

Philosophy 501/CCT 603
Foundations of Philosophical Thought

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and by arrangement at other times
(face-toface or online)

Fall 2018
Wednesdays 7:00
Room: W/4/170

This course introduces graduate students in the Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program and other graduate programs to some of the traditional problems and methods of philosophical inquiry. It also relates philosophy to concerns about good thinking, educational reform, and teaching for effective thinking and considers how to infuse philosophical thinking into workplaces, school curricula, other academic disciplines, and our own lives.

We will become acquainted with several central philosophical problems. What is it to think philosophically? Why should one be moral? What is justice? What is knowledge? How can concrete moral issues such as abortion, human embryo research, and war be thought through? We will not find final answers to these questions. Rather we will: (1) seek to understand why these are such important and open questions, (2) begin to explore ways of answering them, (3) consider how to draw students and others into further engagement with philosophical thinking, and (4) find connections between such questions and other questions we have. The course provides a basis for further work in CCT, Education or many other fields.

The course will proceed primarily through discussion and writing in a (virtual) classroom community of inquiry. You are expected to contribute to the learning experience of the class as well as to gain useful insights from others. All of us can learn from each other. We understand our thoughts better when we express them. Others may connect with them, find useful implications in them or even challenge them. Our objectives are to enhance thinking skills and habits of careful thinking and sound judgment through active philosophical thinking as well as to gain a familiarity with some important philosophical problems, methods, and concepts. The course includes both face-to-face students and students online using Zoom.

Texts: G. Lee Bowie, Meredith W. Michaels, and Robert C. Solomon (eds.), *Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*, sixth edition (Wadsworth)

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett Publishing Co.)

Gareth Matthews, *The Philosophy of Childhood* (Harvard University Press)

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett Publishing Co.)

Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our*

Political Crisis (Simon & Schuster).

Requirements:

- (1) Doing the reading carefully in preparation for class.
- (2) Taking part in class discussion and activities and making a class presentation. The presentation may take any of several forms, including leading the class discussion of an assigned reading or guiding an activity on a related topic. A proposal for the presentation is due by October 24. [20%]
- (3) Doing the weekly writing [40 %]. Some weeks there will be a specific assigned topic for a short paper (2-3 double-spaced, typewritten pages). Other weeks you may write informally on any topic of your choice related to the course. This may include reflections on the readings, reactions to the class discussions, thoughts about how you might go about relating the philosophical issues we are considering to your own teaching, careers, and lives, difficulties you are having, and so on. Each week I will collect the written work and respond to it. (On-line students should e-mail the written work by the day of the class.) The writing assignment for December 5 will be the course metacognitive assignment, suitable for inclusion in your Reflective Practice and Metacognitive Portfolio.
- (4) Writing an 8-10 page (double-spaced, typewritten) final paper, due December 19 [40%]. A 2-page proposal for this is due by October 31. The topic of your paper may also be the basis for your presentation, but it need not be. The paper will allow students to pursue their individual interests connected to the themes of the course. Teachers, for example, may wish to consider applications to their own teaching and may write on the relationship between philosophical ideas and a wide variety of topics in subject matter instruction. Other students may similarly write on topics connected to their personal or professional interests.

Schedule and List of Readings

Some additional reading recommendations will be made from time to time. There will be a variety of further handouts, including study questions on the readings, CCT tools, and UMB and CCT policies or links to them.

1) Sept. 12 Introduction to the goals of the course. Self-introductions. Free writing exercise on philosophical thinking. A community of inquiry and what is involved in learning philosophy. The relation of philosophy to critical and creative thinking.

2) Sept. 19 Free inquiry.

Reading: Mill, On Liberty, pp. 1-52;

3) Sept. 26 Philosophical thinking. Socrates and his philosophical activity.

Reading: Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito.

4) Oct. 3 Children as philosophers. Philosophizing about children.

Reading: Matthews, The Philosophy of Childhood, pp. 1-18, 68-80 ("Introduction: Getting the Idea," "A Philosopher's View of Childhood," "Children's Rights").

5) Oct. 10 Abortion. Moral reasoning. Multiple perspectives.

Reading: Twenty Questions, chap. 10, pp. 351-371:
Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion";
Alice Walker, "Right to Life: What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?";
Sidney Callahan, "The Moral Duty to the Unborn and Its Significance";

6) Oct. 17 Human Embryo research. Cloning. Another look at Socrates.

