Foundations of World Thought Learning Community

This course is part of a Learning Community together with ENGL 2332 World Literature through the Renaissance. Students are encouraged to sign up for both.

Instructor Availability
Contact me via email, or: office C352, phone 214 860 2697. Office hours: M 3:30-5:00p, 7:00-7:30p; T 9:00-10:00a, 3:30-4:30p; W 11:00a-12:00noon, 3:30-4:30p; Th 9:00-10:00a. Also by appointment.

Catalogue Course Description
The history of philosophy from pre-Socratic times to the Renaissance is examined. Connections are made between the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle; Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scholasticism are considered.

This Course: What You Want

You want credit for the course. Okay.

(1) Show up. If you aren’t here, you aren’t part of the course.
(2) Participate. Instruction is intensively interactive.
(3) Take the midterm and the final exam.
(4) Write a ten-page term paper.

Do these four things, perform them adequately, and you will pass and get credit.

You want me to give you good value for your time and money. I will. I will be on time and prepared. I’ll follow the syllabus. I won’t waste time. I assign or recommend books worth reading. I love discussion, and will put myself into it.

You may want to enlist this course in your other life interests. Tell me what your interests are, and I will work to see to it that, as much as possible, you get what you want.

You may want an Honors Option. Okay.

(1) Attend two, one-hour, out-of-class honors meetings.
(2) Write a 15-page term paper.
(3) Make a B- or above both in the course and on the paper, and file the necessary paperwork.

This Course: What I Want

I want you to get the gist of three ideas, and make two efforts.

First is the idea that every person, every idea, every word has a history, and already has a set of relationships and connotations. So your own ideas are already in a context, even if you’ve never thought about it. Moreover, you observe your life and the world around you, thinking about who you are, and how to appropriate, modify, or leave behind lessons and perspectives from the past. That
is, you already have the ability to think critically and contextually about your life and society. What you need is tools for the job and time to do the work.

- The second point to get across is that you have to do this yourself; but that you cannot do it by yourself. No one makes history by themselves, and it is we as a society, not just as individuals, who are the heirs of our intellectual history. It helps if you have time to think about this and a group setting to discuss it.

- Third, I want you to see that, since you’re the same person in all the different things you do and relationships you have, integrating your life so that you act consistently with your values will make you more reliable and trustworthy to others, and less tense and stressed yourself. Good questions can help you integrate your deepest beliefs with your choices and actions.

As for efforts I want you to make,

- The first effort I want you to make is to try to see what the conversation is which you are joining. You do this by reading and listening, and I check on your progress via class discussion and tests.

- Also, I want you to begin to tease out where you actually stand and what you think and what you want to think about the major issues in your life and in our world. You do this by writing and speaking, and I check on this via tutorial and papers.

This Course: How It Fits into the Program in Philosophy and Religion

Ancient Philosophy is a sophomore-level course which assists students to

- Appreciatively and critically assess philosophical works and views, and
- Engage in an existential process comprehending the demands of philosophy on people’s lives.
- Show an informed, unprejudiced awareness of the scope and variety of views in philosophy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical views as expressions of values within social contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of philosophy on social history and individual experience.

It accomplishes the first by explicitly introducing students to the historical range of important Western philosophical texts and schools.

It accomplishes the second by emphasizing explicitly many different worldviews.

The third is attained by explicitly introducing these worldviews, and the many different styles and techniques in philosophy.

The course explicitly introduces the idea of worldviews, and of the sociology of knowledge.

And Ancient Philosophy explicitly introduces information on the historical influence of philosophy on societies.
Associate’s of Arts Degree with Emphasis in Philosophy and Religion
Ancient Philosophy is a required course for History of Ideas track of the Associate of Arts with Emphasis in Philosophy and Religion degree. This degree plan is currently closed to new declarers.

