

Philosophy between Reason and Despair

PHIL 33 – Spring 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am-10:50am

Cognitive Science Building [CSB] 002

INSTRUCTORS

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EMAIL LIST

<https://mailman.ucsd.edu/mailman/listinfo/phil33-s17-l>

ONLINE DISCUSSION SITE

<http://pli.ucsd.edu/s17phil33/>

TEXTBOOKS

(available at the Price Center bookstore)

1 Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
Paton, trans; Harper Perennial

2 Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*
Hannay, trans; Penguin Classics

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*
Smith, trans; Oxford World's Classics

4 Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*
Drinnon, intro; Dover

5 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*
Frechtman, trans; Citadel Press

COURSE DESCRIPTION

After a century of optimism surrounding the Enlightenment about our power of *reason* to arrive at knowledge of the basic theoretical truths about the world, as well as the basic practical principles that should guide human action, intellectual life in the 19th and 20th century was dominated by skepticism about whether reason really had such a power after all. Our course will follow some of the more important lines of debate about reason that occupied philosophy during this century.

We will begin with KANT's critical defence of reason, which, despite acknowledging that reason alone cannot yield any theoretical knowledge of the world (how things are 'in themselves'), contends that reason still must be considered to have absolute authority in the practical sphere, providing knowledge of how we should live. We will then turn to several influential successors of Kant (KIERKEGAARD, NIETZSCHE, GOLDMAN, DE BEAUVOIR) who were not as optimistic about even this limited authority for reason, and who insisted instead that we face up to the potential *irrationality* (absurdity) that might lie at the heart of our existence – even if this involves the experience of *despair*.

Note: PHIL 33 may be used to fulfill the Muir College breadth requirement.

REQUIREMENTS

1. *Weekly questionnaires (35%)*

On Monday of each week, there will be a questionnaire posted on the course's TED page, to be completed on TED by the end of Friday (midnight) of the same week. The form of these questions will be multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank. The topics of the questions will be drawn from both the assigned readings and the lectures from the current week, and answering them will be a straightforward affair for anyone who attends lectures and completes all the readings.

Extra credit: During finals week there will be an optional extra-credit questionnaire, due Friday, June 16th, 5pm.

2. *Weekly online discussion posts (10%)*

Also by end of Friday (midnight) of each week, you will need to post to your discussion group on our course's discussion site. Each post should include: (1) one sentence or two from the week's reading; (2) a 125-word (minimum) paragraph responding to the sentence, which should include (3) at least one question about the sentence.

Extra credit: Each week you can earn an additional 0.25% toward your grade by responding to posts made by others in your discussion group (50-word minimum; twice per week; up to an additional 5%).

3. *Mid-term open-book take-home exam (25%)*

By the beginning of Thursday's meeting during 4th week (April 27th), four mid-term examination questions will be handed out in class and then posted on TED. The topics of these questions will be drawn from both the assigned readings and the lectures of the first five weeks. You will be required to choose three questions and submit 500-word answers to each of the three questions (1500 words total) by the beginning of Thursday's meeting of 5th week (9:30am, May 4th). More specifically, the exam answers must be submitted by this time **both** in hard-copy to the instructor **and** electronically (as a single document file) at [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) (see note C below). The word-count for each answer should be noted at the bottom of each answer.

4. *Final in-class closed-book exam (25%)*

At the beginning of the meeting scheduled for the course during finals week (Tues, June 13th, 8:00am), four examination questions will be given out. You will be required to bring blank blue-books in which to hand-write the answers to the three questions of their choice. No textbooks, notes, computers, phones, etc., can be used. As with the previous exam, the topics of the final exam questions will be drawn from both the assigned readings and the lectures, but now only from the second five weeks. A study guide for the final will be given out during tenth week.

