

# Phil 10: Introduction to Philosophy

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San José State University  
Section 3, Fall 2018

## Course and Contact Information:

Instructor:	Prof. Brown
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Office Hours:	MW 2:00-3:00
Class Days/Time:	MW 4:30-5:45
Classroom:	DHM 208
GE Category:	Are C2

## Course Description:

In this course we will explore the different areas in philosophy, in a historical and diverse manner. We will pay attention to different theories concerning the same issues throughout history and across cultures. We will read theories concerning questions such as: How should one live? What constitutes happiness? Is morality universal or relative? Why should one be moral, especially if it is contrary to one's self interest? How do you know if something is true? Is there a God? Do we have a free will? What makes a just society and a just economic system? What makes a just and fair work place?

## Required Texts:

Course reader available at Maple press, 330 S 10th St.

Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press.  
Available at Spartan Bookstore.

## Course Requirements

In class group work, 20%.

Questions/comments, 10%

First paper assignment, due September 12, 20%.

Take-home midterm examination, due October 15, 20%.

Second paper assignment, due November 7, 15%.

Final take-home examination, due December 13, 15%.

### **Extra credit: class participation.**

Late work is accepted for 50% of the grade.

Plagiarism will result in failing the class.

## Classroom Protocol

NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

## Tentative Reading Assignments Due Dates

8/22 - General Introduction

8/27 - Plato, Apology, pp 1-13 (until 30c).

What is Socrates' definition of wisdom?

How does he answer the charges that he is corrupting the young and introducing new and unfamiliar Gods?

What does Socrates think is his mission?

8/29 - Plato, Apology, pp 13-23.

Why does Socrates refuse to request an acquittal?

Explain the following claims: 'Money does not bring virtue, but virtue brings money'. 'A better man cannot be harmed by a worse'.

9/5 - Plato, Crito, pp 25-33.

What does Crito think Socrates should escape from prison?

Why does Socrates refuse to escape?

9/10 - Descartes, pp 35-53.

Why does Descartes want to doubt everything he knows?

What are his arguments for skepticism?

9/12 – Descartes, first meditation, pp 55-57.

9/17 – Hobbes, pp 61-66.

What is a social contract theory?  
How does Hobbes describe human nature?

9/19 – Hobbes, pp 67-69.

What is the state of nature?  
What are the principles in human nature that cause it?  
Why do we want to emerge out of the state nature?

9/24 – Smith, pp 71-74.

What is Smith's idea of the division of labor and what is his own criticism of it?

9/26 - Smith continue, no further reading.

10/1 - Marx, pp 75-88

Explain the two class structure.  
What is the most destructive feature of capitalism?

10/8 - Marx, pp 91-100

Explain Marx's concept of alienation.

10/10 - Marx, pp 100- 103.

In what way is private property related to alienation?

10/15 – Friedman, pp 107-114.

How does economic freedom lead to political freedom?

10/17 – Friedman, pp 115-122

What is the role of the government?

10/22 - Kewon, chapters 1&2

Explain the analogy of the five blind men and the elephant.

10/24 - Keown, chapter 3.

Explain the law of karma.

10/29- Keown, chapter 4.

What are the four noble truths?

10/31- Keown, chapters 5&7.

What is the role of meditation in Buddhist practice?

11/5 - Keown, chapter 8.

Explain the role of the virtues and the precepts in Buddhist ethics.

11/7- Sartre, pp, 121 -127.

Explain Sartre's claim that "existence precedes essence." In what way do the concepts of freedom and responsibility follow from this claim?

11/14- Sartre, pp, 127-134.

Explain Sartre's notion of anguish, forlornness and despair.  
How far does choice extend? Can we choose our character traits? Our emotions? Passions?  
How does Sartre construct an existential ethics?

11/19 – Sartre continue.

11/26 – Marion Young, pp 135-148.

How does Marion Young define oppression?

11/28 - 12/10 -Lau Tzu, Dao de Jin. Reading online.

University policies:

University GE Learning Outcomes:

GELO 1: Letters courses will enable students to recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns. (All reading assignments illuminate enduring human concerns).

GELO 2: Letters courses will enable students to respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses. (Two papers assignments are required).

GELO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness. (Two papers assignments are required).

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>”