

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy
Section 002: M W 1:30 – 2:45 PM
Spring 2018
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Prof. R. Cherubin

Office: Robinson B461

Office hours: M W 3 – 4 PM; some additional times will be available by appointment

Office hours are drop-in “student hours”: time faculty have set aside specifically to meet with students.

Office phone: 3-1332

Email (best way to reach me): rcherubi@gmu.edu

Department web page: <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/>

Sophronein arete megiste kai sophie alethea legein kai poiein kata phusin epaiontas.

Sound thinking is the greatest human excellence and wisdom is saying and doing true things, perceiving things according to their nature.

--Heracleitus (6th century BCE)

Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must see the need of having nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

--Dr. Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963

Description

This course is designed to introduce students to philosophy through close study of texts from the ancient and modern periods, and through investigation of basic issues and problems to which philosophers have addressed themselves. No previous experience in philosophy is required.

People have engaged in philosophy for at least 2600 years, sometimes at the risk of their lives. This is a sign that they have valued philosophy highly. Philosophy has been valued in part for its useful results: it has been a source both of scientific thought and of social and political transformations. The foundations of modern science were laid by philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz. The foundational principles of modern democracies, including our own, were developed by philosophers such as Locke and Montesquieu. All of these philosophers were continuing the work begun in the ancient period; and these projects continue to develop today. In PHIL 100 we will study works from all of these periods.

So, to the question, “What can you do with a philosophical education?” we might rightly answer, “Change the world!”

Philosophy has also been valued apart from its useful applications: it seeks knowledge and

understanding for their own beauty and meaning. Asking fundamental questions out of a desire to understand is (as far as we know) a uniquely human endeavor, and one that reflects an essential part of being human.

Questions we will explore in this course include the following: What is it that was originally called “philosophy” and how if at all has it changed or developed over the years? How and why did it - and does it - begin? What does philosophy study? How is philosophy related to other fields of study, or to other activities? How does it differ from them? How and why are philosophical questions and philosophical investigations valuable and important? How has philosophy affected everyday life and thought?

Besides introducing students to some fundamental works of philosophy, the course aims as well to introduce students to reading and thinking philosophically. These are capacities whose applications and benefits extend beyond the course itself. For example, philosophy courses are excellent preparation for careers in law (many law schools recommend them), education, medicine, nursing, natural sciences, computer science, technical writing, government, and journalism, among other things - as well as for graduate study in many fields.

Each of the works we will study represents an important development in the history of philosophy. Thus the course offers a good foundation for further study in philosophy. In addition, many of the fundamental ideas and methods of today’s natural and social sciences originated in philosophical works we will read, so that the course provides a deeper understanding of the search for knowledge in other fields.

Unifying themes we will investigate throughout the course as they arise in the readings include the relationship between the search for understanding and the search for the best kinds of life to lead; the role of the search for knowledge in a democracy; and the relationship between questions of the nature of reality and questions of the nature of good and right.

Aims

This course aims to introduce students both to important texts and important ideas from throughout the history of philosophy, and also to the kinds of thinking, reasoning, and reading that philosophy offers. Students will learn what philosophers have said and how they have reasoned; they will also study how philosophical work has responded to and then influenced the lives and civilizations in which it has flourished. Thus another focus will be how philosophy has contributed to the world we live in.

Students will not only read philosophical texts but will learn to engage with them philosophically: they will learn to read critically, to give reasoned arguments, and to examine their own and others’ ideas in constructive ways. The way to learn philosophy is by doing it. The course will also help students explore how involvement in philosophy can be valuable and important for the individual and for a society.

Technology Skills

By the end of the semester students in this course should be able to use the GMU email system; to use GMU’s course management software Blackboard to access assignments and some readings and to upload completed assignments; to use word-processing programs to format documents with correct margins and (if needed) footnotes or endnotes; to access documents on the course web site, in online journal databases, and on the GMU electronic reserve system.

Be sure that your GMU email account is activated, and please check it regularly.

University policies now **require** students to activate their GMU email accounts and to check their GMU email regularly.¹ (See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for help in setting up your account.) Official university communications (announcements; messages from Financial Aid, the Library, instructors, etc.) are sent by email, and students are responsible for knowing the information conveyed in this way. If I need to contact you for any reason outside of class hours, I will do so via your GMU email address. **In addition, your GMU email username and password are required in order to use our course management software, Blackboard.**

Course Requirements

Required Texts

Please purchase your texts (2a and 4c below) from the Bookstore before the sixth week of classes. The Bookstore tends to return unsold texts (other than course packets) to the publishers at that time. (You can also use your favorite online bookseller to order these.)