This Course: How It Fits in the Division of Arts and Sciences
The El Centro Division of Arts and Sciences seeks to promote excellence in a diverse community by providing quality academic and technical education in the Arts and Sciences. Ancient Philosophy

- as a course in philosophy, is a part of academic education in the Arts;
- Diversity is inescapable at El Centro, whether of the trivial, visible kind, the significant, invisible kind, or in course content. The content, social context, and assignments of the course will provide plenty of all three kinds.
- As for excellence and quality…

Philosophy as Part of an El Centro Education
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Philosophy as Part of an El Centro Education

Why does El Centro College offer courses in philosophy, including Ancient Philosophy?

Courses such as Ancient Philosophy help the College carry out its **mission**, namely:

- changing lives through higher education.

Ancient Philosophy has social value to individuals as citizens, workers and entrepreneurs, and consumers of disciplined, critical thinking. Secondarily, introduction to philosophy has personal value to individuals as meaning-making beings with individual and group identities and foundational intellectual and life project commitments.

Courses such as Ancient Philosophy conform to the College’s **purpose**, to wit, providing:

- Continuing adult education programs for occupational or cultural enrichment; and
- Freshman courses in the liberal arts.

Thus, this course channels the College’s **vision**, viz.:

- To recognize the unique opportunity offered by an urban multicultural college—in this case, of learning both how to understand the presuppositions and worldviews of diverse others, and the pedigree of their views and one’s own;
- To purposefully promote a global perspective, transcultural values and competencies, and responsible citizenship; and
- To focus on student success and lifelong learning.

It embodies the College’s **values**, viz.:

- By providing exemplary and innovative instruction, and improving instruction by measuring student learning outcomes over time;
- By challenging individuals to embrace diversity through broadened concepts of self, and by expanding their views of the world and recognizing their roles in a global society;
- By valuing academic freedom and respecting the rights and views of each individual; and by encouraging an honest, respectful, and continual exchange of views among students and faculty; and
- By creating high standards of performance through the acquisition of new knowledge and a commitment to constant responsiveness to the needs of our community of learners.

And this course helps the College attain its **goals**, viz.:

- By June 2015, increase the number of Associate Degrees awarded to 530 compared to a 2008-2009 baseline of 481 degree. Introduction to Philosophy is a Tier Two option for many Associate’s degrees; (Goal 1, Student Success, Objective 4.) and
By 2015, increase by 33% the number of students earning core requirements for transfer over the 2008-09 baseline of 124 students to 164; Ancient Philosophy is a District Core Curriculum course in the area of “Humanity, Creativity, and the Aesthetic Experience.” (Goal 1, Obj. 5.)

**Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)**
El Centro College’s QEP theme is critical thinking in the context of student readiness at each level of learning. Ancient Philosophy introduces students to the notion that all views, values, and practices may be appreciated critically, and that explicit attention to one’s thoughts and beliefs, and those of others, is necessary in a diverse, complex global society.

**This Course: What the Dallas County Community College District Wants**
The mission of the DCCCD is to equip students for successful living and responsible citizenship in a rapidly changing local, national and world community. Courses such as Ancient Philosophy, contribute to several of the District’s current goals, viz.:

- Students who transfer to a baccalaureate degree granting institution will be prepared to attain their educational goals. Ancient Philosophy introduces students to analysis of concepts, alerts them to unexamined presuppositions, and provides them with a history of the ideas both routine and contested in society today. All of these skills play into educational and life success.

- Students will have opportunities to participate in extra- and co-curricular programs and services that support accomplishment of their learning, educational, employment, and career goals. In Ancient Philosophy, we learn to appreciatively and critically evaluate sources of information and opinion available to world citizens.

- DCCCD will collaborate with private, public, and community partners to identify and respond to recruitment, training, and educational needs. Critical thinking, for which Ancient Philosophy sets the context, is routinely mentioned by external stakeholders as a primary desideratum from the College.

**Dallas County Community College District Core2009**
In addition, Ancient Philosophy is, like all Philosophy courses, a Tier Two course in the Core Domain of Humanity, Creativity, and the Aesthetic Experience. This domain enables students

- to critically analyze and form artistic judgments about the arts and humanities.

