



Your University of Choice

COURSE SYLLABUS

Term: 2015-1

Course: PHIL 200A (Great Philosophical Ideas)

Instructor Information:	
Instructor Name	Michael McGehee
Office Number:	Room 517
Phone Number:	(219) 473-4350
Email:	mmcgehee@ccsj.edu
Hours Available:	Tuesdays/Thursdays, Noon-2pm (by appointment)
Instructor Background:	M.A., Philosophy, The University of Chicago, 2013 B.A., Philosophy and History, Cornell College, 2009 CCSJ Band Director Advisor to CCSJ Philosophy Club
Courses Taught at CCSJ:	Foundations of Western Culture (HUM 110), English Composition (ENG 103), Great Philosophical Ideas (PHIL 200), Business and Professional Ethics (PHIL/BSMT 375), Metaphysics (PHIL 321), Epistemology (PHIL 322), Ethics (PHIL 323)

Course Information:	
Course Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, Noon-1:30pm
Classroom:	TBA
Prerequisites:	RLST 130 or 131; Junior Status
Required Books and Materials:	* Texts via Blackboard (printed out by the student before each class) * A spiral notebook for taking notes
Learning Outcomes/ Competencies:	1. Understand the basic terminology used by the great philosophers; 2. Articulate the philosophical themes of major philosophers from their writings and within their historical settings; 3. Evaluate the various philosophical perspectives;

4. Begin to reflect critically about the nature of reality, wisdom, and ethics;
 5. Develop a personal philosophy in conversation with the great philosophers.

Strengthening critical thinking and oral communication skills is a strategy essential to accomplishing the above five goals:

- 1) Comprehend and interpret challenging texts,
- 2) Question and judge ideas for yourself,
- 3) Discern the implications of ideas and convictions,
- 4) Support your views with reasoning,
- 5) Speak confidently and clearly in a public setting,
- 6) Listen and respond to others in a respectful conversation,
- 7) Respond calmly and thoughtfully to questions in a public setting.
- 8) Exercise leadership in class.

Course Description:
 In this course, students seek what is true and good in conversation with the Great Books of Western philosophy. The foundation is the Seminar, an open conversation centered on a text and guided by the instructor. Students read and discuss works by Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers of classical Greece and Rome, scholastic and spiritual thinkers of the Middle Ages such as Anselm and Aquinas, and seminal thinkers of the modern world, such as Rene' Descartes, John Locke, and Friedrich Nietzsche. This course is the Capstone of the General Education curriculum. The Signature oral exam and writing assignment are requirements of this course.

Learning Strategies: Lecture, Group Discussion, Class Discussion, Paper Writing, Journal Writing, Blackboard, Presentations

Experiential Learning Opportunities:

Assessments:

Grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar Participation • Blackboard Posts • Journal Entries • Critical Reflections (Papers) • Final Paper • Oral Defense/Examination 	20% of Final Grade (10 points each) 20% of Final Grade (10 points each) 10% of Final Grade (100 points total) 15% of Final Grade (100 points each) 25% of Final Grade (100 points total) 10% of Final Grade (100 points total)
Class Participation	Class is divided into alternating lecture and seminar days. On lecture days, students are	

	<p>responsible for taking notes, being respectful, and responding to questions from the instructor and comments of their fellow students, as well as writing journal entries, bringing any required texts to class, and completing all in-class activities.</p> <p>On seminar days, students are responsible for bringing the required text for the day printed out (with their quote from their blackboard post highlighted), participating in class discussion of the text, being respectful, and taking notes.</p> <p>In order to receive credit, students must attend class on time and stay for the full duration (unless instructor permission is sought to leave class early or arrive late). Students may use the restroom as they need to during lecture days, but during seminar days, students should only leave when they would not interrupt anyone speaking.</p>	
<p>Signature Assignments</p>	<p>This General Education class will help you prepare for CCSJ's Signature Assignments, a common written and oral project that students complete in Social Justice as freshmen, Religious Studies as sophomores, and Philosophy as juniors. Signature Assignments are assessed for written communications, oral communications, and critical thinking. You must meet required scores in Religious Studies to move ahead to Philosophy, and in Philosophy to complete your General Education program.</p>	
<p><u>Explanation of Assignments:</u></p>		

Seminar Participation

Your attendance of class lecture and active engagement in class discussion during seminar is a very significant part of your overall performance in the course. It is essential that you attend class having done the reading in advance and ready to ask well-thought out questions about the reading in class.

