

St. Lawrence University
PHIL 103 A
Philosophy East and West: An Introduction
T/TH 8:30-10:00 PK 015
Dr. Erin McCarthy

Course Description/Objectives:

This course is designed to introduce you to some major themes and thinkers in the discipline of philosophy. We will do this by taking a comparative approach, looking at philosophy not only of the Western tradition, but also of the Eastern tradition and feminist perspectives. Some themes with which you will become familiar include the idea of a 'good life', ethics, and the self. You will be able to both identify these themes and also compare the approaches of different philosophers and traditions. Through close readings of primary texts, you will be encouraged to explore critically both the commonalities and differences across the traditions. Throughout the course, you will be developing critical thinking skills. You will learn how to critically analyze difficult philosophical texts and arguments, will develop your writing skills, and learn how to ask questions in a philosophical manner. You will also have a chance to develop your own view on these topics and on what it means to do comparative philosophy. The course will be highly participatory in nature, as I believe that discussion is one of the best and most enjoyable ways in which to learn philosophy.

Required Texts:

- 1) Confucius, *Analects*, Ames and Rosemont, translators (Random House, 1998).
- 2) Descartes, René, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, (third Edition) (Hackett, 1993).
- 3) Kant, Immanuel, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett, 1993).
- 4) Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 1992).
- 5) T.P. Kasulis, *Zen Action/Zen Person*, (University of Hawaii, 1985).
- 6) S. Murthy, translator, *The Bhagavad Gita* (second edition)(Long Beach, 1998).
- 7) Some texts on reserve, and/or on the course Blackboard site.

*The above texts are available at the Brewer Bookstore

Course Requirements:

Directed reading papers	30%
Tests	30%
Participation	20%
Final project	20%

Class Format:

Our classes will combine a lecture and discussion format. Lectures provide you with background material and information not covered in the text. In-class discussions and activities give you a chance to ask questions and share your ideas, concerns, and reflections on the material with rest of the class. Our discussion is, however, not limited

to our class meetings. The 'cyber-discussion' group provides you with a forum to ask questions that may not have come up in class and to expand on what you have learned in our class meetings and participation is required as explained below.

Reading:

You are expected to come to class having done the required reading and taken notes, ready to discuss the material in a generous, thoughtful, respectful manner. Reading philosophical texts is not like reading many other texts. A single, cursory reading of the material will not suffice. I expect you to read the material at least twice and take notes, and jot down questions. You are expected to come to every class with these notes from the reading and questions concerning the material - a separate notebook or folder is a good idea (please date and indicate what reading your notes are for). This will be particularly useful for you to prepare for the Directed Reading Papers described below. I expect to be able to call on each one of you *at any time* to see or collect your notes, and will do so periodically during the semester. Should you be unprepared, it will result in a lowering of your participation grade.

Attendance:

Your attendance in class is expected and important. Attendance contributes to your participation grade and more than 3 absences will result in a lowering of your **final** grade by .5 (on the 4 point scale) for each class missed after your three absences. During class, material crucial to helping you understand the readings but not available in the text will be presented. You are responsible for all material covered during class time. The discussion that happens in class provides you with an opportunity to develop your ideas and learn from the ideas of others.

Evaluation:

The **directed reading papers** are designed to foster class discussion, to help you focus on key issues in the readings, and help you learn how to write critically for a philosophy class. You will be asked either to paraphrase some part of the reading or to answer a question (or questions) about it. I will announce the questions at the end of the class the class before they are due. In grading these papers I will be looking for the following: evidence that you have read and understood the material; an answer to the question asked; clear argumentation and, where appropriate, originality of thought. You should not use any outside sources to write these papers, I am interested in *your* understanding of the material. Papers should be 1-2 pages, (typewritten, double spaced, 12pt. font) *no longer*. Papers must be submitted *at the beginning of class* and *must not be handwritten*. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

The in class **tests** will be a combination of multiple choice/fill in the blank/identify and essay questions, and will be comparative in nature. The tests will draw on the readings **and** the material covered in class. **Make up tests will not be given.**

The **final project** will be a project/paper you work on throughout the course and is described in a separate handout. It involves journal entries (which we will do in class) and a final project. This is largely a creative project and the opportunity for you to begin

to develop your own philosophical worldview and reflect on the development of your thought throughout the course.

