

Phil 6 intro to philosophy

CSU Sacramento, Spring 2021

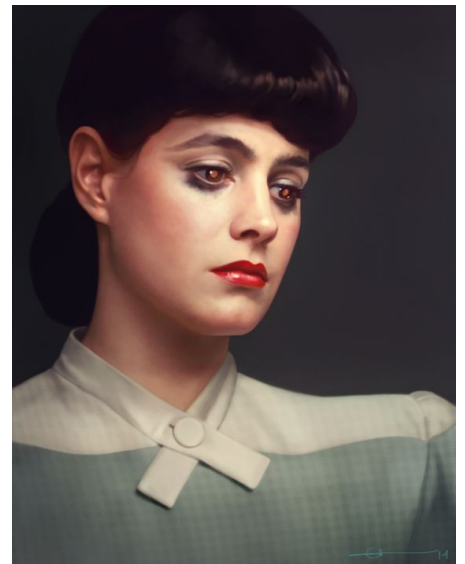
instructor: Jonathan Chen | www.jonsmyth.com

contact: jonathan.chen@csus.edu

office hours: TTh 8:00 – 9:30 via Zoom ([csus.zoom.us/my/jonsmyth](https://csus.zoom.us/j/jonsmyth))

class meets: online asynchronously (i.e. no specified meeting time online)

class section: section 1, course #30667



GENERAL INFORMATION

Catalog Description

Representative selection of philosophical problems will be explored in areas such as knowledge, reality, religion, science, politics, art and morals.
Units: 3.0

General Education Criteria

This course satisfies GE Area C2: Introduction to the Humanities. The learning objectives associated with C2 should focus on the human condition.

About the Course

In this course, we will be examining and reflecting on many of the philosophical problems raised by great thinkers from both past and present. We will tackle various philosophical questions stemming from epistemology (e.g. What conditions must be met for me to say I know something to be true? Why is knowledge important and why should we care about it?), metaphysics (e.g. Is it possible to have a world in which both our will is free and the world itself is completely deterministic? Are you the same person you are today as you were twelve years ago because you share the same memories and experiences?), ethics (e.g. Is an action right or wrong in itself, or does its rightness or wrongness depend on the consequences of that action? Is there a distinction between killing someone and letting her die?), and so on. The purpose of this course, however, is not to simply glance over the material, but to actively engage with it in such a way that incites reflection, mindfulness, and awe.

After completing of the course, students will be able to: 1. Describe and distinguish key philosophical concepts in the main subfields of philosophy, including concepts such as free will, mind, knowledge, belief, reality, faith, reason, good, etc. 2. Read and comprehend philosophical texts, both classical and contemporary. 3. Discuss core philosophical problems, such as whether there is a god, what does it mean to be conscious, are we free to make choices, what is justice, etc. 4. Explain and defend a position on basic philosophical problems. 5. Write clear and concise explanations and arguments about basic philosophical problems.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
 - ✓ You will engage in an array of philosophical debates that stem from various thinkers and philosophical theories, and you will demonstrate your proficiency via quizzes, discussions, and a final paper.
2. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.

- ✓ By sympathizing with thinkers from different traditions and understanding their motivation for their projects, you will have a clearer view on how they contribute to the world we currently live in.
- 3. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
 - ✓ By exploring the various thinkers' ethical theories and suggestions on how society can flourish, you will learn and be able to participate to the discussion in novel ways.
- 4. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including animating ideas and values.
 - ✓ During our exploration of several philosophical traditions that stem from both ancient and contemporary thought, you will be tasked with essay-writing and exams to demonstrate your knowledge.

Required Text

Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, 6th Edition (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Note #1: You can rent the E-Book on VitalSource or Chegg for slightly cheaper.

Note #2: You can also purchase earlier editions, though a couple of the articles might be missing and the page numbers will be off.

Accommodations

For students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations, please contact me before the end of the third week of the semester so that arrangements can be made. Late notifications may interfere with providing accommodations in a timely manner. Also, please provide disability documentation to SSWD (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>), Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-9655, so that they may facilitate the reasonable accommodations process.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & REQUIREMENTS

Canvas & Announcements

We will be using *Canvas*, as a means of communication and assessment. Please log in by going to <https://my.csus.edu/>.

- Always check your CSUS e-mail for class announcements.
- I respond to all e-mails within 24 hours. If I do not respond within that time, assume I did not receive your e-mail and resend it.

Reading

All of the assigned reading should be done before class. The readings will often be challenging, but reading through them two or three more times will help to clarify the material.

