

# Ways of Knowing (ONLINE)

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**Office Location:** Social Science Building 4124 (Virtual office hours will be held on Collaborate Ultra – available through D2L)

**Office Hours:** T/TH 1-2pm, or by appointment

**Virtual Office Hours:** TBD

## Epigraph:

From Friedrich Nietzsche's Daybreak:

“It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist, perhaps I am a philologist still, that is to say, a teacher of slow reading: -- in the end I also write slowly... -- this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers...”

## Email and Response Times:

The best way to reach me is by emailing me at [kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu](mailto:kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu). Please allow 48 hours for a response. For grades, allow one week for assignments to be graded and entered into D2L.

You may also speak with me during regularly scheduled virtual office hours, or by appointment. When writing an email, you must include the following components: the name of the course in the subject line (i.e. PHIL 2000 M/W 2PM), a proper greeting (“Dear Dr. Mirzakhani,”), some type of body paragraph or sentence that alerts me to the purpose of your email and the type of response you are seeking, and a proper closing (e.g. “Best, Steve”). Remember that your email ought to address the five basic questions: Who? What? Where? When? And Why?

ONLY email me from your official KSU student email address. ONLY email me to the address above ([kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu](mailto:kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu)). IF the email you send to me has “view.usg” in it, I will never see it.

## Course Description:

A philosophical, critical examination of the different ways of knowing and thinking in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences including ethical and religious perspectives. Emphasis is on the nature and purpose of philosophical inquiry as applied to selected issues within philosophy and the broader implications of these methods and questions for other disciplines and in everyday contexts.

This section of the course is an introduction to philosophy as a historical survey of the different ways in which we know and engage with the world. We will examine ancient Greek, Buddhist, and Daoist texts. We will also engage with the philosophy of early modernity and the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as criticisms of that tradition from feminist and anti-racist viewpoints. As we read each text, we will ask how it is that we have access to knowledge about the world and what we then are tasked to do given what we know (or do not know). We will reflect upon the roles of art and of doubt in philosophical investigation. Throughout, we will not simply read texts, but we will engage in the practices of philosophy, such as meditation.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

## Course Objectives:

1. Identify philosophical questions and specific philosophical methods.
2. Analyze important issues and concepts in philosophy.

3. Describe and explain claims made by philosophical thinkers and test these against available evidence with a view to advancing general and transferable critical skills.
4. Identify the fundamental philosophical presuppositions involved in “ordinary” and “everyday” experiences and knowledge claims.
5. Create writing indicative of an advanced level of comprehension, argumentation, presentation and writing skills.

## **Required Texts**

1. Plato, *Meno*, trans G.M.A. Grube (Hackett Publishing). Available at the KSU bookstore.  
ISBN-10: 0915144247  
ISBN-13: 978-0915144242

Instead of purchasing the *Meno*, you can also purchase Plato's *Five Dialogues*, which includes the *Meno*. Both are translated by G.M.A Grube.

2. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Grove Press). Available at KSU bookstore. Although you can find this book online, we will be reading it in its entirety, so you may prefer to have a printed copy.
3. All other readings will be posted on Desire2Learn under content. It is your responsibility to read each text before class and to bring a copy with you to class discussion.

## **Minimum Technology Requirements:**

Online learning requires access to computer resources. Generally, basic standards include a computer (either a PC or a Mac) that is less than five years old, equipped with at least Microsoft Office 2007 (including Word, PowerPoint, and Excel) and recent versions of free media players (e.g. RealPlayer, Windows Media Player, QuickTime).

Your internet connection will also be important to your ability to access information. Faculty often use audio and video files that would take a very long time to download over slow internet connections. We highly recommend a high-speed internet connection for taking online courses.

## **Minimum Technical Skills**

Online courses normally require participants to have average computer literacy. Students should be proficient with the basic functions of standard software packages (e.g., MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, and Adobe Reader) and standard players (e.g., QuickTime, Windows Media Player). These programs will need to be accessible to students through home use or other computer access. A working knowledge of the D2L learning management system is required for participation in online courses.

## **Student Support Services**

Please click this link for access to technical support, tutoring services, the Writing Center, Disability Services, and many other resources:

[https://curriculum.kennesaw.edu/resources/ksu\\_student\\_resources\\_for\\_course\\_syllabus.php](https://curriculum.kennesaw.edu/resources/ksu_student_resources_for_course_syllabus.php)

## **Grading**

### **Grading Scale:**

Students are evaluated on the following scale:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% or lower

I—Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair's office.

### **Grade Breakdown (as percentages of the final average):**

Attendance and Participation (discussion boards): 15%

Short Writing Assignments (SWA), group work, and quizzes = 25%

Exams: 60% (3 exams worth 20% each).

## **Description of Assignments:**

### **Discussion Boards:**

For each module you will be required to participate in a discussion board. The process of attempting to express the main ideas of the texts, as well as your criticisms and questions, is a crucial part of the study of philosophy. You will be randomly assigned to small groups where you will reflect on the provided prompt. To receive full credit, you must not only compose a post that addresses all parts of the prompt (and provides textual evidence & citations if appropriate), you must also respond to at least 2 classmates in your group. In order to generate fruitful and respectful conversation, discussions posts must be completed in a timely manner (by the deadline provided) and netiquette guidelines (found in the syllabus) must be followed. Failure to comply with the deadline or netiquette guidelines results in an automatic zero. I will drop your lowest discussion board grade for the semester.