Your participation in seminar each week will be graded based on the following (out of 10 points):

1. Demonstrating your understanding of the text through thoughtful questions and comments during seminar. (4 points)

2. Politely listening to your fellow classmates questions and comments and stayed attentive through seminar. This means no checking your phone, no sleeping, no talking to your neighbor, and, in general, no leaving the room. (3 points)
3. Showing up with the text in-hand, annotated and with your quote from your Blackboard post highlighted or marked. (3 points)

Blackboard Posts

Before seminar each week, students will post a quote from the reading, an interpretation of the meaning of that quote, and a question about the quote for the class. Then, you will respond to one of your fellow students' questions.

So, each week you will be responsible for and graded on the following (out of 10 points):

1. Reading the assigned text at least twice (for understanding) before seminar.
2. Finding, posting, and interpreting a quote from the text online. (4 points for your interpretation, 2 points for the quote)
3. End your post with a question that you had about the reading for the class to try to answer. (2 points)
4. Responding to *at least one* fellow student's post with a thoughtful comment or question. (2 points)
5. Coming to seminar with the text printed out and with your quote highlighted.

Journal Entries

During the first fifteen minutes of every lecture class, students will write two or more paragraphs in response to a prompt, typically concerning the previous night's reading. Students will turn these entries in near the end of the course, and are responsible for keeping track of them and making them up on their own. These journal entries are a low-stakes way to start thinking through the issues we will discuss in class. Students should refer to their journal entries to remember what they are interested in discussing and writing about for their final paper.

Critical Reflections

The student will reflect on the assigned reading by writing one to three well-written pages in response to a particular aspect or section of the reading. Students should try to demonstrate that they understand the material by explaining the arguments in their own words, using their own examples and examples from the text. Do not quote the text word-for-word, but please do cite (with author's last name and page number in parentheses) the sections of the text that support your interpretation.

Final Paper

The final paper will be 5-8 pages, double spaced, on a topic in philosophy, utilizing at least one primary text from the course.

Note: You must submit a rough draft of the final paper by Week 12. You will receive instructor comments within about a week. You should use these comments to improve your paper.

Oral Defense/Examination

The Oral Defense and Examination is the capstone of the entire course, which itself is the capstone of the General Education Program, as Great Philosophical Ideas is the last required course in the General Education sequence. If you fail the Oral Defense and Examination, you will be forced to repeat them within one semester or fail the course, so be sure to take this seriously. It comes in two parts, and will test all of the skills you should have gained by the end of the course.

For the first part, you will speak extemporaneously (that is, without a written speech or note cards) for three minutes about a particular philosopher, philosophical concept, or philosophical text, to be decided at a later date.

For the second part, you will defend a thesis in an oral presentation of your final paper, in front of the class. You will be asked to present the thesis of your paper clearly, and explain how the parts of your paper support that thesis, as well as answer some possible objections. I will also ask you questions for clarity and to check for understanding.

You should dress as you would for an interview, that is, formally. You will also be graded on your public speaking ability; you will get good practice at this during seminar, so don't sweat it. By the time you defend, you'll be ready, as long as you've done good work on your paper and regularly participated in seminar, class discussion, and blackboard. As per Philosophy and Religious Studies program standards, this presentation will be recorded, both to act as a formal record and so that the videos will be assessed.

Signature Assignments and Portfolio

In addition to the other requirements of the course, you will also be required to complete and turn in the following assignments in order to pass the course. Note: These assignments make up your General Education Portfolio, and will be assessed externally (not by the instructor), and will not otherwise affect your grade.

1. An In-Class Essay
2. A General Education Cover Letter
3. A copy of your Final Paper
4. A copy of a rough draft of your Final Paper (commented on by the instructor)

Course Schedule:

* All texts should be downloaded and printed out from Blackboard unless otherwise noted. * You will post on Blackboard and be responsible for participating in Seminar every single week.		
<u>Class Meeting Date</u>	<u>Class Topic/Readings</u>	<u>Papers Due</u>
Week 1 - 08/31/15	Introduction to the Course	
Week 1 - 09/02/15	Seminar: Plato – Euthyphro	
Week 2 - 09/07/15	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	
Week 2 - 09/09/15	Seminar: Plato – Apology	
Week 3 - 09/14/15	Claims and Grounds Jurassic Park Clip Thank You For Smoking Clips Emma Watson's Speech to the UN	
Week 3 - 09/16/15	Seminar: Plato – Crito	
Week 4 - 09/21/15	Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology Plato's Allegory of the Cave	
Week 4 - 09/23/15	Seminar: Aristotle	Critical Reflection #1 Due
Week 5 - 09/28/15	The Concept of Virtue Aristotle's Metaphysics	
Week 5 - 09/30/15	Seminar: Epicurus	