Logic explains and articulates what critical analysis is, for any discipline.
This Course: What the State of Texas Wants

Competencies and Educational Objectives

The state wants this course to improve some of your intellectual competencies. In this course you will at least:

- READ Social and Political Philosophy and other material.
- WRITE a five-page paper.
- SPEAK your mind and LISTEN to others speak theirs.
- CRITICALLY THINK about the views discussed in the class, including your own.

El Centro also wants this course to attain some exemplary educational objectives. So the College wants you to come out of this course:

I. able to demonstrate an awareness of the scope and variety of the humanities;
II. understanding the humanities in their breadth and depth as an expression of historically-situated, cultural human values;
III. able to respond to these values critically;
IV. able to demonstrate a knowledge of the influence of philosophy;
V. and to be able to articulate an informed personal reaction to it.

My intention is that the readings, class lecture, and class discussion will expose you to the humane vision afforded by philosophical ideas about social identity and decision-making, and will begin to convince you that every group identity and every decision is that of human beings who have beliefs, a shared history, and culture; they reflect our values and our worldview. The midterm and final exam will test this. I hope the class discussions and papers will enable you to respond to the values expressed in various ethical beliefs and theories, indicate its influence in your own areas of interest, and begin to articulate your own position.

Course Objectives

Ancient philosophy is both theoretical and practical. We have learned again in these last years that our major local and national problems are also global problems, with histories. We reenact situations familiar to Roman or to medieval Western thinkers. We can learn from this.

Courses in ancient philosophy thus meet the needs of local, national, and global citizens with an informed historical perspective. As it happens, this means that such courses also meet the requirements and can exceed the expectations of the mission, the core curriculum, and the goals of El Centro College.

A number of objectives related to the course may be in the mind of the instructor which are not included here: for example, instructor learning objectives. However, there are several categories of objectives in this section of this course as taught by this instructor which are very much in mind:

- Student Adult Competencies, such as time management, self-control in the midst of disagreement, and successful socialization into the community of inquirers which the section aspires to become.
- Course Design Effectiveness, such as the suitability and utility of texts, assignments, and pedagogical techniques to lead students to succeed at defined student learning objectives.
- Student Learning Objectives
Only those student learning objectives relevant to student assessment and grading will be defined here.

**Student Learning Objectives**

*Specifically, the baseline for course success is mastery of the following learning objectives* which are tied to the competencies and educational objectives.

I. you should be able to explain the different forms of love according to Plato and to identify examples in current life;

II. you should be able to give basic information about the origin of the arts according to Aristotle;

III. you should be able to give a reasoned critique of Plato’s political/social system;

IV. you should be able to relate Muslim and Christian views of the Middle Ages to America’s engagement with the Middle East today.

V. you should be able to articulate your own views on at least one topic in the field.

**Assessment**

Although in any course there are many other goals and objectives than the ones listed above, these mentioned are the ones I will attempt to assess in a way accessible to stakeholders.

Objective I will be assessed in class participation and the final, and possibly the presentation.

Objective II will be assessed on the final, and possibly the presentation.

Objective III will be assessed in class participation, the midterm, the paper, and the final.

Objective IV will be assessed on the final, and possibly the paper or presentation.

Objective V will be assessed via the paper and presentation.

**Details**

**Involvement**

Roll will be taken every class period. If there is a problem with your attendance, let me know about it as soon as you find out about it. Excuses require documentation. Also, I will ask for a list of your religious observances, if any, on the first day of class, which might require you to miss a class session. In general, College absence policies will be followed.

**Prerequisites**

Students are required to have demonstrated college-level “reading, writing, and/or math skills” prior to enrolling in academic transfer core courses. In philosophy you read and write. If you are weak in this area, get help. El Centro has many reading and writing resources.

**Style Guide**

Philosophy uses Chicago style for writing.

**Academic and Personal Integrity**

*Plagiarism is not tolerated:* anything from one letter grade to course failure will be the consequence, at the discretion of the instructor, as per College policy.

