

PHL 101: Introduction to Philosophy – Morals and Society

Lecture Times: Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 – 10:20 am

Location: Marine Science Building (MSB) Rm. 100

Professor: Sean M. Smith, Ph.D.

Email: sean.smith@hawaii.edu

Phone: (808) 956 8954

Professor Office Hours: Mondays from 10:30 – 11:30 am in Sakamaki B-313.

Tutorial Times: Fridays from 9:30 am – 10:20 am

Locations: Marine Science Building (MSB) Rm. 100

Teaching Assistant: Kevin Rickman

Email: rickmank@hawaii.edu

TA Office Hours: Mondays from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm in Sakamaki C-313

NOTES:

1. Except when necessary, e-mails should concern procedural questions about the course only. Philosophical questions will be addressed in class and during office hours.
2. Students should *not* hesitate to make an appointment if they are unable to come to office hours. We *will* find time to meet and discuss any issues.

Course Description:

This course will be a general introduction to the study of philosophy from a cross-cultural and normative perspective. The course is cross-cultural in the sense that we will explore thinkers from the so-called ‘Western’ canon starting with Plato as well as philosophers from the classical Chinese and Indian philosophical traditions. We will also look at contemporary philosophers who wrote in the 20th century as well as other time periods and cultures (like early-modern Germany, for example). The course is normative in the sense that our attention will be focused on two related issues pertaining to morality. The first is what it means to be a *good* person. This is a question about ethics. The second is the question of what we *ought* to do in light of our answer to the first question. This is a question about how a moral person should interact with their society. This is why the course is subtitled ‘Morals and Society’.

We begin with the questions about the nature of reason and human nature in early modern Germany and the Warring States Period in China. We then explore the nature of power and the distinction between might and right. What makes an action right or wrong? How does our power or capacity to do something relate to our obligations? We will look at Plato’s attempt to answer these questions in the opening book of his *Republic* as well as the Indian classic, *The Bhagavad Gita*. We then move on to a comparison between Plato’s *Republic* and the Laozi on the question of what it is to know about the world and how this knowledge can lead to a higher understanding of the ultimate nature of reality. We then transition to a debate in Ancient India on the nature of the self, examining

perspectives from both Buddhist and Hindu philosophers. From here we fast-forward and return to the early modern period where we look at Kant's views about practical reason, ethics, and the person. To conclude we will explore Nietzsche's genealogical approach to philosophical normativity, feminist philosophical cultural criticism, and the questions of death and the meaning of life.

Texts:

The Bhagavad Gita (2015) Translated by Gavin Flood and Charles Martin, Norton.
Kant, I. (1999) *Practical Philosophy* (ed.) M. Gregor, Cambridge UP.
Laozi (2007) *Dao de Jing*. (trans.) H.G. Moeller, Open Court Publishing.
Plato (1992) *The Republic*. (trans.) G.M.A. Grube, Hackett.

Style and Academic Writing:

Hacker, D. and Sommers, N. (2011) *A Pocket Style Manual*, 6th Edition. Bedford.
Strunk, W. and White, E.B. (1999) *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. Pearson.

All other readings are available as pdf's online at the Laulima site.

Course Requirements:

1. Passage Interpretation (2-3 pp)	10% of course grade	Due: Sept. 27
2. Argument Analysis (3-5 pp)	20% of course grade	Due: Oct. 25
3. Term Paper (5-7 pp)	25% of course grade	Due: Nov. 25
4. Final Exam (2 hrs)	30% of course grade	Date: TBD
5. Attendance, Participation, and Tutorials	15% of course grade	Ongoing

NOTE: All papers must be submitted to your TA in tutorial.

Schedule and Reading:

Week 1 – Aug. 26, 28, 30 – INTRODUCTION - Kant's "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment" (in *Practical Philosophy*) and Primer on Arguments (pdf)

Note: There will be no tutorial sections the first week. Instead there will be three lectures. Everyone is expected to come to class on Friday Aug. 30th.