Quizzes

Reading Quizzes

There will be ten online reading quizzes for this class. These quizzes will be available on *Canvas* as multiple choice and/or true/false questions, and they will be taken before our discussion on the readings.

Lecture Quizzes

There will be five online lecture quizzes for this class. These quizzes will be available on *Canvas*, and you will be given a study guide before each quiz.

Online Discussions

I will be facilitating mandatory discussion forums on *Canvas*. There will be two kinds: (1) small discussions and (2) critical discussions. Small discussions are merely an opportunity to share your thoughts about a topic; no justification is required. Critical discussions, on the other hand, are an opportunity to critically assess the arguments of the authors and your peers, and determine the persuasiveness of their argument.

You can find a detailed account of how the online discussions work on *Canvas*.

Final Paper

You will be assigned a final paper (3-4 pages) for this class. It will demonstrate some of the ways in which you approach moral problems. You must substantiate your viewpoint, but also be charitable and sincere to alternative viewpoints. Your grade for the paper is based on the reasoning behind your argument rather than the position you intend to argue for. With this, you will be given an opportunity to organize your thoughts clearly and coherently, and show that you have developed a proficiency in constructing arguments.

Your paper is due on May 17th (Monday) at 11:59pm. **The last day to send me a proposal via e-mail is April 30th. However, from April 26th – 30th, I will accept a maximum of 5 proposals from the entire class. Thus, if you are the 6th student to send me a proposal, your proposal will not be read. You may continue to discuss your proposal with me via office hours after April 30th, but I will no longer accept e-mails.**

Due to the sheer volume of work, I will only look over paper drafts during my office hours (or by appointment). I am happy and willing to look over as many drafts as necessary.

For students who need additional help with writing and organizing their papers, I highly recommend visiting the Writing Center (<http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>) and/or PARC (<http://www.csus.edu/parc/index.html>) on campus.

Assignments and Grading

Who is You?	10 pts	10%
Lecture Quizzes (6)	360 pts	36%
Reading Quizzes (14)	140 pts	14%
Small Discussions (5)	50	5%
Critical Discussions (4)	240 pts	24%
Final Paper	200 pts	20%

A = 93 – 100, **A-** = 90 – 92, **B+** = 87 – 89, **B** = 83 – 86, **B-** = 80 – 82, **C+** = 77 – 79, **C** = 73 – 76, **C-** = 70 – 72
D+ = 67 – 69, **D** = 63 – 66, **D-** = 60 – 62.9, **F** = 0 – 59

Late Assignments

You will be given a feasible amount of time to complete each assignment, and it is your responsibility to know when an assignment is due. Should you need to make up an assignment, the following penalties will be enforced:

- ✓ -5 points for each 24-hour period that the 'Who is You?' assignment is submitted late. No excuses accepted.
- ✓ -10 points for each 24-hour period that a quiz is taken late, unless you have relevant documents* to account for your absence.
- ✓ -5 points for each 24-hour period that a small discussion post is submitted late. No excuses accepted.
- ✓ -5 points for each 24-hour period that a critical discussion post is submitted late. No excuses accepted. After 48 hours, you can no longer make up the discussion post.
- ✓ -50 points for each 24-hour period that your Final Paper is submitted late. No excuses accepted.
- ✓ Late reading quizzes are not accepted.

*Relevant documents should describe an injury or illness, death in the family, military service, or athletic responsibilities.

For instance, if you submit an online discussion post 3 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -5 points. If you submit it 25 hours after the due date, you will be penalized -10 points.

Note: When submitting your assignments on *Canvas*, please make sure that it has been submitted properly. If you are unsure, you can always send me an e-mail with the assignment attached and *copied and pasted* (don't just send me an e-mail asking if I received the assignment posted on *Canvas*).

Academic Honesty

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. Any student caught intentionally plagiarizing will automatically receive an **F** in the class and be reported to Student Affairs and the department chair for serious disciplinary action.

"Plagiarism, as a form of cheating, is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporation of another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge."

If you are still unsure of what counts as plagiarism, please speak with me or read more at: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/STU-0100.htm>

Course Schedule

This is subject to change. You will be given at least a two-week notice if any changes are made.
All readings should be completed before coming to class.

The course schedule is available on Canvas or via www.jonsmyth.com/teaching.

COVID-19 Related Information

Illness: If you fall ill due to COVID-19, you will not be penalized for late submissions or absences in attendance. However, you must provide documentation of your illness.

Zoom etiquette: Be respectful to others. See here: https://www.csus.edu/diversity-inclusion/_internal/_documents/honor-code1.pdf

Additional resources:

Services for students with disabilities: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>

Student health and counseling: <https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/>

Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES): <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/>