



Duquesne University / Spring, 2020
Basic Philosophical Questions / UCOR 132
Department of Philosophy / L. Michael Harrington
Office Hrs: T+Th 3-4pm / College Hall 328

1. You will need the following **texts**: Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Christopher Gill (Penguin, 2003); Descartes, *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings*, trans. Desmond M. Clarke (Penguin, 1999); Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (Random House, 1955).

2. To calculate **your grade**, divide the number of points you have earned by the total points possible. Convert the resulting percentage into a letter grade using the following scale: 92-100%=A, 88-91.99%=A-, 84-87.99%=B+, 80-83.99%=B, 76-79.99%=B-, 72-75.99%=C+, 64-71.99%=C, 52-63.99%=D, 0-51.99%=F.

3. **Your grade** is based on three things: four in-class exercises (each worth 40 points), two exams (each worth 60 points), and class participation and attendance (worth 54 points).

4. Each **in-class exercise** will have five short-answer questions based on the texts we have discussed, five multiple-choice questions on logic and fallacies, an argument outline, and a series of short essay questions about your argument. The exercises are closed book and closed note.

5. Each **exam** will have two parts. The first is closed book and closed note, consisting of two pages of questions asking you to apply material discussed in the texts we've read so far. The second portion of the exam is open book but not open note, consisting of a thesis and a series of short essay questions. You must cite (i.e. provide a page number) or quote the text to provide evidence for every major claim that you make in the open book portion of the exam.

6. **Class participation** means asking and answering questions, volunteering to read passages, and commenting on the text. On days when I have to call on students in order to elicit this participation, I will only give credit for participation (three points) to those students I call on and to those who voluntarily participate. If you are worried that you will not receive credit on such days, send me an email and I will be sure to call on you. On days when I do not have to call on anyone, everyone will receive credit for participation. Each time I notice that you have come to class late, that you are using your phone in class, or that you have come to class without your text, I will drop three points from the class participation and attendance component of your grade.

7. You may skip four classes without penalty. After that, you will lose three points from the class participation and **attendance** component of your grade for each class you miss. Do not miss class on days when exams or in-class exercises are scheduled. I will not allow you to take them at another time (except under extraordinary circumstances, or when you have notified me ahead of time with a university-approved reason to miss class).

8. I do not allow **laptops** to be used in class at any time (unless you have a letter of accommodation from special student services permitting you to use one). I will allow you to use an e-reader or tablet computer placed flat on your desk when we are discussing texts I have sent you electronically, but you will not be able to use these electronic devices during the open book portions of exams, so it is better to print out the texts.

9. I offer **extra credit** only on the closed book portions of in-class exercises and exams.

10. **Do not plagiarize or cheat** on your written work. If I find that you have quoted or nearly quoted someone else's words without acknowledging them, you may either withdraw from the class or take a failing grade in the class. If you speak to another student or take out a phone during an exam, you will fail that exam.

11. There are no explicit **learning outcomes** for this class. Philosophers become philosophers not by identifying a goal to achieve, but by taking existing philosophers as exemplars and selectively doing what they do. In this class you will have the opportunity to analyze philosophical concepts and to make arguments. Your ability to do this may improve with practice and feedback, but such improvement should not be identified as the goal of the course.

12. The course **calendar**:

Aug.	27	Introduction: The University as a Medieval Institution
	29	Introduction: Building a Scholastic Quaestio
Sept.	3	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> , II-II, q. 179 (Blackboard)
	5	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , II-II, q. 180, aa. 3 and 6 (Blackboard)
	10	Isaac Watts, <i>Logic</i> , excerpts (Blackboard)
	12	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , II-II, qq. 181-182 (Blackboard)
	17	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #1
	19	Soetsu Yanagi, "What Is Folk Craft?" (Blackboard)
	24	Walter Benjamin, <i>Arcades Project</i> , "Idleness" (Blackboard)
	26	Hannah Arendt, <i>The Human Condition</i> , pp. 1-21 (Blackboard)
Oct.	1	IN-CLASS EXERCISE #2
	3	Albert Camus, <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> , pp. 3-16
	8	<i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> , pp. 16-22, 28-31, 119-123
	10	<i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> , pp. 66-84
	15	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Meditations 1-2
	17	MIDTERM EXAM
	22	Meditation 3
	24	Meditation 4
	29	Meditation 6

31 *The Human Condition*, pp. 280-294 (Blackboard)

Nov. 5 **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #3**
7 Plato, *Symposium*, 172a-180c

12 *Symposium*, 180c-189c
14 *Symposium*, 189c-201c

19 *Symposium*, 201d-212c
21 *Symposium*, 212c-223d

26 **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK**
28 **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Dec. 3 Conclusion: Making a Speech About Love
5 **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #4**

Dec. 10 **NO CLASS: FRIDAY SCHEDULE**