Reading: Twenty Questions, pp. 369-377, 305-311:
Dena S. Davis, "Stem Cells, Cloning, and Abortion";
The President's Council on Bioethics, "The Moral Status of the Embryo";
Daniel Callahan, "The Puzzle of Profound Respect: Human Embryo Research";
Mary B. Mahowald and Anthony P. Mahowald, "Embryonic Stem Cell Retrieval and a Possible Ethical Bypass";
Robert Wachbroit, "Genetic Encores: The Ethics of Human Cloning";

Plato, Meno.

7) Oct. 24 What is a person? Theories of personal identity.

Proposal for Presentation Due

Reading: Matthews, The Philosophy of Childhood, pp. 81-88 ("Childhood Amnesia");

Twenty Questions, chap. 8, pp. 269-293:
John Perry, "The First Night";
John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity";
David Hume, "Of Personal Identity";
Meredith W. Michaels, "Persons, Brains, and Bodies";

8) Oct. 31 Life and death. Can children be philosophical thinkers?

Proposal for Final Paper Due

Reading: Twenty Questions, pp. 383-389, 393-406:

Chuang-Tzu, "A Taoist on Death";
Thomas Nagel, "Death";
Bonnie Steinbock, "The Intentional Termination of Life";
Patricia Mann, "Meanings of Death"

Matthews, The Philosophy of Childhood, pp. 19-53, 89-101 ("Theories and Models of Childhood," "Piaget and Philosophy," "Piaget and Conservation," "Childhood and Death");

Plato, Phaedo.

9) Nov. 7 Emotions. Nussbaum's take on emotions and contemporary politics.

Reading Twenty Questions, pp. 315-388:

Aristotle, "On Anger";
Rene Descartes, "The Passions of the Soul";
David Hume, "On Pride";
William James. "What Is an Emotion?";
Annette Baier, "Feeling that Matter";
Jean-Paul Sartre, "Emotions as Transformations of the World";
Robert C. Solomon, "Anger as a Way of Engaging the World"

Nussbaum, pp. 1-95.

10) Nov. 14 More on Emotion and Politics

Nussbaum, pp. 97-245.

11) Nov. 21 Egoism and altruism.

Reading: Twenty Questions, chap. 14, pp. 460-483:

Ntozake Shange, "get it & feel good";
Plato, "The Ring of Gyges";
Epicurus, "The Pursuit of Pleasure";
Thomas Hobbes, "People Are Selfish";
Adam Smith, "Compassion";
Richard Dawkins, "The Selfish Gene";
Ayn Rand, "The Virtue of Selfishness";

Tara Smith, "Individual Rights, Welfare Rights";
James Rachels, "Ethical Egoism";
Jim Holt, "The Life of the Saint."

12) Nov. 28 What is the right thing for me to do? Ethical theories. Moral development and moral education.

Reading: Matthews, The Philosophy of Childhood, pp. 54-67 ("Moral Development");

Twenty Questions, chap. 16, pp. 519-556:

"The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount" [from the Bible];

Confucius, "The Analects";

"The Unjust" [from the Koran];

Aristotle, "Happiness and the Good Life";

Immanuel Kant, "Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals";

John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism";

Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Natural History of Morals";

A.J. Ayer, "Emotivism";

Simone de Beauvoir, "Freedom and Morality";

Jonathan Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn";

Claudia Card, "A Feminist View of Ethics";

Robert Kane, "Through the Moral Maze."

13) Dec. 5 What Do I know? Inquiry and freedom. Implications for critical and creative thinking. Literature and art for and by children.

Metacognitive Assignment Due

Reading: Twenty Questions, chap. 7, pp. 205-211:

Plato, "The Myth of the Cave";

Rene Descartes, "Meditation";

Lewis Carroll, "Through the Looking Glass";

Lorraine Code, "What Can She Know?"

Matthews, The Philosophy of Childhood, pp. 102-124 ("Literature for Children," "Child Art")

14) Dec. 12 Synthesis. Individuality. Experiments in living.

Reading: Mill, On Liberty, pp. 53-113.

Final Paper Due December 19

The University of Massachusetts Boston is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for all students with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. If you have a disability and feel you will need accommodations in this course, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services, Campus Center, Upper Level, Room 211 at 617.287.7430. "<http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/>" <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/> After registration with the Ross Center, a student should present and discuss the accommodations with the professor. Although a student can request accommodations at any time, we recommend that students inform the professor of the need for accommodations by the end of the Drop/Add period to ensure that accommodations are available for the entirety of the course.

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity:

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life--not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process--shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presupposes that any submission of work for academic credit is the student's own and is in compliance with University policies, including its policies on appropriate citation and plagiarism. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Catalogue and relevant program student handbook(s)

http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code.