Also: ancient philosophy often involves discussing challenging issues, some aspects of which may be offensive to some people. By enrolling in the course, you are committing to handling course materials and class participation in an adult and appropriate manner. This
includes but is not limited to no cell phone usage, texting, twittering, IM-ing, or leaving class to take calls. It includes not eating or being a distraction to the instructor or fellow students, handling debate and conflict maturely and appropriately, and using a laptop, notebook, or pda only for taking notes, not surfing. Grievances not settled between adults, or with my assistance, including grievances regarding me, can be directed to the College ombudsperson.

Recording Class Sessions
Please do not record me on any device without my expressed, written consent.

Make-Ups
No makeups without a documented medical or legal excuse. All testing materials return to me. Makeups are done orally or in the testing center. No rescheduling or makeup of the final.

Turning In Papers
Papers turned in late lose 2/3 of a letter grade for each weekday late up to five such days. Papers must be stapled; unstapled papers will not be accepted. No email submissions.

Stationery for Quizzes, Papers, and Final
The midterm and final will be answered on blue books. Term papers should be submitted in electronic form via SafeAssign. Midterm / final in blue or black ink or #2 / mechanical pencil.

Amendments to the Syllabus
If I make any changes to the syllabus, I will do so in writing, distributed in class to you.

Grading
While each graded student action requires CRITICAL THINKING, and the midterm and final both require the ability to READ and WRITE, grading focus will be as follows:

Class participation  15%  SPEAK, LISTEN: Objectives I and III.
Presentation     15%  SPEAK, WRITE, READ; Objective IV.
Midterm          20%  READ; Objectives II, III, and IV.
5-page Paper     25%  WRITE; Objectives III and V.
Final            25%  CRITICAL THINKING; Objectives I, II, III, and IV.

This Course: What You Need

Texts:
Coursepack:

Writing Guide (Recommended):
Calendar

August 27  Welcome. The Course.

I. In the Beginning…

August 27  Introduction to the Premodern World. Heraclitus, Xenophanes.
Norton, A1131-1132.

29  Genesis 1-11, Tao Te Ching (I.2.5.1).
Norton, A158-169, 1344-1355.
World Philosophy, pp. 65-70.

September 5  Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics (I.3.3.1).
World, pp. 88-97.

10  Socrates, Plato.
World, pp. 75-88, 429-436.
Norton, A863-907, 1143-1153.

12  Plato, Aristotle.
World, pp. 249-263.

17  Cicero, Seneca.
Norton, pp. 936-939

19  Confucius (I.2.1.1), Mencius (I.2.2.1), Chuang-Tzu (I.2.3.1 and III.13.1.1).
World, pp. 38-57.
Norton, A1330-1344, 1374-1398, 1420-1421, 1423-1427.

24  Bhagavad-Gita (I.1.1.1), Upanishads (II.7.1.1-7).
World, pp. 3-9, 205-214.
Norton, A1282-1301.

26  Augustine (I.4.2.1-2, III.15.2.1, and V.23.1.1,2).

October 1  Plotinus Enneads, Sextus Empiricus (III.14.3.1).
World, 348-356.

3  Dhammapada (I.1.3.1, 2), Questions for King Milinda (II.7.3.1).
World, pp. 16-22, 223-226.

8  al Farabi (I.4.3.1), Maimonides (I.4.4.1).
World, pp. 111-123.


22 Anselm (V.23.2.1). *World*, pp. 533-535.


29 Averroes *The Decisive Treatise* and (V.24.2.1), al-Ghazzali *The Deliverance from Error* and (V.24.2.1). (some of V.24.3.1,2??) *World*, pp. 547-556/561.

31 Shankara (II.7.2.1 and IV.18.2.1), Dignaga (IV.18.3.1). *World*, pp. 217-218, 416-423.


12 Samkhya (II.7.2.2), Yoga (II.7.2.3). *World*, 218-223.

14 Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.

19 Mahayana (II.8.1.1), Vajrayana (II.8.2.1), Heart Sutra (II.8.3.1), Zen (II.8.3.2). 236-248.

26 Machiavelli.  

28 Bacon.

December 3 Huehuetlamini.  
*Norton*, C536-541, 559-571, 576-582.

5 We medievals? Ancient-future thinking. Review.

13 **Final exam** 12:30-2:30pm.