

# PHILOSOPHY 1: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

University of California, San Diego 2012 Winter Quarter  
PETER 102 MWF 1-1:50pm

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What can we know about the origin and existence of the world, nature, human beings, and god? Could divine revelation possibly be the source of any human knowledge? What are the major arguments for and against the idea that a supernatural being created or intelligently designed our world and ourselves? To what extent must science accept or reject the existence of god as a basis for theorizing and explaining nature and natural things such as plants, animals, and humans? This course introduces philosophy through a careful consideration of such questions in reading several masterpieces of the history of philosophy (in translation) dealing with the relationship between scientific knowledge and religion or theology, including: dialogues written in Greek by Plato and in English by Hume, a letter written in Greek by Epicurus, a didactic poem written in Latin by Lucretius, and a prose work written in French by Descartes. The required textbooks are:

1. Plato, *Timaeus*, tr. D. Zeyl. Indianapolis, 2001.
2. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, tr. M. F. Smith. Indianapolis, 2001.
3. René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method*, tr. I. Maclean. Oxford, 2006.
4. David Hume, *Dialogues and Natural History of Religion*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin. Oxford, 1998.

## Objectives

1. Learn to interpret and criticize English translations of canonical primary works of philosophy written in various literary forms including dialogues, letters, poems, and treatises.
2. Grasp in outline the main subdivisions of philosophy and their interrelations, especially those most salient in the history of philosophy and the philosophy of science, including logic (or epistemology), ethics (or politics), and natural philosophy (or physics).
3. Survey major topics and problems of scientific knowledge in relation to religion and theology, and the range of philosophical approaches to exploring and resolving them.
4. Develop skills in writing and discussing philosophy under time constraints (examinations), and space constraints (writing assignments), and in the context of peer-led discussion groups.

**Evaluation** (1000 pt. scale 900-1000 = A; 800-900 = B; 700-800 = C; 600-700 = D; <600 = F)

1. Participation (100 points): Regular attendance and participation in class or by posting questions or comments to the discussion board at ted.ucsd.edu are required. Failure to hand in the student info form by Jan. 13 will result in an automatic -10 participation points.
2. Scribe assignment (100 points): A group writing assignment and revision exercise, with an oral participation component. (See separate handout for details.)
3. Writing assignments (400 points): Four writing assignments due, on Jan. 20, Feb. 3, Mar. 2, and Mar. 16. No late or electronic papers accepted. (See separate handouts for details.)
4. Midterm examination (100 points): Open-book essay exam on Feb. 17 in class.

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5. Final examination (300 points): Open-book, cumulative essay exam on March 23 (Friday) 11:30am-2:30pm. Missing the final exam results in an automatic F for the course.

### Schedule of Readings, Examinations, and Deadlines

2012 January 9 Greetings and Introduction

i11 Plato, *Euthyphro* (handout).

i13 Plato, *Euthyphro*. **Student information form due.**

2012i16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday—no class.

i18 Plato, *Timaeus*.

i20 Plato, *Timaeus*. **Assignment 1 due.**

i23 Plato, *Timaeus*.

i25 Plato, *Timaeus*.

i27 Feedback on writing assignment.

i30 Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecus* (handout).

February 1 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* I.

ii3 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* II. **Assignment 2 due.**

ii6 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* III.

ii8 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* IV.

ii10 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* V.

ii13 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* VI.

ii15 Review.

ii17 **Midterm Examination.**

2012ii20 President's Day Holiday—no class.

ii22 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* I.

ii24 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* II.

ii27 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* III.

ii29 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* IV.

March 2 Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* V-VI. **Assignment 3 due.**

iii5 Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion* I-II.

iii7 Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion* III-IV.

iii9 Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion* V-VII.

iii12 Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion* VIII-X.

iii14 Hume *Dialogues on Natural Religion* XI-XII.

iii16 Review. **Assignment 4 due.**

2012iii23 (F) 11:30am-2:30pm **Final Examination.**