

SYLLABUS
Spring '10

Fundamentals of Philosophy

MWF 9:00-9:50 (Section A) 104 WH
MWF 10:00-10:50 (Section B) 104 WH

PHI-2010A&B
Dr. Ari Santas

Course Description:

This course will be an introduction to Philosophy, using texts from the ancient to the modern period. Using these materials, we shall consider issues within the following fields of philosophy: Ethics, Metaphysics, Philosophy in Literature, Political Philosophy and Environmental Philosophy.

Go to the online version of this syllabus at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Syllabus/Spring/2010s10.doc>

Note: This is not a lecture course; we shall proceed by a combination of in-class assignments, informal presentations, and class discussion. If you prefer a lecture format, you might consider transferring to another section of the course.

Course Learning Outcomes (Objectives):

- to develop a meaningful conception of what philosophy is (D1; U6)
- to develop and understanding of the intellectual heritage of contemporary society (D3;U1)
- to develop skills in reading, writing, and speaking critically (D2; U4, U7)
- to develop skills in cooperative education and collaborative action (D3; U8)

Required Texts:

- Christopher Biffle, *A Guided Tour of Five Works by Plato** (ISBN: 0767410335)
- Christopher Biffle, *A Guided Tour of Selections from Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics** (ISBN: 0-7674-0975-2)
- Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy** (ISBN: 0-915144-57-3)
- J.S. Mill, *On Liberty** (ISBN: 0-915144-43-3)
- Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael* (ISBN: 0-553-37540-7)
- bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (ISBN: 0-415-908086)

*Online versions of some of the texts (all but the last two) can be found at my main course index:

http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/2010_Index.htm

Office Hours:

My office is located in 148 Farber Hall (the old Student Health Center). The times you may find me there are M-F 11:00-12:00. You can reach me there or leave a message at 333-5949. You can also reach me through e-mail at asantas@valdosta.edu

Special Needs:

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty).

Grades:

Grades will be determined on the following basis:

- weekly quizzes (25%)
- group projects/reports (25%)
- participation and attendance (25%)
- final project (25%)

Participation and Attendance:

Attendance is required. **I will be taking roll every day and assign part of your grade on the basis of how many days missed.** The rest of your participation grade will be determined partly by your peers, and partly by me. What I'll be looking for, besides regular attendance, and encourage each of you to look for as well, are the following:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| conscientious class presentations | contribution to discussion |
| effort to improve and grow | attentiveness* to the course materials and to each other |
| responsible attitude towards learning | respectful treatment of your peers |

***A Word on Cell Phones:**

Cell phones are thieves of attention and attentiveness. I do not allow their use in my classes. They are to be *silenced* and *no texting* should be conducted during class time. If you must make use of one, you must step out of the room. If I must remind you of this, you will be *asked to leave* the class.

Group Work:

Although some of your work will be done individually, much of the work you do in this class will be done in groups. See my [Guidelines](#) web page for rationale and suggestions for making this system work for you.

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Study/guide.html> (Section IV)

And remember, a *third* of your participation grade will come from your group-mates.

Readings:

The readings will often be difficult so it is important that you read the material carefully, and most often, two or three times. Check out the reading guidelines at the [Guidelines](#) page (<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Study/guide.html>) before your first reading assignment. If you have special difficulties with any of the readings, do not hesitate to ask me about it, either during class or office hours. (Actually, if you don't have any questions, that probably means you didn't read it carefully enough!)

Study Questions and Quizzes:

There will be regular in-class quizzes (generally once a week). Unless otherwise indicated, the quizzes will be done *in your small groups*. These will be open book and based on your readings, classroom activities, and study questions provided for you online.

All study questions can be found at my [Course Index](#):

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/2010 Index.htm>

Small Group Projects and Reports:

For each author's text, I shall give you a take-home project, which you and your group will have at least a week to complete. Each group will arrange with me individually the work to be completed for these projects. On these assignments you will be graded collectively, so take heed to the comments listed above and below. Again, my ultimate criterion of evaluation is that of informing and/or convincing one's peers. Essays will be graded using the following criteria:

Clarity and Development (grammar, structure, style)

Command of Material (completeness, accuracy)

Critical Reasoning (originality, logic, imagination)

All assignments can be found at my main [Course Index](#). <http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/2010 Index.htm>

For more details on writing and oral reports, see also the [Guidelines](#) webpage linked to the same course index.

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Study/guide.html>

Final Projects:

The final project of the term will be a choice between a large group project or an final essay. The group project can able to take a variety of forms, but will likely be a short film project. In any case it will require you to communicate something we have learned together during the course of the term to an audience outside of the classroom. Students not wishing to participate in this final group project can opt to write a final essay instead. Details for both project options will be discussed and worked out throughout the term.

Students who opt to undertake a final group project may be selected to present their product to a larger audience and participate in Westview Productions, whose goal is to lead students into the direction of not only learning the information but taking opportunity to distribute the information to his or her peers and beyond. More information can be found on the following webpage:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Westview/Westview.htm>

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:

The VSU Student Code of Conduct in the [Student Handbook](#) states:

Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated in the paper they must be appropriately acknowledged. (p. 59)

Anyone found guilty of academic dishonesty—offering someone else's work as their own—will receive an 'F' in the course. In addition, current VSU policy dictates that all instances be reported to the administration for disciplinary action.