

## Met PH 110 B1—Great Philosophers—Fall 2016

Tuesdays, 6:00pm-9:00pm, STH 113

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Office Hours: Thursdays 5pm-7pm and by appointment

### Course Description

We will examine three issues concerning philosophy through the reading of classic philosophical texts. We will first examine the nature of philosophy itself. Does it have a unique task or goal? Is it distinguishable from science? Second, we will examine the relationship between philosophy and religion. Is it philosophy's job to examine, and potentially challenge, religious belief? Or do philosophy and religion constitute mutually distinct spheres? Third, we will examine the relationship between philosophy and morality. Is philosophy supportive of morality? Is it inimical to it?

### Required Texts

*Beyond Good and Evil: A Prelude to the Philosophy of the Future* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Translated by Walter Kauffman. Vintage Books. ISBN: 0679724656.

*Fear and Trembling* by Soren Kirkegaard. Translated by Alastair Hannay. Penguin. ISBN: 0140444491.

*Gorgias* by Plato. Translated by Donald J. Zeyl. Hackett. ISBN: 0872200167.

All books available at the BU bookstore. You may get them elsewhere—for example, Amazon—but make sure you have the listed editions.

Additional readings will be made available electronically. The course Blackboard Learn site is available at: <https://learn.bu.edu>

### Assignments and Grading

- Weekly reading responses (**50% of grade**). Written responses to prompts on the day's reading, **due in hardcopy at the beginning of each class**. Reading responses should not exceed one page and should be either double or one-and-a-half spaced. Prompts will be assigned through e-mail. Students are permitted to miss **three** reading response without penalty. Students who complete more than the required number of reading responses will have their lowest grade(s) dropped.
- In-Class Writing assignments (**10% of grade**). Writing assignments given and completed in class. **Be sure to bring paper and a pen/pencil to class to complete them.**
- Final (**20% of grade**). A cumulative written final exam. For date, time, and location, see the "Final Exam Schedule" link under the "Academic" tab in the Boston University Student Link.
- Participation (**20% of grade**). Includes attendance and in-class discussion participation. Discussion with me outside of class—for example, at office hours—can also contribute towards the participation grade,

but it is not required for an excellent score. Beginning with the third absence, each absence will **lower the participation grade by a full grade** (e.g. A to B).

### Policies

- Students should attend all classes. Make-up exams or late reading responses will be permitted if a student can provide documentation for an excused absence (e.g. doctor's letter or documentation for other kinds of absences allowed under University policy). Missed in-class writing assignments **cannot be made up**. Students who miss class should come to office hours or schedule a time with me to review missed material. **If you must miss a class due to external circumstances, then your reading response is due via e-mail by the start of that class.**
- Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in any Metropolitan College course. They will result in no credit for the assignment or examination and may lead to disciplinary actions. Please take the time to review the Student Academic Conduct Code:  
[http://www.bu.edu/met/metropolitan\\_college\\_people/student/resources/conduct/code.html](http://www.bu.edu/met/metropolitan_college_people/student/resources/conduct/code.html)
- Cell phone or laptop/tablet use is not permitted in class. **Please bring paper and a pen or pencil for note-taking as well as a physical copy of the day's reading.**

### Schedule (subject to change with due notice)

What is Philosophy?

Tuesday, September 6: Introduction / Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1-3; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Book 1, Chapter 1, paragraphs 11-16; Plato, *Phaedo* 95e-99d

Tuesday, September 13: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (first paragraph), 11, 14, 20, 25

Tuesday, September 20: Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"

Tuesday, September 27: Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?"

Philosophy and Religion

Tuesday, October 4: Plato, *Euthyphro*

Tuesday, October 11: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question 1, skip articles 9 and 10, Question 2

Tuesday, October 18: Hume, "The Natural History of Religion," sections I-IV, VI-VIII, XIV-XV

Tuesday, October 25: Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, up to Problema I: Is there a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?

## Philosophy and Morality

Tuesday, November 1: Antiphon selections; Plato, *Gorgias*, 447a-449d, 466a-481b

Tuesday, November 8: Plato, *Gorgias*, 481b-491d, 504a-509d, 523a-527e

Tuesday, November 15: Butler, Sermons II and III

Tuesday, November 22: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and Section I,  
Transition from common rational to philosophic moral cognition

Tuesday, November 29: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part 5, On the natural history of morals

Tuesday, December 6: Williams, "The Archimedian Point" / Review