1. Readings on Thales and Anaximander. Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

2a. Plato, *Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. Grube. Hackett Publishing Co. Available now in GMU Bookstore.

2b. R. Cherubin, “Notes on *Euthyphro*.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

2c. M.L. King, “Letter From Birmingham Jail.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

3a. J. Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (excerpt). Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

3b. F. Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

3c. M. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts). Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4a. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A1-2. Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4b. R. Cherubin, “Notes on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* A1-2.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4c. R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Cress. Hackett Publishing Co. Available now in GMU Bookstore.

4d. R. Cherubin, “Notes on Descartes’ *Discourse* Part IV” and “Notes on Descartes’ *Discourse* Part V.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4e. R. Fowler, “Life of Galileo” (excerpt). Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4f. D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (selections). Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

4g. L. Alcoff, “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

¹ See <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/#text> .

5a. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, Book II, Book VI Chapter 5, Book X. Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

5b. R. Cherubin, “Notes on *Nicomachean Ethics* Books I, II, and X.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

5c. A. Locke, “The Ethics of Culture.” Available via our Blackboard page (Reading Assignments tab).

Some additional texts will be assigned as recommended or optional reading; these will be available via our Blackboard page Reading Assignments and Reading Resources tabs.

Class sessions

1. Class sessions will consist of lectures plus questions and discussion. Since much of the course reading is not easy, lectures are intended to help students understand difficult points in the reading. Lectures will also help students delve more deeply into the ideas and problems presented by the readings. Therefore it is important to do the reading *and* to attend the lectures: the lectures and the readings do not repeat one another, but work together.

While lectures will necessarily take up the largest portion of each class session, there will always be time for questions in each session. I will ask you to respond to questions in order to help you think your way into the texts; and you will ask questions of me (or the class) if you do not understand something, or if you find something in the reading that is strange, interesting, exciting, or surprising. If you want a truly “interactive classroom,” then ask questions and participate in discussions!

Students will never be penalized for asking thoughtful questions or for making thoughtful comments during class discussions. **Thoughtful class participation will never harm your grade.** (Remember too that if you have questions or wish to discuss something, you are always welcome to come to office hours.)

If you don't have questions, you haven't read the assignment.

2. Class sessions begin at 1:30 PM. If you miss a class or part of a class, it is up to you to get the notes and assignments for that day. Experience in previous semesters shows that students who attend class regularly tend to earn significantly better grades on writing assignments than those who do not attend class regularly. You will not be graded on attendance; but you will need to know material that is presented in class in order to complete the writing assignments. Also, class lectures and discussions are intended to help students understand the reading assignments. Class participation can help your grade, too, in cases where your average is between two letter grades.

3. Students are expected to read the material assigned for each class meeting, and to come to class prepared to answer questions about it, to discuss it, and/or to ask thoughtful questions about it. Philosophy readings can be difficult, so you should expect to go over each reading assignment at least twice: once before the class meeting for which the reading is assigned, and once after the class.

4. **Students are expected to bring to class each day the text that we are studying that day.** We will be going over certain passages very carefully, and you won't be able to follow what is going on without your text.

5. Before each class session begins, please make sure that cell phones and other potentially noisy electronic devices are either turned off or turned to a silent setting (for example,

set cell phones to vibrate instead of ring). Do not use any devices (computers, phones, tablets, etc.) in a way that distracts other students or yourself.

Reading

Reading in philosophy can be somewhat different from reading in other subjects. It calls for different skills and different kinds of attention, and we will work on these throughout the semester. You'll do best in the course, and you'll get the most out of it, if you follow these steps:

1. Before each class meeting, read the material assigned for that meeting.
2. Jot down some notes responding to the study questions for that day (if any). Also, jot down any questions you might have. *If you don't have questions, you haven't read the assignment.*
3. Come to class, listen to the lecture, take part in the discussions, and ask the questions you had.
4. Read the material again.

Written Work

1. There will be four 3-5 page essay writing assignments for this course. These are all **required** assignments. They are not collaborative; each student is to do his or her own work. Each essay will count for 25% of your grade.

