# Philosophy 100: Introduction to Philosophy Spring 2020

TTH 9:45 - 11 14-214 (CRN 32645) CSM

**Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Dr. David Danielson **Office Hours:**

Office: 10-412 Phone 574-6376 MW 7:30 – 8:00

E-mail: Danielson@smccd.edu MW 11:10 – 12:00

Web Page: <http://accounts.smccd.edu/danielson/phil.100/> TTH 7:30 – 9:30, 11 – 12

**Texts:** **Required:** Sophie’s World, Jostein Gaarder

Recommended***:***  How to Get the Most out of Philosophy, James Soccio

You need to choose and read one of the following books for the final exam. Some of them may not be available in the bookstore. You will need to hunt them down. See the website for help; I have links to them there.

Recommended: The Kin of Ata are Waiting for You, Dorothy Bryant

Recommended: The Island, Aldous Huxley

Recommended: Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Robert Pirsig

Recommended: The Story of B, Daniel Quinn

Recommended: An Unknown Woman, Alice Koller

**Course Description, Goals, and Objectives:**

This class is an introduction to the discipline of philosophy. We will explore the good, the beautiful and the true. We will examine these ideas historically by reading the novel *Sophie’s World*.

The goal of this course is for you to gain an understanding of the nature of philosophical questions and ideas, and to be able to participate in your own development of your life concerning these questions. Another goal is for you to experience the difficulty and joy of presenting, discussing, re-evaluating and understanding your own views and those of others. Part of this joy entails learning to recognize, evaluate and create well-reasoned arguments.

These are the Specific Learning Objectives:

Identify some of the central figures and main issues in the history of philosophy.

To be able to identify, explicate, and evaluate complex arguments.

Compare and contrast divergent philosophical theories on some issue.

Formulate a reasoned response to a philosophical position.

Analyze a philosophical position in terms of different cultural/social perspectives.

**Grades:**

* There will be three exams. The first is worth 100 pts., the second worth 300 pts., and a A = 1000 - 900

Final exam is worth 150 pts. (Total Exams = 550 pts., or 55% of final grade) B = 899 - 800

* There will be short homework and/or quizzes based on the readings, lectures and the discussions. C = 799 - 700

These will count for 230 pts. D = 699 - 600

* Summary of an article. It is worth 120 pts. (Details below.) F = 599 - 0
* There is a philosophy journal worth 100 pts. (Details below.)

The due dates for assignments will be indicated when the assignments are given. You can arrange to take an exam late with a drop in grade. While you cannot make up homework/quizzes, there will be extra credit available.

**Summary of an article:**

In addition to reading *Sophie’s World*, we will also read short bits of original writings by philosophers: for example, we will read a selection from Plato’s *Republi*c. Each of you is responsible to write a summary of one of these writings.

In order to complete this assignment, you will need to meet with me in the office and read me your summary. A summary should inform the reader of the main ideas from the writing. The summary should be entirely in your own words; thus, do not include any quotes. The summary should be no longer than two pages, double space typed. (Please bring a copy for me, and one for you: which can be on your phone or computer.)

Please make an appointment to meet with me rather than dropping in during office hours.

If you do not know what a summary is, make sure to find out before you meet with me. Ideally, these meetings will take place no later than about 2 weeks after we finish discussing the writings in class. Two students may meet with me at the same time, but each needs to have his, or her, own summary: and we need an hour.

You may choose from the following list: Paolo Freire, Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Descartes, Hume, Marx, and Kierkegaard. I will have a signup sheet.

Movie “Night”

This class is part of a learning community combining Philosophy 100 classes with Psychology 100 classes. There will be four films shown on Friday afternoons. (A handout is forthcoming.) You can earn extra credit by attending the films.

**Extra Credit**

There will be Philosophy club meetings approximately three times during the semester. These are on Friday afternoons TBA. If there talks held on campus that have philosophical content, I will offer those as extra credit opportunities. In order to receive extra credit for these events, write a 1-page summary of the main ideas you learn at the talks, or Philosophy Club meetings. I will offer any extra credit opportunities to all students.

**Further Important Information:**

You can expect me to meet the class for all the sessions unless unavoidably detained. If I know ahead of time that I will be unable to meet the class, I will let you know. I will be emailing you often using the school-provided gmail address. Either check the school email site regularly or forward that mail to your usual email address. Thanks

**General Classroom Stuff** I encourage you to attend class and show up on time because that’s one of the best ways to hear information you need to be successful in the class. Since we will often be discussing the readings, I also strongly encourage you to come to class having read and tried to comprehend the assignments in order ready to participate meaningfully. If you arrive after class has begun, please don’t let the door slam. If you leave during class, please try to remember to close the door quietly. Thanks.

If you know you have to leave class early, please sit near the door to cause the least disruption to the learning environment when you leave. If you need to arrange to miss a class and get an assignment, please let me know ahead of time and put it in writing: email is fine. (I have found I cannot remember all the verbal details.)