Week 2 – Sept. 2, 4, 6 – HUMAN NATURE – *Mengzi* 6A (pdf) and *Xunzi* Ch. 23 (pdf)

Note: No class on Monday Sept. 2 because of Labor Day

Week 3 – Sept. 9, 11, 13 - IS MIGHT RIGHT? - Book I of Plato's *Republic*

Week 4 – Sept. 16, 18, 20 - PERSONAL POWER - *The Bhagavad Gita* (try to read all of it, but make certain you get through Books I and II)

Week 5 – Sept. 23, 25, 27 – FRIENDSHIP – Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Ch. VIII (pdf)

PASSAGE INTERPRETTAION DUE IN CLASS ON FRIDAY SEPT. 27

Week 6 – Sept. 30, Oct. 2, 4 - KNOWLEDGE OF FORM – Books VI and VII of Plato’s Republic

Week 7 – Oct. 7, 9, 11 – KNOWLEDGE OF FORMLESSNESS – *Dao de Jing* (read as much as you can but make sure to take a close look at the following chapters because we will talk about them in class: 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 32, 37, 38, 68, 71)

Week 8 – Oct. 14, 16, 18 – SELF OR NOT SELF? - *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, Chapter 4, Verses III-IV* and, The Discourse on the Not-Self Characteristic (pdf), Is there a Self? (pdf), Vajirā Sutta (pdf)

Week 9 – Oct. 21, 23, 25 - PERSONS AND PRACTICAL REASON I – Introduction and Part 1 of Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (this is a hard reading, just be patient with yourself and do your best)

ARGUMENT ANALYSIS DUE IN CLASS ON FRIDAY OCT. 25

Week 10 – Oct. 28, 30, Nov. 1 - PERSONS AND PRACTICAL REASON II – Part 2 of Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (read as much of Part 3 as you can, but stay focused on Part 2)

Week 11 – Nov. 4, 6, 8 - EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS – Third Treatise of Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morality*

Week 12 – Nov. 11, 13, 15 – CULTURAL CRITICISM – Hannah Arendt’s ‘Labor, Work, Action’ (pdf)

Note: No class on Monday Nov. 11 for Veteran’s Day

Week 13 – Nov. 18, 20, 22 – FEMINISM - Iris Marion Young ‘Throwing Like a Girl’ (pdf)

Week 14 – Nov. 25, 27, 29 – LIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM – Excerpts from John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* §§ 1, 3-4, 11, and 24 (pdf) and Excerpts from ch. 7 of Robert Nozick’s *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (pdf)

FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS + FINAL EXAM PREP QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS ON WEDNESDAY NOV. 25

Note: No class on Friday Nov. 29 because of a University-wide non-instructional day

Week 15 – Dec. 2, 4, 6 – SUFFERING AND DEATH – The Poem of Kissa Gotami with its Commentary (pdf) AND Excerpts from Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (pdf)

Week 16 – Dec. 9, 11 – THE MEANING OF LIFE, AND THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY - Derek Parfit’s ‘What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best’ (pdf), Bertrand Russell’s ‘The Value of Philosophy’ (pdf)

FINAL EXAM: TBA – During the Formal Exam Period (Dec. 16-20)

How to Read: The readings for this class are difficult. Read slowly. Figure out how many hours per day you're able to devote to this class and how many days you have to do a given reading. Do the math and read at least the minimum number of pages every day to get everything done before class. If you can, re-read where necessary after you've attended lecture.

Handouts: For each class, there will be a handout distributed on Laulima the Sunday before the first meeting of a given week. These handouts will be very detailed and will concern the material covered for a given week. Make sure you have a copy of the relevant handout for each lecture.

Important: These handouts should *not* be relied on in the place of lectures. If you use the handout as an excuse to not attend lecture, you will do poorly in the class.

Paper Submission Guidelines: See section (A) in 'Course Policies' below for late penalty and extension policies.