- a. The first essay will be due on February 15, and the topic question(s) will be posted on or by February 3.
- b. The second essay will be due on March 8; the question(s) will be posted on or by February 26.
- c. The third essay will be due on April 19; the question(s) will be posted on or by April 9.
- d. The fourth essay will be due on May 9; the question(s) will be posted on or by April 25.

There will also be in-class ungraded writing assignments, offering reflection and practice for writing in philosophy.

2. There is no in-class final exam for this class. Your last essay assignment is due on the scheduled final exam day for this class.

If you have more than one exams scheduled at the same time or more than two exams scheduled on the same day, consult the instructors **early in the semester** to request rescheduling: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring-2016/final-exams/>.

3. Use Blackboard to submit your work for the graded assignments. Please do not submit assignments via email. Attachments frequently fail to open properly, and material pasted into the body of an email message often comes through with pieces of text missing.

4. A helpful guide for writing in philosophy, developed in cooperation with the GMU Philosophy Department, is available through the Writing Resources tab in our Blackboard page.

Grading

1. Grading on required written assignments. Assignments are designed to see not only whether students have read the texts, but also whether they understand and have thought about the texts and the ideas discussed in class. *To answer the questions correctly, and to cover the essay topics adequately, you will have to show **your** comprehension of the issues. Simply copying information from texts or other sources will not be sufficient.* No more than 20% of your answer to any question may consist of quotations; no more than 20% of each essay you write may consist of quotations. When you quote a text, you must show that you understand what the quotation means, by discussing it or explaining it.

To earn an A on an assignment, you need to: answer the question(s) correctly (there may be several ways to do this); cover your topic thoroughly; follow all instructions; show your own understanding of the texts and ideas you use; apply this understanding; explain how you came to your conclusions and why you have concluded they are right; use sound and valid reasoning throughout; show your own reasoning and the evidence that support your conclusions; make no factual errors²; make no citation errors; use correct grammar and spelling; write clearly.

An assignment that earns a B is one that gets most parts of the question(s) right, but makes some noticeable factual error OR does not answer the question(s) quite completely OR does not cover its topic thoroughly OR does not show the student's own understanding or reasoning on some key points OR comes to accurate but unexplained conclusions OR makes some significant and confusing citation errors OR makes a significant error in reasoning.

An assignment that earns a C is one that answers some of the topic question, but leaves out crucial points OR makes some major factual or reasoning errors in one area OR includes reasoning or explanation that provides only partial support for the points made OR combines several of the problems mentioned in the paragraph on "B" assignments OR is not written clearly or accurately enough to convey your understanding of certain important points.

An assignment that earns a D shows minimal understanding of the texts OR covers little of the question(s) or topics correctly OR makes major factual errors that undermine the answers it gives OR shows very little accurate reasoning or explanation OR is so unclear that I can only tell whether a few parts are right.

An assignment will earn an F if it covers less than 60% of the question(s) or topic correctly

2 What is a factual error in philosophy? I will say more about this during the semester. But here are some examples: If you said that there is evidence that Descartes had blond hair, that would be a factual error (contemporary paintings of him depict his hair as very dark), but it would not be important enough to result in a deduction of points, unless you somehow tried to make a connection between Descartes' hair color and his philosophical ideas! Points would be deducted, however, if you said that Descartes lived in 5th-century BCE Athens under a democratic government. He was born in France in 1596 and lived in various parts of western Europe until his death in 1650, under various monarchical governments. This is very important because as we will see, Descartes was responding to philosophical, political, theological, and scientific issues of his time and place. Similarly, if you wrote that Descartes said or believed that mind or soul is material, that would be a factual error; he says something quite different, and essentially contrary to that. If you wrote that Descartes said that the unexamined life is not worth living, that would be a factual error; it is Socrates (as reported by Plato) who said this. Points would be lost for these kinds of factual errors, because they show a lack of understanding of Descartes' work.

OR if it does not address the question(s) OR if it is so unclear that I cannot tell what you are saying OR if it does not show your own reasoning OR if all points are supported with factually incorrect information or invalid reasoning.

If you do not submit an assignment, you will receive a grade of F for that assignment.

Grades of A-, B+, B-, C+, etc. will also be given. An A- paper is between an A paper and a B paper but closer to an A paper; a B+ paper is between an A paper and a B paper but closer to a B paper, etc.