It is ultimately your responsibility to drop, so don’t expect me to drop you if you walk away. I do retain the option to drop any student for excessive absences (more than two weeks’ class sessions.) Failure to drop will result in your receiving a failing grade for the class. If you ask me to drop you, and you make the request before the final drop date, I will drop you. (An email or a phone message will suffice: include your G number.) You cannot receive an incomplete without an approved written request.

*Smart phones and computers:* Solid research results convince me that paying attention to or being distracted by your phone works against developing philosophical skills. I assume that you are here to learn these skills since they are required to do well in the class. So make wise decisions that are in your best interest. I also believe that there is solid evidence that taking notes on a computer is less beneficial when compared to taking notes by hand. (In either case, just writing down words off power-point slides may effectively communicate words, but it does not produce understanding – and philosophy is seeking understanding.) If you do choose to use a computer to take notes, please sit in one of the two front rows and email me a copy of your notes after each class. Thanks.

For the 2nd class session you attend please bring to class a 4X 6 card with your name and a phone number or e-mail address that you don’t mind that I have. Please put the info at the very top of the card and leave most of the space below empty. Please make sure it is a 4 X 6 card. This is the first homework assignment! (There are 4X6 cards available outside my office door if you need them.)

# Important College Policies at <http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/collegepolicies/index.asp>.

Due to increases in plagiarism, a brief reminder: When you submit work make sure it is your work. If you use someone else’s work, use quotation marks and cite sources. This includes internet sites! Although it is easy to find information on the web, it is easy to find plagiarized material as well. Failure to cite sources etc. results in a failing grade for the assignment! There is an explanation of plagiarism in the Soccio text and a link on the website for this class.

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations for this class, please see me as soon as possible or contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) for assistance. The DRC is located in Bldg. 10 - 120. 650.574.6438: TTY 650.574.6230

*The San Mateo County Community College District is committed to maintaining safe and caring college environments at Cañada College, College of San Mateo and Skyline College. The District has established policies and procedures regarding Sexual Misconduct, Harassment, and Assault. A District website has also been developed which provides you with important information about sexual misconduct and sexual assault.* [*http://smccd.edu/titleix/*](http://smccd.edu/titleix/#_blank)

The faculty at College of San Mateo affirm that students are entitled to an equitable learning environment that celebrates their voice, fosters their agency, and develops their capacity for self-advocacy, and that is free of unfair practices. If you feel you are in an environment that is not conducive to your learning or you want to learn more about educational equity, please come talk to me. You may also contact CSM’s Director of Equity (collegeofsanmateo.edu/equity) to explore your options.

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##### **Topic Schedule: Discussion/ Homework Assignments**

Here is the schedule we will follow up to the first exam. There are times when the discussion will focus on a specific reading .Come prepared to analyze the readings together in class discussions. In addition to keeping up with reading *Sophie’s World*, we will read the following two items for the first exam.

**Read Paolo Freire’s: The Pedagogy of the Oppressed for class on Thursday 1/23.** (This means you should have read and digested the article before class.)

**Read Plato’s: The Divided Line and Myth of the Cave for class on Thursday 2/6.**

###### Homework

1. Turn in a 4X6 card. The card is due on the second class-session you attend. (I will take these late for reduced credit, but I need these!) Please make sure you use a 4 X 6 card – not a piece of paper. (There are cards available at my office door.) (10 pts.)

2. Meet me during office hours for a brief 5-minute chat. There is no writing for this. You have until **1/30** for credit. (Feel free to drop in during office hours; you do not need to make an appointment.) (10 pts.)

**(Please email the following assignment before class.)**

1. In a short paragraph, describe the purpose of the journal for this class. Due **Tuesday, 1/21** (Please do not turn in any journal assignments.) (10 pts.)
2. Using three sentences, name three significant reasons why banking education is problematic. Due on **Tuesday 1/28** (10 pts.)

There will be more homework assignments. I will assign them in class.

The **first Exam** will be in-class on **Thursday 2/20.** You will have the questions a week before hand. I encourage you to meet with other students to prepare.

# Philosophy Journal

One major credo in Philosophy is to “*know thyself*.”

In an effort to aid in that search, I ask you to keep a journal. It is a place to explore who you are in more depth than is usually possible in your hectic daily life.

What I mean by a “journal” is not the type of book or paper used. The kind of physical journal does not matter. What matters is writing at a very intimate level of self-understanding. I have found for myself that a profound path towards self-knowledge is to write. Writing makes possible the grasping of an often-elusive sense of who I am. It gives form to a chaotic, swirling flux of my existence, and is a practice, which allows you to see yourself more objectively. It also relates to the following quote from Robert Keegan “The subject of one stage [of growth] becomes the object of the subject at the next stage.”

What I expect from you is an authentic attempt to take yourself seriously. I ask that you attempt the prompts and expect to see them reflected in the paper at the end.

You may at this point have questions regarding “How much do I have to write?” and “How will this be graded?”

There is no easy answer as to how much to write. Some people are prolific; others are less so. Thus, quantitative benchmarks alone are not helpful. A minimum amount is to attempt those assigned on the journal assignment handouts. (Merely doing the minimum, writing on the topics I provide, is the equivalent of a “B” grade.) The more journal entries that you write however, the easier the assignment at the end will be to accomplish.

