

24.01: Classics of Western Philosophy (CI-H)
Fall 2017

DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce you to the Western philosophical tradition through the study of thinkers who have defined the philosophical canon, such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Kant, and critiques of the canon. You'll grapple with questions that have been significant to philosophy from its beginnings: questions about the nature of the mind, the existence of God, the foundations of knowledge, and the legitimacy of the state. You'll also observe changes of intellectual outlook over time, and the effect of scientific, religious, and political concerns on the development of philosophical ideas.

One of the aims of this course is to introduce you to some of the thinkers and themes from the history of Western philosophy. But another important aim of this course is to develop your skill at the kind of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking called for when working on the history of philosophy. There is a historical component to this latter aim: you'll learn to read historical texts closely and carefully. And there is a philosophical component to it: you'll learn to thoughtfully but critically assess the arguments we find in those texts. The readings, assignments, and class sessions will all contribute toward realizing these aims.

INSTRUCTORS:

Prof. Sally Haslanger
Office Location: 32-D926 (mailbox: 32-D808)
Email: shaslang@mit.edu
Office Hours: M11-12 and by appointment

TAs: Allison Koslow (akoslow@mit.edu), Quinn White (qwhite@mit.edu)

Writing Tutor: TBA

CLASS MEETINGS:

Lecture: MW 10-11, 32-124

Recitations:

(R1) F10-11, 56-157, Koslow

(R2) F11-12, 56-157, White

(R3) F12-1, 56-167, White

TEXTS: All available on Stellar

COURSE URL: <http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/24/fa17/24.01/>

All handouts and announcements for the course including lecture notes will be available through the Stellar website. The site will also provide links to required and recommended readings. Note that many of the texts are available online, but in different translations with different pagination. It is advisable to use the texts uploaded for the class so that coordination on translation and pagination is easy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Criteria for HASS CI-H subjects: "The CI-H subjects provide you with a foundation in effective expository writing and oral communication. CI-H subjects are writing classes or classes in the HASS curriculum in which you plan, organize, draft, and revise a series of sequenced assignments based on course material. These subjects require at least 20 pages of writing, typically divided among three to five assignments. At least one essay must be revised and resubmitted. CI-H subjects also offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression through presentations, student-led discussion, or class participation."

You will satisfy the HASS CI-H criteria and the course objectives through the following course components (each of which are described in more detail, below):

- Recitation, attendance, quizzes (25% of final grade)
- Papers and exercises (totaling 75% of final grade)
 - 2 exercises: 10% of final grade
 - Exercise #1: Exegesis—a short (1–2 page) paper interpreting and explaining a bit of text.
 - Exercise #2: Analysis—a short (1–2 page) paper critically assessing an argument.
 - Note: The two Exercises together must total at least 3 pages.*
 - Paper #1: 10% of final grade
 - Paper #2: 15% of final grade
 - Rewrite: 15% of final grade
 - Paper #3: 25% of final grade

Note: you must pass each component of the course in order to pass the course.

RECITATION:

Your recitation grade will be based on your attendance (in both lecture and recitation), preparation, contributions to discussion, quizzes in lecture, and any other written or oral assignments your TA arranges for section. You should come to recitation prepared to discuss the readings from class.

LECTURE AND RECITATION POLICIES:

- **Attendance at both lecture and recitation is required.** If, for whatever reason, you cannot attend lecture or recitation, you should contact your TA as soon as possible in advance of that class session. Your TA will have discretion to set policies for making up excused absences.
- You should expect to disagree with things we read or discuss, with other people in class (including me or your TA). These disagreements may be vigorous but must always be reasoned and respectful.
- A note on gadgets: laptops, iPads, and so forth are not permitted in lecture unless you have an accommodation (see below under “Assistance”). If you have an accommodation and are found using gadgets for impermissible activities (checking email, etc.), we will have a meeting with Student Disability Services to determine an appropriate resolution.
- Your TA may set additional policies for recitation (including policies regarding gadgets).

PAPERS:

Over the course of the semester you will write three papers. I will post to Stellar more detailed instructions for each assignment (along with more detailed grading criteria).