As required by University policy, a letter grade of A+ is equivalent to a numerical grade of 4.0; a grade of A is also equivalent to a numerical grade of 4.0; a grade of A- is equivalent to a 3.67; a B+ is equivalent to a 3.33; a B is equivalent to a 3.0; etc.

For a full listing of the University's policy for converting letter grades into numerical grades to compute your undergraduate GPA (grade-point average), see the University Catalog online at <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/grading/#text>.

2. Late assignment policy: Work that is handed in **late with a documented legitimate excuse will be accepted without penalty.** Examples of documented legitimate excuses include a doctor's note or emergency room receipt if the absence was due to illness; a receipt from a mechanic for emergency car repairs on the day of class or exam; an official document (such as a syllabus) from one of your other courses proving that you had a required field trip for that class on the day our class meets; an official document from your workplace proving that your job sent you out of town on the day an assignment was due and that you did not have access to a way to send the assignment; an official document from an athletic team proving that you had a competition on the day an assignment was due and that you had no way of submitting the assignment; etc. **The documentation must account for the lateness:** for example, a medical note indicating that you were treated for an illness of a week's duration would **not** be sufficient documentation to excuse submitting an assignment a month late.

Other work that is due during the semester (before Finals Week) and that is handed in **late, without a documented legitimate excuse, will lose one grade increment per day that it is late.** For example, an assignment that would have received a B+ if handed in on time will receive a B if submitted within 24 hours of its deadline without a documented legitimate excuse. The maximum penalty is three full letter grades. Assignments that are more than 9 days late will not be accepted without a documented legitimate excuse.

Work that is due during Final s Week will NOT be accepted after its due date. Work that is due during Finals Week and that is not submitted by its due date will receive a grade of F unless you have requested a grade of IN (see #4 below).

3. Policy on assignments that are not submitted at all: Any required assignment that you do not submit by the time that the last assignment is due will receive a grade of F, unless you have requested a grade of IN (see #4 below).

4. Policy concerning grades of IN (incomplete): Grades of IN will be given **only** in either of the following situations:

(1) If you request a grade of IN in writing at least 24 hours before the last assignment is due AND submit an Incomplete Grade Contract (available at

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/IGC.pdf>) OR

(2) If a sudden emergency arises less than 24 hours before the assignment is due AND you can provide documentation of this emergency (as described in the section on late assignments, above) and a written request for a grade of IN plus the Incomplete Grade Contract mentioned above.

If you do not make a written request for a grade of IN (including submitting an Incomplete Grade Contract) and cannot provide documentation of emergency, you will receive a grade of F for each assignment that is missing.

University policy specifies that instructors are to assign an IN only if the student has a very limited amount of work to complete and there is a non-academic reason that prevents them from completing the work within the semester.

5. Policy on plagiarism/ Honor Code policy: You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and obeying the University Honor Code and the Honor Code Statement for this course. For details please see the Honor Code Statement attached at the end of this syllabus (pages 10-13). The policy for this class is in accordance with University policy as outlined in the online University Catalog at <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> . See also <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> . If you have any questions, please ask your instructor.

6. Academic accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, **please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474 or ods@gmu.edu** . For specifics on the process of arranging accommodations, see <http://ds.gmu.edu/> .

All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. By ‘disability’ I mean a learning disability, physical disability, or other condition that requires that you receive accommodations such as modified assignments, note-takers, extended exam time, etc.

The need for accommodations must be identified to the ODS and the instructor at the beginning of the semester (unless the need for accommodations develops after that point, in which case it should be identified as soon as possible after it arises). Please get the proper documentation from the Office of Disability Services concerning the specific accommodations you will need at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as it is available, so that we can set up appropriate arrangements. Then please take a moment (before or after class, in office hours, etc.) to show me the documentation and to make sure I understand exactly what you will need.

7. Optional written work.

Throughout the semester, I will make announcements in class about lectures and other events that have to do with philosophy. Some of these events will be held at GMU; others will be at other universities and throughout the Washington, DC area. **A way to get extra credit** is to write a short piece (no shorter than two typed double-spaced pages in length, or about 600 words) about the event you attended. This piece *must* include: a description of what the lecture or event was about; a description of the position the speaker(s) took on the issues, if any; a brief statement of the reasoning the speaker(s) used or the explanations the speaker(s) gave, if any; a statement of whether you agree or disagree (or whether you don’t know whether you agree) with the

speaker(s) and *why*. This sort of extra-credit piece will be graded in the same way as the other kind (see above).

c. Extra credit will be granted towards your semester grade in the following way: 2 points' worth of extra-credit work (for example, one piece of writing that received a score of 2, or 2 pieces that each received a score of 1) raises the *lowest* of your grades one increment. (For this purpose, the average of the two short essays counts as one grade). 4 points' worth of extra-credit work raises your lowest grade two increments. For example, suppose that your lowest grade on any of the assignments was C. If you do 2 points' worth of extra-credit work, your C grade on that assignment becomes a B-. If you do 4 points' worth of extra-credit work, it becomes a B.