Week 6 - 10/05/15	The Concept of Goodness The Social Contract	
Week 6 - 10/07/15	Seminar: Stoics	
Week 7 - 10/12/15	Arguments For/Against God's Existence	
Week 7 - 10/14/15	Seminar: Descartes	Critical Reflection #2 Due
Week 8 - 10/19/15	Introduction to Epistemology The Skeptical Challenge The Matrix Clip	
Week 8 - 10/21/15	Seminar: Locke	
Week 9 - 10/26/15	Innate Knowledge/Acquired Knowledge Experience and Reason	
Week 9 - 10/28/15	Seminar: Hume	
Week 10 - 11/02/15	Hume's Metaphysics Impressions and Ideas	
Week 10 - 11/04/15	Seminar: Kant	Critical Reflection #3 Due
Week 11 - 11/09/15	Introduction to Ethics The Concept of Duty	
Week 11 - 11/11/15	Seminar: Bentham and Mill	
Week 12 - 11/16/15	The Concept of Utility Higher and Lower Pleasures The Trolley Problem	
Week 12 - 11/18/15	Seminar: TBD	Rough Draft of Final Paper Due (Required)
Week 13 - 11/23/15	Introduction to Political Philosophy Mill's On Liberty	
Week 13 - 11/25/15	ORAL DEFENSES	
Week 14 - 11/30/15	ORAL DEFENSES	
Week 14 - 12/02/15	ORAL DEFENSES	
Week 15 - 12/07/15 - 12/9/15 (TBA)	EXAM WEEK: ORAL DEFENSES	Final Paper Due

Schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion to suit the needs of the course.

Responsibilities	
Attending Class	You cannot succeed in this class if you do not attend. We believe that intellectual growth and success in higher education occur through interaction in the classroom and laboratories. However, we do not want to penalize students for

	participating in college-sponsored events. When you miss class because of a college event, you must give notice of your absence in advance, and you are responsible for all missed work. Being absent doesn't excuse you from doing class work; you have more responsibilities to keep up and meet the objectives of this course.
Turning In Your Work	You cannot succeed in this class if you do not turn in all your work on the day it is due. Except in rare circumstances, late work will not be accepted. All assignments should be turned in via Blackboard unless otherwise noted.
Using Electronic Devices	Turn off all cell phones and other electric devices for the full duration of each class. The usage of cell phones, laptops, tablets, and e-readers is allowed for the sole purpose of taking notes. If there is an important reason why you must have your phone or other electronic device turned on (for example, an illness at home or a work emergency), speak to me about it before class.
Participating in Class	Many of the issues we will discuss in class are controversial. Therefore, it is essential that this class is a safe environment for the exchange of ideas. Please be respectful of your fellow students and myself. This means, in the first place, refrain from the use of hate speech, insults, interrupting someone when he or she is speaking, or any other harmful behavior. Class should be a fun and interesting place to be, so if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the way a student or anyone else has made you feel in the classroom, please let me know as soon as possible. Students who cannot show consideration to others <i>will</i> be kicked out of class.
Doing Your Own Work	If you turn in work that is not your own, you are subject to judicial review, and these procedures can be found in the College Catalog and the Student Planner. The maximum penalty for any form of academic dishonesty is dismissal from the College. Using standard citation guidelines, such as MLA or APA format, to document sources avoids plagiarism. The Library has reference copies of each of these manuals, and there are brief checklists in your Student Handbook and Planner. PLEASE NOTE: All papers may be electronically checked for plagiarism.
Withdrawing from Class	After the last day established for class changes has passed (see the College calendar), you may withdraw from a course by following the policy outlined in the CCSJ Course Catalog.

Resources	
Student Success Center:	The Student Success Center provides faculty tutors at all levels to help you master specific subjects and develop effective learning skills. It is open to all students at no charge. You can contact the Student Success Center at 219 473-4287 or stop by the Library.
Disability Services:	Disability Services strives to meet the needs of all students by providing academic services in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. If you believe that you need a "reasonable accommodation" because of a disability, contact the Disability Services Coordinator at 219-473-4349.

CCSJ Alerts:	<p>Calumet College of St. Joseph's emergency communications system will tell you about emergencies, weather-related closings, or other incidents via text, email, or voice messages. Please sign up for this important service annually on the College's website at: http://www.ccsj.edu/alerts/index.html.</p> <p>In addition, you can check other media for important information, such as school closings:</p> <p>Internet: http://www.ccsj.edu Radio: WAKE – 1500 AM, WGN – 720 AM, WIJE – 105.5 FM, WLS – 890 AM, WZVN – 107.1 FM, WBBM NEWS RADIO 78 TV Channels: 2, 5, 7, 9, 32</p>