- Submit all papers to your TA in tutorial.
- Do *not* include a title page. Title pages are evil.
- Make sure you *title* your papers in a way that reflects the content of what you've written. Be creative and thoughtful. "Paper 1 on *Laozi*" is not a good title.
- Double space your work and use a 12-pt. font.
- Include page numbers in the footer of your pages. Look at this document and mimic it. Be sure to include your name as well.
- In the top right-hand corner of the first page include the following information single-spaced:

Your Name
Course Code
Prof's Name
TA's Name
Due Date

Writing Assignment 1: Passage Interpretation – 2-3 pp (10%)

To begin, very carefully read all of the Vajīra sutta from Week 8's readings (the pdf is on Laulima). Consider the following passage from that piece:

Just as, with an assemblage of parts,
The word 'chariot' is used,
So, when the aggregates exist,
There is the convention 'a being.'

It's only suffering that comes to be,
Suffering that stands and falls away.
Nothing but suffering comes to be,
Nothing but suffering ceases.

The purpose of this assignment is simply exegetical. What that means is that your task is to try to explain what's going on in the passage in your own words. Here are some relevant questions, by

answering them, you'll be on your way to completing the assignment: What is the passage trying to say? What is the relation between the chariot and its parts on the one hand, and our sense of self and the aggregates on the other (the first set of verses). How does the discussion of suffering relate to selfhood (the second set of verses)? How is Vajīra's response meant to function as a rebuke to Māra's attempt to confuse and frighten her?

Note: For this assignment, it is important that you complete it before I lecture on the material it covers. Therefore, late submissions for this assignment will *not* be accepted after Sunday Oct. 13th.

Writing Assignment 2: Argument Analysis – 3-5 pp (20%):

This assignment builds on the first. In addition to asking you to again explain in your own words what is going on, you must now also engage critically with the argument. The task is straightforward, but not so simple.

Here is the relevant passage - *Dao de Jing*, Ch. 47, p. 113:

Not to go out of the door—
 To know the world.
Not to look out of the window—
 To know the Dao of heaven.

The further one goes out,
 The less one will know.

Therefore the sage
 Knows without going,
 Names without seeing,
 Completes without acting.

First, explain the argument of the passage as best you can. What is the passage claiming? What kind of prescriptive advice is it giving to the reader? Second, once you've explained this as best you can in your own words, try to come up with an objection to the argument. Some questions to ask yourself when trying to formulate an objection: What are the underlying assumptions of the passage? How might you criticize such assumptions philosophically? Third, consider a possible response to your objection on behalf of someone who is sympathetic to the claims of the *Dao de Jing* being made in the above passage. Then, if you can, try and think of a rejoinder to that response. The point of this assignment is to build on what you learned in the first. You must work in the same way, with the added responsibility of engaging the text in a critical way, through the offering of and responding to, objections.

Writing Assignment 3: Term Paper - 5-7 pp (25%):

Instructions: This final assignment is a proper philosophy essay. You will need to develop a *thesis statement* that provides the reader with a positive sense of what you will accomplish in the essay and how you will argue for your view. A good thesis statement will take a critical stand on an existing philosophical issue and inform your reader about what you plan to argue.

Your introductory paragraph should do three things. First, it should tell your reader what your paper is about without being too vague. Explain precisely what your paper is concerned with. Second, you should state your thesis clearly. It should be simple and to the point, something like: “In this paper, I will argue that x” where ‘x’ = your thesis statement. Finally, you should briefly explain how you will argue for your thesis by giving the reader an outline of how the paper will be structured. Your introductory paragraph should be about half a page long or shorter.

After you’ve got your introductory paragraph together, you will need to make sure you do three things in the body of the paper. Divide the paper into sections and tackle a single task in each section. Your first section/task is to explain the topic you are going to engage with in some detail; provide the reader with enough exegetical information to be able to understand the problem you’re going to address and what the philosophical stakes are (this part of the paper should be approximately 2 pages, no more). Your second task is to explain why your view, as articulated by your thesis, is correct. This is the most important part of your paper, it is where you will provide positive reasons in support of your thesis. This section of the paper should be about 2-3 pages. Third, consider an objection against your view and try to come up with a response. Think of the most substantial objection you can and focus on just this one objection (rather than a list of several less substantial objections). This section of the paper should be about 1-2 pages. Finish your paper with a brief concluding paragraph that summarizes what you’ve accomplished in your paper. This last paragraph, like your introduction, should be about half a page or less. If you follow these instructions, you will have a tight paper that comes in within the allotted page limits. Don’t write a paper that is less or more than the prescribed limits. Make sure you consult the pdf file ‘Primer on Arguments’ before writing this paper.