At the end of the semester, I will ask you to reread all you have written and provide me a summary description and critical reflection on what you learned in the process. This written assignment will be the item graded. I will **NOT** be reading your notebook, EVER! Other questions you may have regarding this process I hope to answer as we progress in the semester. I will ask you to include the number of entries you have made as part of the grade.

I would like you to begin as soon as possible. A good place to begin is to ask yourself “Where am I now in my life?” Asking this question gives you a sense of the current situation of your life. Part of answering this question is to list the important people, events, situations, circumstances, “works”, hopes, plans, dreams, religious / spiritual experiences, and bodily awarenesses you have. Finally, make sure to date each entry, including the year.

Keep in mind that no one will be reading this notebook. It is for you. You are the audience. Dive deep into yourself; the more that you give to the process, the more you will learn.

I wish you well on this journey.

(Many of the assignments come from the work of Ira Progoff Ph.D. in his book At a Journal Workshop, and by Byron Katie’s book Loving What Is.)

[For an additional five pts on the first homework assignment (the 4X6 card) put in parentheses near the top, whether you hear [“Laurel” or “Yanny.”]](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/16/upshot/audio-clip-yanny-laurel-debate.html)

Journal Assignment Topics

You can write these at the beginning of class if you arrive early, or you can answer these outside of class. You will not turn in the journal so feel free to write whatever comes to mind. You are encouraged to write more than on these topics; I want you to try these prompts. You do not need to write them on the dates below: you can answer them during the week some time.

1/14 Why am I here?

1/16 What are your goals for this class? What do you hope to learn?

1/21 Where am I now in my life? (See the description in the Journal explanation on the previous page.)

1/23 Reflect on your reactions to the first reading of Freire’s essay. (Recall any important school/learning moments in your life.

1/28 Steppingstones: list 8 – 12 events in your life, beginning with “I was born.” Spontaneously list other events that mark key moments in your life.

1/30 Who are you today?

2/4 Record any dreams you have. (Feel free to keep adding to this list as the semester progresses. You may want to make a separate section to record your dreams.)

2/6 What are your reactions to the ideas of the Pre-Socratics?

2/11 Dialogue with Persons: Pick some person important to you. Write a brief history of the relationship. Then write a conversation with that person. Allow yourself to be in a “twilight state” of consciousness so that you are not merely directing the words. Allow the other person to speak from his or her perspective

2/13 What are your reactions to the Plato reading?

2/18 Follow the instructions on this website: Byron Katie’s [“Do the Work.”](http://thework.com/do-work) Ask one question and explore.

2/20 How did you prepare for the exam?

2/25 Dialogue with the Body: Consider that your body is the other with whom you have a conversation. First, list 8 – 10 body memories that come to mind. Then write a brief statement summarizing your current physical state of being. Then have a dialogue with your body.

2/27 Who are you today?

“we must not cease from exploration

and the end of all our exploring

will be to arrive where we began

and to know the place for the first time.”

T.S. Eliot “Little Gidding” V. in The Four Quartets

# Spring 2020 Philosophy 100

Tuesday Thursday

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1/14  Opening Day | 16  Syllabus / What is Philosophy? |
| 21  More: What is Philosophy? | 23  **Read *Paolo Freire*** |
| 28  Logic and Reasoning | 30  Logic and Reasoning |
| 2/4  Pre-Socratics (Read S.W. up through “Fate.”) | 6  Pre-Socratics / Plato (S.W. “Socrates”) Read ***Plato*** |
| 11  Plato (S.W. “Plato) | 13  Plato |
| 18  Plato | 20  **1st Exam** |
| 25  Aristotle (S.W. “Aristotle”) | 27  Read ***Aristotle*** |
| 3/3  Read ***Stoicism*** (S.W. “Hellenism”) | 5  **No Class Today** |
| 10  (S.W. “Middle Ages” and “Two Cultures”)) | 12  (S.W. “Renaissance”) |
| 17  (S.W. “Baroque”) | 19  (S.W. “Descartes) Read ***Descartes*** |
| 24  (S.W. “Spinoza”) | 26  (S.W. “Locke”) |
| **31 Spring Break** | **4/4** |
| 7  (S.W. “Hume”) Read ***Hume*** | 9  (S.W. “Berkeley” and “”Bjerkely”) |
| 14  (S.W. “Enlightenment”) | 16  (S.W. “Kant”) |
| 21  ( S.W. “Romanticism” and “Hegel”) | 23  (S.W. “Kierkegaard”) Read ***Kierkegaard*** |
| 28  (S.W. “Marx” Read ***Marx)*** | 30  (S.W. “Darwin” and “Freud”) |
| 5/5  (S. W. “Our Time”) | 7  (S. W. “Garden Party”) |
| 12  S. W. “Counter Point” and “Big Bang”) | 14  Review |
| 19  **Final Exam 8:10 – 10:40** | 21 |