If you have any questions, please ask your instructor.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Please note that this schedule may change slightly should that become necessary. Changes will be announced in class as soon as the instructor knows about them. Students are responsible for becoming aware of any changes announced in class.

I. Ancient Philosophy; introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

Beginning philosophy the way philosophy began

Week 1 (Jan. 22 - 24):

Required reading: Readings on Thales and Anaximander (written by Couprie and McKirahan)

Plato, *Euthyphro* (in *Trial and Death of Socrates*; please purchase this text);
also web notes on Plato's *Euthyphro* (available via Blackboard)

Week 2 (January 29 - 31):

Required: Plato, *Euthyphro* (continued) and *Apology*; web notes on *Euthyphro* (available through a link from our course web site); King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (available through a link from our course web site)

Weeks 3-4 (Feb. 5 - 14):

Required: Plato, *Apology* King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (via Blackboard)
(continued)

Modern Social and Political Philosophy

Week 5 (Feb. 19 - 21):

Required: J. Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (via Blackboard)

Week 6 (Feb. 26 - 28):

Required: Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts); Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (available via Blackboard)

II. What Can We Know, and How (if at all) Should We Go About Seeking It?

Knowledge and What Is: Epistemology and Metaphysics

Weeks 7 - 8 (March 5 - 21):

Required: Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A1-2; Cherubin, "Notes on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A1-2." (Available via Blackboard)

Modern Philosophy and the Making of the Modern World (What is “Modern”?)

Foundations and Early Developments

Weeks 8 - 10 (March 21 - April 4):

Required: Fowler, “Life of Galileo” (available via Blackboard);

Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (please purchase this text)

Cherubin, “Notes on *Discourse* Part Four,” “Notes on *Discourse* Part Five” (available via blackboard)

Recommended: Cherubin, Notes on relationships between the scientific revolution of the 17th century and the political revolutions of the next two centuries (available via Blackboard)

Week 11 (April 9 - 11):

Required: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (via Blackboard)

Week 12 (April 16):

Required: Alcoff, “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types” (available via our Blackboard page)

III. Knowledge of What Is and Knowledge of Good: Contemporary Issues (and ancient responses): Knowledge, Good, Justice, and Pluralism

Weeks 12 - 13 (April 16 - 25):

Required: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, Book II, book VI Chapter 5, Book X (via Blackboard)

Cherubin, “Notes on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*...” (via Blackboard)

Week 14 (April 30 - May 2):

Required: A. Locke, “The Ethics of Culture” (available via Blackboard)

Required: Cherubin, “Pluralism Without Relativism in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*” (available via Blackboard)

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Other (optional) materials and activities in philosophy

1. The GMU Philosophy Club meets frequently throughout the school year. The Club will hold discussions, lectures, and debates on campus, and is also planning joint activities with other area colleges. All are welcome to attend. For further information, please contact the Club’s faculty advisor, Prof. Christopher Di Teresi (cditeres@gmu.edu).

2. The GMU Philosophy Department web site is <http://philosophy.gmu.edu> . There you will find course descriptions, faculty information, syllabi, tips for writing philosophy papers, links to further philosophy resources, and more.

Some useful resources at GMU

GMU Writing Center, Robinson A114: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://caps.gmu.edu>: SUB I Room 3129, 703-993-2380

Learning Services (academic skills, tutoring, etc.): <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>

Disability Services (ODS): <http://ds.gmu.edu> : SUB I Room 2500, 703-993-2474

University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu>

University policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

Career Services: <http://careers.gmu.edu>

Important dates this semester

January 29: Last day to add classes
 February 23: Last day to drop classes
 February 26: Beginning of Selective Withdrawal Period
 March 12 – 18: Spring Break; no class meetings
 March 23: Mid-term progress reports will be submitted by this date
 March 30: End of Selective Withdrawal period
 May 2: Last class meeting for this course (unless there are make-up classes for snow days etc.)

