept 15
 - Read → reread Tuesday's readings
- **FRIDAY SEPT 16th → Writing Assignment 1 Due by 7:00pm**

— UNIT 2 - HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE —

Aristotle - *Nicomachean Ethics*

- Week 6, Day 1 - Sept 20
 - Read → *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I and II
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 4.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 6, Day 2 - Sept 22
 - Read or Listen (both are available via the link) → <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/music/dolly-parton-is-magnificent>
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 4.2 due by 8:00am**

Kant - *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

- Week 7, Day 1 - Sept 27
 - Read → *Groundwork*, First Section
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 5.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 7, Day 2 - Sept 29
 - Read → reread *Groundwork*, First Section
- Week 8, Day 1 - Oct 4
 - Read → *Groundwork*, Second Section
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 5.2 due by 8:00am**
- Week 8, Day 2 - Oct 6
 - Read → reread *Groundwork*, Second Section
 - NOTE: Prof Chaplin is out of town. Class is replaced by a short pre-recorded lecture (view on Sakai) and a Sakai activity.

Mill - *Utilitarianism*

- Week 9, Day 1 - Oct 11
 - Read → *Utilitarianism*, Chapters I-II and IV, pp 205-226 and 234-239
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 6.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 9, Day 2 - Oct 13
 - Read → <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2022/04/rethinking-higher-and-lower-pleasures/>
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 6.2 due by 8:00am**

— UNIT 3 - METAPHYSICS —

Buddhism on Self (and Suffering)

- Week 10, Day 1 - Oct 18
 - Read → *Buddhism as Philosophy*: Chs 1.2, 1.3, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 7.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 10, Day 2 - Oct 20 - NO CLASS
 - Fall Break.
- Week 11, Day 1 - Oct 25
 - Read → *Buddhism as Philosophy*: Chs 2.3-2.7
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 7.2 due by 8:00am**
- Week 11, Day 2 - Oct 27
 - Read → reread *Buddhism as Philosophy*: Chs 2.3-2.7
- **FRIDAY OCT 28th → Writing Assignment 2 Due by 7:00pm**

David Hume on Causation and Self

- Week 12, Day 1 - Nov 1
 - Read → *Enquiry into Human Understanding*, Sections II-IV, pp 12-29
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 8.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 12, Day 2 - Nov 3
 - Read → reread *Enquiry into Human Understanding*, Sections II-IV, pp 12-29
- Week 13, Day 1 - Nov 8
 - Read → *Enquiry into Human Understanding*, Sections V-VII, pp 30-57
- Week 13, Day 2 - Nov 10
 - Read → *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1.4.6 ('Of Personal Identity'), pp 251-263
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 8.2 due by 8:00am**

Aztec (Nahua) Metaphysics and Teotl (note: silent "l")

- Week 14, Day 1 - Nov 15
 - Read → *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, pp 1-12 and 21-42.
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 9.1 due by 8:00am**
- Week 14, Day 2 - Nov 17
 - Read → *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, pp 43-62.
 - Due → **Reading Worksheet 9.2 due by 8:00am**

Presentations

- Week 15, Day 1 - Nov 22
 - Group Presentations
- Week 15, Day 2 - Nov 24 - NO CLASS
 - Thanksgiving
- Week 16, Day 1 - Nov 29
 - Group Presentations

Final Exam → Saturday Dec 3rd, 2022, 4:00-6:00pm. Caldwell Hall 105