Topics:

1. Provide a comparative analysis of Plato’s conception of power from book 1 of the *Republic* with that found in the first two books of the *Gita*. How does the *Gita*’s vision of personal and spiritual power relate to the kind of political power being championed by Thrasymachus in the *Republic*? What are the relevant similarities and differences? How should we understand the relation of political power and personal power? How ought these notions be thought of in connection to the project of being moral?
2. Compare Plato and the Laozi’s conceptions of form and formlessness and how they relate to knowledge of first principles (the Form of the Good for Plato and the Dao in the *Laozi*). What are the relevant similarities and differences. Which view do you think presents a more compelling case for a) knowing about the world around us and b) living a happy and skillful life? Why?
3. How might someone like Kant object to the Vajirā sutta on moral grounds? What role does the practical agent play for Kant such that he would be critical of the Buddhist negation of self? Does the Buddhist have an avenue for reply? Which view do you think does a better job of explaining a) the metaphysics of the self and b) the significance of the self for moral action?
4. A topic of your choosing. Do not take this option unless you have discussed your proposal with *both* the Professor and your TA and gotten explicit approval.

Note 1: These topic prompts are meant to orient you in the area to be covered for each paper. You should *not* try to address every question embedded in a given prompt. Rather, you should use the prompt to help you develop a clear thesis statement and argue for that thesis in your paper. Make sure you talk about your thesis statement with either the Professor or your TA and get their approval before writing.

Note 2: IMPORTANT – Please specify in the upper-right corner of your first page, along with your other information, whether you would like comments on your final paper. For this final writing assignment, those that do not request feedback will not receive any. For those who do request written feedback on the final assignment, in doing so, you are agreeing to a) come and retrieve your paper from either the Professor or your TA when it is finished being graded and b) to read the written comments carefully and try to apply any lessons you might have gleaned to subsequent projects.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam will happen some time during the official examination period. The University will let us know exactly when that will be. The exam will be 2 hours long. The content of the exam will cover the entire course. It will consist in short answer questions that test your knowledge of the material and long-answer questions that require you to think creatively and synthetically about what you have learned this term. You will receive a set of study questions in week 14. It will consist in 15 short answer questions and 6 long answer questions. The exam will be 5 short answer questions and 2 long answer questions drawn from these study questions. Thus, when you write the exam, there will be no question that you have not already seen. This will help to focus your revision on what you have learned rather than on cramming.

Attendance, Participation, and Tutorials (15%): This class will have tutorial sections that will meet on Fridays (see page 1 for location details). Attending and participating in tutorials is essential for your success in this course. Use this time to ask questions and talk to each other. Learning how to talk about philosophy goes a long way in helping you deepen your reading of and writing about philosophy. If there are any difficulties around comfort with speaking in tutorial sections, please see your TA or the Professor to make alternative arrangements for your participation grade.

COURSE POLICIES (Read Carefully):

A. Late Assignments: Assignments will be reduced 1/3 a letter grade for each day that they are late, including weekends. Extensions may be granted if there is need. Students should contact their TA to request extensions before the due date and be prepared to provide any necessary medical documentation.

B. Contact Policy: The Professor and TA's will be available to answer questions at weekly office hours and by appointment. The course website will be used to post announcements and readings; students are expected to check it, and their university email accounts, regularly. Students may email the Professor or TA's with any procedural questions. Keep in-depth philosophical questions for class and office hours.