The **participation** grade is based on quality of participation in class discussions, e-mail participation in the Blackboard site for the course, reading notes, attendance, etc.. You will each be responsible for contributing to the discussion forums in Blackboard regularly over the course of the semester. Often, if you are on the borderline of a higher final grade (.1-.2 points away on a 4.0 scale), excellent attendance and effort in these categories can help boost your grade to the next level.

* This course will make use of the university's Blackboard website program. Each student has a Blackboard account for this course. Some readings may be posted on the Blackboard site.

Rules, policies, etc....

Late assignments will not be accepted. Exceptions will be made only in the case where you have made previous arrangements with me (as in the use of your favor) or in the case of documented emergencies. In the latter case, it is your responsibility to discuss the matter with me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made *if* warranted. **See the Student Handbook for Academic Honesty Policies.** **Respect** for other students' voices and viewpoints is expected and required. This will create a positive learning environment in our class, where everyone will feel that their viewpoint is respected.

***The instructor reserves the right to change the course requirements and schedule attached if it proves necessary.**

Phil 103 Schedule of Readings and Assignments

T Jan. 20	Introduction
TH Jan. 22	PART ONE - Self and the Good Life <i>Republic</i> : Book I, Book II (Journal entry #1 in class)
T Jan. 27	<i>Republic</i> : Book V
TH Jan. 29	<i>Republic</i> : Book VI
T Feb. 3	<i>Republic</i> : Book VII Directed Reading Paper#1 DUE
TH Feb. 5	Wrap Up <i>Republic</i> <i>Yoga Workshop in class (tentative)</i>
T Feb. 10	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> : Introduction; Chapters 1-3 (Journal entry #2 in class)
TH Feb. 12	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> : Chapters 4-9
T Feb. 17	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> : Chapters 10-14
TH Feb. 19	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> : Chapters 14-18 (Journal Entry #2 in class)
T Feb. 24	TEST #1
TH Feb. 26	PART TWO: Self and Ethics Kant: Preface; Film: "Can Rules Define Morality?" (Journal entry #3 in class)
T March 2	Kant: First Section
TH March 4	Kant: Second Section
T March 9	Confucius: Introduction Confucius: Passages concerning <i>Li</i> : 1.12, 1.13; 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.23; 3.3, 3.4, 3.15, 3.19, 3.26; 4.13; 5.27; 8.2, 8.8; 9.3, 9.11; 10.4; 12.1, 12.5, 12.15; 13.3, 13.4, 13.5; 14.12, 14.41; 15.18; 16.5, 16.13; 17.11; 20.3
TH March 11	Directed Reading Paper # 2 DUE at the beginning of class Confucius: Passages concerning <i>Ren</i> : 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.15; 5.19;

6.7, 6.22, 6.30; 7.6, 7.30, 7.34; 8.2, 8.7; 9.1; 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.22; 13.12, 13.19, 13.27; 14.1, 14.4, 14.6, 14.28; 15.9, 15.33, 15.35, 15.36; 17.6, 17.8; 19.6; 20.2

March 16 &18

Spring Break

T March 23

Confucius: Passages concerning *junzi*: 1.2; 4.5, 4.9, 4.10, 4.16; 6.18, 6.27; 7.33; 8.2, 8.7; 12.5, 12.15, 12.19; 13.3, 13.23, 13.25; 15.9, 15.18, 15.21, 15.32; 16.10; 17.4, 17.23; 18.7; 19.9; 20.3; Additional Selections, TBA
(Journal entry #4 in class)

TH March 25

TEST #2

T March 30

PART THREE - Epistemology and Self: How do we know? What can we know? How do I know who I am?
Descartes: Synopsis; Meditations One and Two
(Journal entry #5 in class)

TH April 1

Descartes: Meditations Three and Four

T April 6

Descartes: Meditations Five and Six

****Mandatory attendance at Zen Lecture (Date TBA: either April 6 or 7 in the evening)****

TH April 8

Wrap Up *Meditations*

T April 13

Kasulis: Chapter 1; Film: "Is there an Enduring Self?"
Directed Reading Paper #3 DUE at the beginning of class

TH April 15

Kasulis: Chapter 3; Chapter 4

T April 20

Kasulis: Chapter 5; Chapter 7
(Journal entry #6 in class)

TH April 22

TEST # 3

T April 27

Kasulis: Chapter 9, 10

TH April 29

**Wrap up; loose ends
FINAL PROJECT DUE DATE - TBA**