You will revise Paper #2 in light of feedback from your TA. The rewrite will be graded as an independent assignment, and will be evaluated, in part, by your success in improving the paper in light of feedback. Note that revised papers will be held to a higher standard, and not all revisions are improvements. It is possible that a rewrite will earn a lower grade than the original.

- Paper #1 (600-1200 words)—this paper will involve both exegesis and analysis (as in exercises).
- Paper #2 (1500-2100 words)—this paper will involve exegesis and analysis, and will require you to engage even more deeply with some text(s) and theme(s) studied in the course.
- Rewrite of Paper #2
- Paper #3 (2100–2700 words)—this paper will be similar in form to Paper #2 but, as you’ll note, a bit longer.

Note: Papers #1, #2, and #3 together must total at least 17 pages. (This does not include the rewrite.)

EXTENSION POLICY:

- Each student has 3 “no-questions asked” (NQA) 24-hour extensions per semester, for use on exercises or papers. To use a NQA extension, *you must ask your TA for an extension in advance of the deadline for the assignment in question.*

- NQA extensions may be combined for a three-day extension on one assignment or broken up among multiple assignments. No other extensions will be granted (except for exceptional circumstances).
- Unexcused late work will lose 1/3 grade per day or portion thereof (e.g., an “A” paper turned in during the first 24 hours after a deadline will receive an “A-”).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. If in doubt about what counts as plagiarism, or about how to properly reference a source, consult the instructor or your TA. Other forms of academic dishonesty include: cheating on exams, double submission of papers, aiding dishonesty, and falsification of records. If academic dishonesty is proven, this will result in severe disciplinary consequences, which could include any or all of the following: a redo of the assignment for a reduced grade; failure on the assignment; failure of the course; a letter in the student’s file in the Office of Student Citizenship or referral to the Committee on Discipline. If you are tempted to plagiarize because you are in crisis, it is always better to speak to your TA, the professor, your advisor, the academic deans, the counseling center, or another trusted authority on campus who can help you handle the crisis. For details about expectations, see the Academic Integrity Handbook: <https://integrity.mit.edu/>

In academic writing, then, you must give citations each time you use someone else’s ideas, words, phrasing, or unusual information. An insidious form of plagiarism is the “patchwork paper”—some words and ideas taken from source A are stitched together with words and ideas from source B and source C and.... **In this class**, you may refer to the assigned texts without full citation (see “How to Cite a Source” below), if it is clear what text you are drawing upon. You *must*, however, give page numbers in parentheses after all quotes and in support of your claims about the text.

Your essays should be your own work, although you are encouraged to seek writing advice from the Writing and Communication Center (12-132, 617-253-3090). If there is any question about whether the student’s paper is his or her own work, TA’s have been directed to bring the paper directly to the professor. Every effort will be made to determine whether the paper is plagiarized. This is an attempt to be fair to the teachers and the other students in the course.

There are four guidelines for using sources in your essays: (i) There is never a good reason to paraphrase a source—either summarize it in your own words or quote it exactly (citing the source in either case); (ii) When you quote, quote exactly, use quotation marks, and cite the source; (iii) When you use information that might not be considered common knowledge, cite the source; (iv) When in doubt about whether or not to give a citation, always give a citation.

Helpful link: <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/avoiding-plagiarism/>

HOW TO CITE A SOURCE:

If your essay discusses a single source that was assigned for the course and if you make clear, in the body of your text, which source you are discussing, then you may cite any quotations or discussions of that source by giving, in the body of your writing, the page number of the quotation or paraphrase in parentheses next to the stretch of text. E.g.,

In his “Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,” David Hume writes that “All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, namely, relations of ideas and matters of fact” (842).

If your essay discusses multiple sources or if you use or consult sources not assigned for the course, you need to provide full references in a bibliography. Citations of those sources in the body of your paper should follow a standard format, such as that of the APA, MLA, or CMS. For other questions about bibliography and citation format, speak with your TA or the writing tutor.