Important general note from the University

Check PatriotWeb regularly to verify that you are registered for the classes for which you think you are registered. This is particularly important since students are no longer dropped for nonpayment. Faculty are not to grade the work of students whose names do not appear on the official class roster. If you are registered for a class you do not attend, you will not necessarily be dropped automatically. Therefore if you wish to drop a class, do so through PatriotWeb. Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late.

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website <http://registrar.gmu.edu>.) After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

Contacting your instructor: Office hours and email

- 1. Office hours** are times I have set aside specifically for meeting with students. If you want to speak with me outside of class, come to office hours. You do not need an appointment to come by during office hours, but if you want to make sure that I will be available during a certain portion of the office hours, then you can ask me to write you in for that specific time. My office is Robinson B 461.
- 2.** I will in general answer **emails** within one business day of when they are received. This means that emails received on, say, Monday afternoon will generally be answered by Tuesday afternoon; emails received on Friday afternoon will be answered by Monday afternoon.
- 3. If you email me, please include your GMU email address.** Please sign your name to your emails.

Honor Code Statement

This course is conducted in accordance with the GMU Honor Code, as outlined in the University Catalog. The GMU Honor Code is as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater

academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

See also the online version of the most recent catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>.

See <http://oai.gmu.edu> for more detailed information.

Each student is to do his or her own work; collaboration on required written assignments (exams, papers, etc.) is not permitted.

All answers on written assignments must be in the student's own words.³ Short quotations from the class texts or from other sources may be used, provided that all quotations are properly attributed (you must cite the author's name, the title of the source, and the page number or URL if any). **If you do not know how to do this, please see your instructor and I will be glad to help you.**

The Mason Honor Code on Plagiarism: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/plagiarism/understanding-plagiarism/>

The Mason Honor Code on Cheating: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/cheating/>

Further clarification: Earlier versions of the University Catalog provided good general accounts of what is meant by 'plagiarism' and 'cheating' here, and as these are consistent with the current GMU Office of Academic Integrity accounts I **will continue to use these earlier descriptions for purposes of clarification:**

Earlier versions of the University Catalog included under the heading 'Plagiarism' two kinds of thing. First is "[p]resenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment."⁴ This means that if you quote from any source without giving proper credit to that source, what you have done counts as plagiarism, and will not be permitted. By 'source,' I mean printed material, electronic material (information from internet sites, email, text messages, etc.), films, videotapes, audiotapes, radio, television, human beings other than yourself, or any other presenter of verbal information. By 'proper credit' I mean clear identification of the source of each quotation you have used, including the title of the source, the name of the author (where available), the URL if the source is a web site, the journal title if the source is a journal article, the date of publication (or of download from a web site), and the publisher if the source is a book. **If you have any question as to whether what you are**

³ Hint: Assignment questions and prompts will be such that you cannot answer correctly or sufficiently simply by copying sentences from the class texts or other sources. You will need to be able to show that you have understood what you have read. (In general, I ask that quotations make up no more than 20% of your answer to each numbered exam question and no more than 20% of the total length of your papers; this gives you space to answer the questions adequately and to discuss your quotations.)

⁴ This and all quotations in this Honor Code Statement are taken from the 2003-2004 GMU Catalog, p. 29.

doing constitutes quotation from a source, or if you are unsure about how to quote a source or how to give proper credit, please see your instructor.

The second kind of plagiarism outlined in the Catalog was “[b]orrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.” This means that if you take a passage from something you have read, and change a few of the words—without changing the meaning—and then claim that these ideas are yours (or simply fail to mention whose they are), that is also plagiarism, and is not permitted. There is nothing wrong with quoting (briefly) from sources; just acknowledge when you do it. If a source you find says exactly what you yourself think, show why you think it is correct. As long as you explain this in your own words, there is no problem. **If you have any questions about what counts as “borrowing the sequence of ideas...,” please see your instructor, and I will be glad to help.**

Both kinds of plagiarism are forbidden at GMU. Examples of plagiarism and examples of proper (non-plagiarizing) citation are provided at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~rcherubi/plagiarism.html> .

According to the earlier catalogs whose descriptions this class will follow, “**cheating encompasses the following: (1) The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.**

(2) The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including, but not limited to, the following: fraud, duress, deception, theft, trick, talking, signs, gestures, copying from another student, and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data or other information.