### **Short Writing Assignments (SWAs) and Quizzes:**

For the short writing assignments, you will respond to prompts or questions I provide on D2L. These assignments will be listed in the checklist for each module. Quizzes will be short answer, multiple choice, and fill in the blank. I will drop your lowest SWA/quiz grades for the semester. You will not be permitted to make up a quiz or SWA. Please read the checklist carefully; sometimes video lectures will not be available until after you complete a SWA or Quiz. I have posted general guidelines for the purpose of the SWA as well as my grading criteria in module one.

### **Exams:**

There will be three exams for this course. Exams will be posted during modules 5, 9 and 16. The exams will be comprised of both short answer and essay questions. The exams will be open book; however, you will not be allowed to use anything aside from the text (i.e., you will not be able to access lectures during the exam). Although you are permitted to read the texts on a laptop or e-reader throughout the semester, I would highly recommend going ahead and printing each text and annotating as you read so that you have a hard copy ready for use on the exam. The purpose of the exams is not to test your memory or your note-taking abilities, but rather to determine whether you can clearly explain complex philosophical arguments in your own words. You will have a limited time window (1.5 hours) to complete each exam.

### **Late Work:**

No late assignments will be accepted. You will receive a ZERO for any assignment turned in late.

### **Class Participation:**

For this online class, you are expected to login to D2L throughout the each week (i.e., each module). You ought to check D2L at the beginning of each module, and minimally when your discussion board posts are due (i.e., Thursday and Friday of each week). If you wait until the end of the day Sunday, not only will you have already received a zero for the discussion board, but you will likely not have time to complete the reading and the assignments for the module.

## Communication Rules:

In any classroom setting there are communication rules in place that encourage students to respect others and their opinions. In an online environment the do's and don'ts of online communication are referred to as **Netiquette**. As a student in this course you should:

- Be sensitive and reflective to what others are saying.
- Avoid typing in all capitals because it is difficult to read and is considered the electronic version of 'shouting'.
- Don't flame - These are outbursts of extreme emotion or opinion.
- Think before you hit the post (enter/reply) button. You can't take it back!
- Don't use offensive language.
- Use clear subject lines.
- Don't use abbreviations or acronyms unless the entire class knows them.
- Be forgiving. Anyone can make a mistake.
- Keep the dialogue collegial and professional, humor is difficult to convey in an online environment.
- Always assume good intent and respond accordingly. If you are unsure of or annoyed by a message, wait 24 hours before responding.

## Course Schedule:

<b>Week</b>  (Each week/module begins at noon on Monday and ends at midnight on Sunday)	<b>Module</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1 (8/19 - 8/25)	Module 1: Start Here (Welcome) and Ancient Greece (Part I)	Syllabus  Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"

Week 2 (8/26-9/1)	Module 2: Ancient Greece: Plato (Part II)	Plato, <i>Meno</i>
WEEK 3 (9/2 - 9/8)	Module 3: Descartes (Part I)	Descartes, Letter of Dedication & Meditation One
Week 4 (9/9 - 9/15)	Module 4: Descartes (Part II)	Descartes, Meditation Two & Lorraine Code, "Sex of the Knower"
Week 5 (9/16 - 9/22)	Module 5: Free Will or Determinism?	Baron d' Holbach, "Are We Cogs" and Karoline von Guenderode, "Magic and Destiny" EXAM #1 will be posted during this module.
Week 6 (9/23-9/29)	Module 6: Nietzsche	Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies"
Week 7 (9/30 - 10/6)	Module 7: Charles Mills	Charles Mills, "But What Are You Really?"
Week 8 (10/7 - 10/13))	Module 8: Audre Lorde	Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference"
Week 9 (10/14 - 10/20)	Module 9: Gloria Anzaldua	Gloria Anzaldua, "New Mestiza Nation" Exam #2 will be posted during this module
Week 10 (10/21 - 10/27)	Module 10: Buddhism (Part I)	What the Buddha Taught: 4 Noble Truths
Week 11 (10/28 - 11/3)	Module 11: Buddhism (Part II)	WTBT, Nirvana and "Four

		Foundations of Mindfulness"
Week 12 (11/4 - 11/10)	Module 12: Daoism: Dao De Jing (Part I)	Introduction to Daoism and Chapters 1-11 (selections)
Week 13 (11/11 - 11/17)	Module 13: Daoism: Dao De Jing (Part II)	Dao De Jing chapters 16-81 (selections)
Week 14 (11/18 - 11/24)	Module 14: Daoism: Zhuangzi	Introduction to Zhuangzi & Inner Chapters
Holiday - No classes 11/25-12/1		
Week 15 (12/2 - 12/8)	Module 15: Cixous	Cixous, "the Last Painting"
Week 16 (12/9 - 12/16)	Module 16: Final Exam (Exam #3)	

## University Policies

### Academic Integrity Statement

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5c of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the university's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to university materials, misrepresentation/falsification of university records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement. See also [KSU Student Code of Conduct](#).

Academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) may result in a failing grade for the class.

### Tips for Reading Philosophy

1. Find a time of day and a location where you do your most productive reading.

2. Read each text slowly and more than once.
3. As you read, create a system for annotating the text. Here are some suggestions of how to annotate:

Draw a box around a word that the author is defining in that sentence;

Underline or highlight key phrases within a definition;

Circle words or phrases you do not understand (and look them up in a dictionary);

Place key words/phrases in the margins so that you can find them more quickly later;

Number each point in an author's argument;

Summarize each paragraph/page in your own words in the margins;

Try to create an outline, chart or diagram of the argument found in the text.