

Self and Others – Fall 2016 (PHIL 1000)

Professor: Dr. Marina Folescu
Email: folescum@missouri.edu
Office: Strickland Hall 434

Class time: Mon & Wed, 11:00–12:15 pm
Office Hours: Tue, 3:30 – 5:00
and by appointment

Course Description

We live in relationship to the people, animals, and objects around us. Our nature partly determines who we are; but so do our cultural heritage and political environment. We can and do influence how others perceive us through our relationships and actions. The notions of personal and political freedom cannot be understood well unless we have a framework for understanding what *we* are, as minds-and-bodies unions, and what we *owe* to each other, as fellow citizens in a society.

In this class, we will start at the beginning: we will dedicate most of the time to closely read three of the most famous texts in the history of Western philosophy, both from the 17th century. First, we will be reading closely Descartes' *Meditations*, where he laid the foundations of dualism, a thesis that is still live and well in contemporary psychology and philosophy of mind. We will not be appealing to biology, neuroscience, or psychology, but think about what *we* are, from a metaphysical point of view. In the second part of this class, we will be discussing Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, where he laid the foundations of the theory of social contract. This theory is aimed at explaining how it is that people congregate together in societies and what is the nature of their rights and obligations, as members of particular societies. Social contract theory was renewed and revised, most recently by John Rawls, in the 20th century, and it offers one of the best explanations of the behaviors and relationships of people, understood as *political* beings.

Course Objectives

1. To gain an appreciation of the place of philosophy within the complex intellectual and social issues of an epoch.
2. To gain the necessary tools for constructing a charitable interpretation of a difficult text.
3. To develop an ability to extract, analyze, and criticize arguments from a difficult text. This will enable you to acquire the skills of effective communication.
4. To become familiar with the use of thought experiments to advance a thesis.

Assignments and Grading

Readings / Attendance / Participation: 35% (of total grade)

Class attendance is **required**, and you are expected to come prepared to discuss the readings. This portion of the grade is awarded for *quality*, not quantity of attendance. Quality participation involves advancing the discussion with relevant contributions.

To ensure that everyone has a chance to earn their participation points, we will proceed as follows. At the end of each Wed class (except in the first and last weeks of classes), I will assign homework, in the form of two or three questions. Each week on Mon, you will come prepared to answer these questions (you may bring something written to class, if it's easier for you; but this is not required). We will spend roughly 20 min to talk about your answers – each and every one here will explain why s/he is giving those answers to those questions – and then we will move on to discussing the rest of the topics to be covered in class that day.

Students with legitimate excuses (as determined by me) may be given an option of making up for up to **three** absences by turning in some additional work (usually, a one page written synopsis/description of an argument that was covered in class).

To do this effectively, the assigned readings must be completed **prior** to class for the day they are assigned.

One in-class (or take-home) midterm: 25% (of total grade). The midterm is scheduled for **October 12, 2016**.

Final in-class exam: 40% (of total grade). The final exam is scheduled for **December 16, 2016, 10:00 am to noon**.

Note: the date and time of the final examination are set by the Registrar's office according to the days and times of the class meeting; I have no say in exam scheduling. Please do not ask to take the exam early; if you know now that you will have commitments that make you unable to take the exam on the scheduled day, do not enroll in this class.

No extra-credit work will be given, so make your regular work count.

Course Policies

Blackboard / E-mail: I expect all students to check their university e-mail accounts. Unless an email from a student requires immediate action, it is my policy to reply to emails within one business day. I will not reply to student emails asking questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus. I also expect all students to check Blackboard regularly for announcements and other information.

Grading: I use Blackboard's system for converting percentages to letter grades: 90-100 is the A range, 80-89 is the B range, 70-79 is the C range, etc., with pluses and minuses assigned proportionally (for example, 87-89 is a B+, 83-86 is a B, and 80-82 is a B-).

The grades are assigned in the following manner: A – for excellent work; B – for good work; C – for fair work; D – for work that is sub-par; F – for work that does not meet the minimum requirements.

Simply meeting the minimum requirements for this course does not entitle a student to a grade of A or B.

Electronics Policy: Students are not allowed to use any electronic devices in the classroom (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.). Exceptions will be made only if a student has a note from the disability office on campus OR the student makes a good (independent of disabilities) case for laptop use. The use of all other electronic devices is strictly prohibited, even in exceptional cases. I would prefer not to have to enforce this rule; but experience teaches me that I may need to. Any unauthorized use of electronic devices will be penalized: the student will have her/his grade reduced by 3%.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism, cheating, and other academic dishonesty, being unfair to other students, and disrespectful to me, will not be tolerated. I strictly follow the university's policies on academic integrity. Each student is expected to know the University policy on plagiarism as it is stated on <http://osrr.missouri.edu/guidelines/index.html>. Students caught plagiarizing on a paper, exam, or any assignment, will be reported to the Office of the Provost for investigation. Any assignment that contains plagiarized material (as confirmed via Option A or B) will receive **a grade of zero**. **Beware:** under university regulations, paraphrasing from a text, without using proper citations practices, counts as plagiarism. Of course, proper citations are an easy way of avoiding this problem. If you are unsure about how to cite sources in your written assignments, please see me.

Academic Accommodations: If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Center (<http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

For my own good: I would like to ask you to kindly refrain from using strong scents whenever you attend class. These include, but are not limited to, perfumes, deodorants, and even, for instance, hazelnut flavored coffee.

Flexibility: Strictly adhering to a particular guideline is not always the most sensible course of action. So, I reserve the right to alter the course plan, reading schedule, grading policies, etc. throughout the semester, when the need arises. All changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

Required Texts

The following texts are all required and they may be purchased at the campus bookstore. Please bring the relevant books with you to lecture. Please quote only from the assigned editions.

- Plato, *Five Dialogues* – Hackett, 2002. ISBN 978-0872206335
- Descartes, *Meditations* – Cambridge, 1996. ISBN 978-0521558181
- Locke, John, *Second Treatise of Government* – Hackett, 1980. ISBN: 9780915144860.
- Locke, John, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* – Hackett, 1980. ISBN: 9780915145607.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1	8/22 8/24	Introduction Refresher on the policy on academic integrity Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
Week 2	8/29 8/31	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
Week 3	9/5 9/7	Labor Day – No Class Descartes: Meditation I
Week 4	9/12 9/14	Descartes: Meditation I Descartes: Objections and Replies, 63–67
Week 5	9/19 9/21	Descartes: Meditation II Descartes: Descartes: Objections and Replies, 68–77
Week 6	9/26 9/28	Descartes: Meditation III Descartes: Meditation III
Week 7	10/3 10/5	Descartes: Objections and Replies, pp. 78–89 How to take a philosophy exam Descartes: Meditation VI
Week 8	10/10 10/12	Descartes: Meditation VI MIDTERM
Week 9	10/17 10/19	Descartes: Objections and replies pp. 107–115 Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of the state of nature”, 7-14
Week 10	10/24 10/26	Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of the state of war”, 14-16 Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of slavery”, 17-18
Week 11	10/31 11/2	Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of property”, 18-30 Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of property”, 18-30
Week 12	11/7 11/9	Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of political or civil society”, 42-51 Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of the beginning of political societies”, 52-65
Week 13	11/14 11/16	Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> , “Of the ends of political society and government”, 65-68 Locke: <i>Second Treatise</i> – wrap-up

THANKSGIVING RECESS: November 19 – November 27

Week 14	11/28	Locke: <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , 23-34
	11/30	Locke: <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , 35-45
Week 15	12/5	Locke: <i>A Letter Concerning Toleration</i> , 46-58
	12/7	Closing Remarks