ASSISTANCE:

- You should always feel free to contact me or your TA about any questions or concerns you have about the course. Write us emails, visit our office hours, intercept us on campus (within reason)!
- This course also has a dedicated writing advisor. You should contact the writing advisor for help with papers. You can meet to discuss ideas, work on an outline, go over a draft in detail, and more.
- The Writing and Communication Center (<http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/>) can provide assistance with your writing and communication. The WCC can also provide assistance to students for whom English is a second language. You can schedule an appointment for an in-person consultation or you can arrange an online consultation. See the WCC website for additional details about the resources and services they can provide.
- If you have a disability, then you have a right under Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act to reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request accommodations, please contact Student Disabilities Services (<http://mit.edu/uaap/sds/> 5-104, 617-253-1674, uaap-sds@mit.edu). If you are eligible, they will give you an accommodation letter which you should bring to me as soon as possible. That way we can work together to make sure all of the course content is accessible to you.
- The Academic Integrity Handbook (linked above) lists numerous other resources that might assist you in various ways.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Additional readings will be recommended throughout the term.

I. Introduction: content and method

9/6: first class

9/11: What counts as “Western” Philosophy

Anthony Appiah, “There is No Such Thing as Western Civilization.”
and Sonya Sodha commentary.

9/13: History and Power

Michael Rowlands, “The Politics of Identity in Archeology”

Martin Bernal "The Image of Ancient Greece as a Tool for Colonialism and European Hegemony," pp. 119-128 (especially pp. 125-127)

Recommended: Jasper Griffin, “Who Are These Coming to the Sacrifice?”

See also: <http://www.reed.edu/humanities/110Tech/BlackAthena.html>

9/18: Influences

Reading TBA

II. Civil Disobedience

9/20: Obligation to the State?

Socrates: *Apology*, pp. 23-44; *Crito*, pp. 44-56.

Exercise #1 due at the beginning of class

9/25: Conscientious Objection

Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience.”

James Baldwin: “A Talk to Teachers.”

9/27: Social Movements

Hannah Arendt, “Civil Disobedience,” pp. 51-77.

Martin Luther King, “A Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

9/29: student holiday (no recitation)

III. The State and the Economy

10/2: *Plato's State*

Plato, *Republic*, Selections from Book II, IV and V (368a-376d, 433a-466d)

Exercise #2 due at the beginning of class

10/4: *Why not Democracy?*

Plato, *Republic*, Book VIII (543-571)

Recommended: Elizabeth Anderson, "The Epistemology of Democracy."

10/9: *Columbus Day Holiday*

10/11: *The State of Nature*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 13-15 (pp. 76-98)

10/16: *The Social Contract*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17-18 (pp. 103-114), 20 (pp. 122-129).

10/18: *Dependency*

Martha Nussbaum, "Justice," from *Examined Life*.

Paper #1 due at the beginning of class

10/23: *Property*

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Ch. 5.

Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America*, Ch. 6.

10/25: *Capitalism*

Karl Marx, Selections from *Capital*

10/30: *Emancipation*

Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question."

IV. Knowledge & Science

11/1: *A Priori Knowledge*

Plato, *Meno* 80d-100b, pp. 68-88, *Republic* VII:1

11/6: *Epistemic Skepticism*

Descartes *Meditations 1*

11/8: *Back from Skepticism*

Descartes, *Meditations 2&3*

11/10: *Veteran's Day, no recitation*

11/13: *Empiricism*

David Hume, *Enquiry* §1-3

Paper #2 due at the beginning of class.

11/15: *The Problem of Induction*

David Hume, *Enquiry* §4-5

11/20: *Other Ways of Knowing*

Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff, "Are 'Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" (FE 217-244)

Final paper topics distributed

11/22: *Epistemology of Ignorance*
Charles Mills, "White Ignorance"

11/23-24: *Thanksgiving Break*

V. Mind, Body, and Self

11/27: *The Soul*

Aristotle, *De Anima* II: 1-3; Recommended: *On the Generation of Animals* IV:1

11/29: *The Real Distinction between Mind and Body*

Rene Descartes, *Meditation 6* and correspondence with Princess Elizabeth.

Final day to turn in rewrite of Paper #2.

12/4: *Union of Mind and Body*

Shapiro, L. (1999) "Princess Elizabeth and Descartes: The Union of Mind and Body and the Practice of Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 7(3): 503–520

12/6: *Racialized Bodies*

Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (selections)

W.E.B. DuBois, "The Souls of Black Folk" (selections)

12/11: *Gendered Bodies*

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction

12/13: Last class

Paper #3 due at the beginning of class. No final exam.

