

Philosophy in the Americas

PHIL 35 – Winter 2024

Prof. Patricia Marechal (pmarechal@ucsd.edu)

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30pm-4:50pm

PCYNH 109 – OH: Thursday 2-3pm

<https://canvas.ucsd.edu/courses/62494>

Teaching Assistants:

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Course description

Our course will provide a survey of some of the central topics and texts in the history of philosophy in the Americas. We will read selections of material prior to the conquest of the Americas, philosophical essays penned during the initial ‘colonial’ period, texts related to the configuration of the modern American states, and intellectual productions linked to movements and topics central to philosophical discussions during the twentieth century until today. One of the goals of the course will be to explore the wide variety of philosophical traditions, schools, topics, and approaches that were actively developed in a distinctive manner in these continents. We will also explore the problems and prospects of thinking of ‘philosophy in the Americas’, the philosophy of being ‘American’, and what is distinctive about ‘American philosophy’.

Note: PHIL 35 may be used to fulfill the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) requirement, as well as some requirements for some Colleges.

Requirements

1. *Weekly online discussion posts (20%) & comments (10%)*

A. By **end of Thursday (midnight)** of each week, you will need to contribute a post to your group (there are three groups; divided up by last name) on our course’s online discussion forum on Canvas. Your post should include:

(1) a quote of one sentence (or two) of particular interest to you from the week’s readings, (2) 100-word (minimum) response, including your thoughts and opinions about the topic being discussed, and (3) at least one question about the sentence(s) you’ve chosen.

B. Before the **end of Friday (midnight)**, you will also need to post one 50-word (minimum) comment on someone else’s post in your discussion group.

* *Extra credit:* Each week you can earn another 0.25% toward your grade by responding to a second post or comment made by others (50-word minimum; once per week; up to an additional 2.5% toward the overall course grade).

2. *Mid-term exam (30%)*

An in-class closed-book hand-written exam will take place during our meeting on Tuesday of Week 6 (Feb 13th); a review sheet will be distributed during Week 5, and there will be an exam-focused review/discussion session with the TAs prior to the mid-term.

3. *Final exam (30%)*

An in-class closed-book hand-written final exam will be held during the window of time for our final specified by the registrar; a study guide will be distributed during the 10th week, and there will be an exam-focused review/discussion session with the TAs in the days before the exam.

4. *Two office hours 5 minute ‘check-ins’ (5% × 2 = 10%)*

Each student is required to have two meetings (in person or via zoom) with the instructors (professor or TA) during the term, one during the first half (weeks 1-5), a second during the second half (weeks 6-10). The scheduling time for these check-ins will be during the weekly office hours; sign up via Canvas; if neither the professor's or either TA's office hour slots will ever work with your schedule, be in touch as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements. Meeting duration will be 5 minutes, no preparation required.

Notes About Requirements

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).

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. 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. The use of technology (phones, tablets, computers, etc.) is to be limited to engagement with course material; all technology is prohibited during any closed- book assignment.

Accommodations: If any accommodations are needed due to a disability or for religious reasons, please notify me at the end of the first class period or as soon as possible. Students requesting accommodations for the course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and also to the OSD Liaison in the Philosophy Department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

Readings

All readings will be made available electronically as pdfs on our Canvas site.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Note: The quantity of readings per week is relatively low because of the degree of difficulty of many of the readings. Students are encouraged to read all the texts twice over to aid comprehension.

WEEK 1: Origins

Jan. 7 (T): Introduction to Philosophy in the Americas

Jan. 8 (Th): Selections of Popol Vuh [Mayan]; Codex Chimalpopoca [Nahuatl (Aztec)]; David Cusick, Ancient History of the Six Nations [Iroquois]; Huarachi Manuscript [Inca]

WEEK 2: Colonialism

Jan. 14 (T): Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians* (1551)

Jan. 16 (Th): Benjamin Franklin, 'Remarks concerning the savages of North America' (1784); Simón Bolívar, 'Jamaica Letter' (1815); 'Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the Second National Congress of Venezuela at La Angostura' (1819)

WEEK 3: Transcendentalism

Jan. 21 (T): Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Nature' (1836); '(Harvard) Divinity School Address' (1838)

Jan. 23 (Th): Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* [selections] (1844); Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* [selections] (1854)

WEEK 4: Slavery and Freedom

Jan. 28 (T): Louis Menand, 'Agassiz' in *The Metaphysical Club*; Frederick Douglass, 'The Nature of Slavery'; 'The Inhumanity of Slavery' (1850); 'What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?' (1852)

Jan. 30 (Th): Henry David Thoreau, 'Resistance to Civil Government' (1849), Lydia Maria Child, 'Duty of Disobedience to the Fugitive Slave Act: An Appeal to the Legislators of Massachusetts' (1860); Emma Goldman, 'Preface', 'Anarchism' (1910).

WEEK 5: Pragmatism

Feb. 4 (T): C.S. Peirce, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' (1878); William James, 'The Will to Believe' (1896) and 'What Pragmatism Means' (1906)

Feb. 6 (Th): Mid-term (in person) exam (bring blue books)

WEEK 6: Identities

Feb. 11 (T): Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, 'Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism' (1845); J.B. Alberdi, 'Bases and Starting Points for the Political Organization of the Argentine Republic' [selections] (1853).

Feb. 13 (Th): José Martí, 'My Race' (1893); José Vasconcelos, 'The Cosmic Race: Mestizaje' (1925); 'The Race Problem in Latin America' (1926).

WEEK 7: Identities (contn'ed)

Feb. 18 (T): W.E.B. Du Bois, 'Of our Spiritual Strivings' (1904); 'The Evolution of the Race Problem' (1909); Francis Hsu, 'Americanization...' and 'Chinese Identity...', *The Challenge of the American Dream* (1971)

Feb. 20 (Th): Jorge Gracia, 'Who Makes Hispanics/Latinos Who We Are? The Key to Our Unity in Diversity' (2000); Linda Martín Alcoff, 'Is Latina/o Identity a Racial Identity?' (2000)

WEEK 8: Against Totalitarianism

Feb. 25 (T): Hannah Arendt, 'Preface', 'Anti-semitism as an outrage to common sense', 'The perplexities of the rights of man', in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951)

Feb. 27 (Th): Martin Luther King, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' (1963); James Baldwin, 'Many Thousands Gone', 'Stranger in a Village', *Notes of a Native Son* (1955); Angela Davis, 'Prison Reform or Prison Abolition?' (2003)

WEEK 9: Socialism, Revolution, Liberation

March 4 (T): Mariátegui, 'Ethics and Socialism' (1930); 'Seven Essays' [selections] (1928)

March 6 (Th): Enrique Dussel, 'Philosophy of Liberation' [selection] (1977)

WEEK 10: Feminisms

March 11 (T): Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 'Reply to Sor Filotea' (1691); Lydia Maria Child, 'Woman's Rights' (1843); Emma Goldman, 'The Traffic in Women' (1910); Betty Friedan, 'The Problem that Has no Name' in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)

March 13 (Th): María Lugones, 'Toward a Decolonial Feminism' (2010); Cinzia Arruzza, Nancy Fraser, Tithi Bhattacharya, 'Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto' (2019); Verónica Gago, 'Feminist International: Chapter 1' (2020)