C. Accessibility: If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, feel free to contact KOKUA at any time. Their address is: <https://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>

The course instructor is happy to provide any accommodations needed to ensure that all materials

and activities are accessible to all students. It is the responsibility of students, however, to communicate their needs to the instructor and accessibility services so that accommodations can be organised in a timely and efficient manner.

D. Academic Integrity: Don't plagiarise. Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Hawai'i is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved. Another common, though often unreported consequence of representing someone's ideas as your own, is spontaneous combustion, something to be avoided at all costs. The University's Code of Behaviour on plagiarism and academic honesty can be found here:

<https://www.hawaii.edu/eli/useful-information-for-students/academic-honesty/>

E. Health Services: University Health Services Mānoa (UHSM) is staffed by physicians, nurse clinicians, nurses, and other support staff, and offers a wide range of medical services and programs to UH Mānoa students, with many of the services also available to UH Mānoa faculty and staff and students from other UH campuses. Services include general medical care on a walk-in basis; women's health, sports medicine, psychiatry, and dermatology clinics by appointment; pharmacy and clinical laboratory; and student training, employment and volunteer opportunities.

1710 East West Road Honolulu, Hawaii 96822 Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956- 8965
www.hawaii.edu/shs/

F. Mental Health: Academic work is difficult and psychologically demanding. It's important to work hard and push yourself to do your best, but it is even more important to take care of and be kind to yourself. The instructor is available to discuss such matters if there is need. The University also has a number of resources available. Please do not hesitate to make use of these if difficulties arise:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/campus-life/health/>
<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/counseling/>

G. Title IX: The University of Hawaii is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these, the University has staff and resources on your campus to support and

assist you. Staff can also direct you to resources that are in the community. Here are some of your options:

If you wish to remain **ANONYMOUS**, speak with someone **CONFIDENTIALLY**, or would like to receive information and support in a **CONFIDENTIAL** setting, contact the confidential resources available here:

<http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/titleix/resources.html#confidential>

If you wish to **REPORT** an incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence or stalking as well as receive information and support, contact:

Contact: Dee Uwono
Director and Title IX Coordinator Hawai'i Hall 124
2500 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-2299
t9uhm@hawaii.edu

Important Note: As a member of the University faculty, I am **required to immediately report** any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator. Although the Title IX Coordinator and I cannot guarantee confidentiality, you will still have options about how your case will be handled. My goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources and support you need. For more information regarding sex discrimination and gender-based violence, the University's Title IX resources and the University's Policy, Interim EP 1.204, go to:

<http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/titleix/>

H. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Student Services: UH Mānoa strives to maintain a safe and inclusive campus environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. The office provides direct services to students of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to confidentially discuss or seek advocacy and support for mistreatment due to their actual or perceived sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Contact: Camaron Miyamoto
Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services 211 2600 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-9250
email: lgbtq@hawaii.edu
<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/lgbt/>

I. Office of Gender Equity: This office offers direct services to victims and survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assaults. Brief descriptions of services offered are available here.

Contact: Jenna Friedman

Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services 210 2600 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-9499
email: geneq@hawaii.edu
www.manoa.hawaii.edu/genderequity

J. Prevention, Awareness, and Understanding (PAU) Violence Program: This program exists to inspire, educate, and empower students and campus communities to build safe living-learning environments, end interpersonal violence, and encourage holistic well-being in ways that are supportive, collaborative, student-centered, and strengths-based. PAU Violence Program staff provides direct services to all University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa students including crisis response, safety planning, academic support, and referrals to campus and community resources.

Contacts: Jennifer Barnett and Leslie Cabingabang
Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services 211 2600 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-8059
uhmpau@hawaii.edu

K. Student Parents At Mānoa (SPAM): This group seeks to increase the visibility of and resources for student parents at UH Mānoa as they pursue education while parenting. SPAM staff provide advocacy, support, and referrals for pregnant and parenting students to help them succeed in their educational goals.

Contact: Teresa Bill
2600 Campus Road
Queen Lili‘uokalani Center for Student Services 211 Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-8059
gotkids@hawaii.edu
<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/studentparents/>