5. *Attendance and class participation (5%)*

Due to the nature of the assignments, attendance at the lectures is a prerequisite for doing well in the course. Students are thus expected not to miss any meetings, and roll will be taken on a regular basis. Students are also expected to come prepared to discuss the readings, ask questions, raise objections, and otherwise actively contribute to the class meetings. Attendance at the two review sessions that will be held before the exams is also strongly encouraged. Extra participation in the online discussion groups will also be taken into account. ****NOTE: A minimum of 50% recorded attendance at lectures is required in order to pass the class.****

NOTES ABOUT REQUIREMENTS

A. No extensions will be granted for any assignment or exam, except in cases of **genuine** emergency (e.g., earthquake, flood, fire, death in the family, illness certified by a doctor).

B. The UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship must be observed in this course. This includes observance of the following six principles:

As a student,

1. I will not receive or provide unauthorized assistance in examinations.
2. I will not use unauthorized materials during an examination.
3. I will not use materials from sources without proper quotation, acknowledgement or citations.
4. I will not alter examinations, essays, or other assignments for regrading.
5. I will not fabricate data or references.
6. I will not use false excuses to obtain extensions of time for examinations or writing assignments.

C. *Maintaining academic integrity*: Though students are strongly encouraged to discuss the assignments with one another, each student must submit answers to the assignments independently of one another, written in her or his own words. Additionally, students agree that by taking this course, their mid-term examinations and final papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted exams and papers will be included as source documents in the [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) site.

D. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing (i) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office, (ii) will receive a failing grade on the assignment at issue, and (iii) will be in jeopardy of failing the entire course, depending on the nature of the breach of academic integrity.

E. The use of *technology* (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) is *prohibited* during class meetings.

F. If any accommodations are needed due to a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS
{tentative}

All page numbers refer to the pagination in the assigned editions of our textbooks.

1. Tues, Apr 4	Introduction: taking the Enlightenment seriously		Thurs, Apr 6	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Preface & Ch1	pp.55-73
2. Tues, Apr 11	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Ch2, first half (till m425)	pp.74-92	Thurs, Apr 13	Kant, <i>Groundwork</i> Ch2, second half (from m425); Ch3, second half (from 'The Extreme Limit')	pp.92-113; 123-31
3. Tues, Apr 18	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> Preface through Praise of Abr.	pp.41-56	Thurs, Apr 20	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> Preamble	pp.57-82
4. Tues, Apr 25	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> Problema I	pp.83-95	Thurs, Apr 27*	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> Problema II	pp.96-108
* mid-term exam questions distributed					
5. Tues, May 2	Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> Problema III (sel) & Epilogue	pp.109-27; pp.136-47	Thurs, May 4*	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy</i> Preface	pp.3-10
* 9:30am mid-term due					
6. Tues, May 9	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy</i> First Essay	pp.11-38	Thurs, May 11	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy</i> Second Essay	pp.39-76
7. Tues, May 16	Nietzsche, <i>Genealogy</i> , Third Essay, §§1-17; 24-28	pp.77-112; 125-36	Thurs, May 18	Goldman, 'Anarchism'	pp.47-68
8. Tues, May 23	Goldman, 'Minorities' and 'Prisons'	pp.69-78; 109-26	Thurs, May 25	Goldman, 'Emancipation' and 'Marriage'	pp.213-40
9. Tues, May 30	De Beauvoir, <i>Ethics</i> I	pp.7-34	Thurs, Jun 1	De Beauvoir, <i>Ethics</i> II	pp.35-73
10. Tues, Jun 6	De Beauvoir, <i>Ethics</i> III.1-3	pp.74-115	Thurs, Jun 8	De Beauvoir, <i>Ethics</i> III.4-Concl	pp.115-59
11. Tues, Jun 13	8:00-11:00a: final exam		Friday, Jun 16	5pm: extra-credit due	

Note: The quantity of readings per week is relatively low, because the degree of difficulty of many of the readings is relatively high. Students are very much encouraged to read all of the texts carefully at least *two* times, for greater comprehension.