(3) Attempted Cheating.”

All such cheating and attempted cheating are forbidden at GMU. Since required assignments for this course specify that students are not to collaborate, any collaboration between students in the writing of required assignments will be considered to be a case of giving and receiving of “unauthorized and unfair advantage in academic work over other students.”

Again, if you have any questions about whether something you intend to do on a paper or exam is acceptable, please speak to your instructor before the assignment is due. I will be glad to help you—really.

Penalties/Responses to Plagiarism and Cheating:

A. For a first offense in this course, on assignments other than the final assignment: If there is **evidence** that a student has collaborated with others, or **evidence** that a student has presented others’ words or sequences of ideas as his or her own, that student’s paper will be invalidated, and the student will be required to complete a paper on a different topic, in a satisfactory manner within a one-week deadline. The work submitted will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade. Work submitted after the one-week deadline will be assessed a late penalty as outlined above under “Late Assignment Policy.” No credit will be given until the work is re-submitted satisfactorily. If the work is not re-submitted satisfactorily, that assignment will receive a grade of F.

B. On the final assignment, or for a second offense on earlier assignments: If there is **evidence** that a student has collaborated with others or has presented others' words or sequences of ideas as his or her own, **the case will be reported to the Honor Committee**. No credit will be given unless the case is resolved with a finding of "Not Guilty."

Note. By 'evidence' I mean something in writing that clearly shows proof of plagiarism or illegitimate collaboration. For example, if two students submit identically-worded answers; if a student submits a paper which I find to consist substantially of material copied from a book or web site without attribution and I can get hold of a copy of the book or can access pages from the web site—all of these are examples of cases where I would say that there is evidence of an Honor Code violation. If there is any question in my mind, I will speak to the student(s) involved before making the determination as to whether to take action.

Diversity Statement

Philosophia, *historiē*, and *dizēsis* began in respect for diversity in ideas, cultures, beliefs, and ways of thinking. Ancient Greek practitioners of these activities traced them to Miletus, a crossroads for a variety of cultures including Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, Babylonians, and other cultures of the Middle East, southern Europe, and northern and eastern Africa. In Miletus, the first philosophers sought out, investigated, and tested a variety of ideas and ways of thinking, treating foreign ideas and familiar ideas with equal respect — including subjecting them to equal scrutiny. The fact that an idea or person was Greek in origin did not incite in philosophers more respect or less respect than was due a foreign person or idea; and the fact that an idea was new did not make it any more suspect than an older one.

For the first philosophers, respect for the diverse and the familiar was compatible with — it even required — inquiry and testing. This is because what these philosophers valued was understanding, even where this went beyond and challenged what passed for understanding in their communities.

PHIL 100 endeavors to continue this philosophical project. Only by respectful yet critical systematic questioning will we be able to discover and move beyond the prejudices and gaps in knowledge we might not yet realize we have, to a more comprehensive and powerful understanding.

To this end, the course will function in keeping with the University Diversity Statement, <http://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement>, and the Women and Gender Studies Program Commitment to Diversity Statement, <http://wgstcenter.gmu.edu/about-us/diversityinclusivity-statement/> :

"[We] seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own."

University Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence, in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, our resources, and the options available to students.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (<http://ssac.gmu.edu/> ; 703-993-3686, Crisis Line 703-380-1434), Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/> ; 703-993-2380), and Student Health Services (<http://shs.gmu.edu/> ; 703-993-2831).

All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are **not** considered confidential resources and are **required** to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX Coordinator, at <http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix>, at 703-993-8730, or in the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.

Student Privacy and Communications

As noted earlier in the syllabus, students **must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class.** I will not respond to messages sent from, or send messages to, a non-Mason email address. Your MasonLive email address is the only one that I can definitely identify as belonging to you.

Policy on the use of electronic devices in the classroom

Cell phones, tablets, laptops, pagers, and other electronic devices are permitted in the classroom as long as they are used respectfully, in ways that do not distract you or anyone else from the business of the class, that do not disrupt the activities of the class, that do not disturb your colleagues or instructor, and that do not constitute cheating. Please set ring tones and alarms to a silent mode during class sessions. Distracting, disruptive, or otherwise disrespectful use of electronics in the classroom shows a lack of professionalism and may negatively affect your participation grade.