

# Ways of Knowing

## Instructor Contact Information

Dr. Karolin Mirzakhan

Email: [kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu](mailto:kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu)

Office: Social Science Building 4124

Phone: 470-578-2463

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

## 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 19th 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.

## Course Objectives

PHIL 2200 satisfies one of Kennesaw State University's general education program requirements. It addresses the CRITICAL THINKING general education learning outcome(s). The learning outcome states: Students articulate a position on an issue and support it by evaluating evidence relevant to the position, considering opposing positions or evidence, and evaluating the implications and/or consequences of the issue. For more information about KSU's General Education program requirements and associated learning outcomes, please visit the [course catalog](#)

## Course Objectives

1. Identify philosophical questions.
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 "everyday" and "ordinary" experiences and knowledge claims.
5. Create writing indicative of an advanced level of comprehension, argumentation, and presentation.

## 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.

## 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: 15%

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

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

## Description of Assignments:

### Attendance Policy

To be counted as present, you must: 1) be physically present in the classroom for the entire official class period and awake; 2) bring a copy of the text we are covering that day with you; 3) be prepared to ask questions and take notes. You will NOT be counted present if you do not have the appropriate materials with you (paper and pen to take notes, readings), if you spend class time either on your phone or laptop doing anything unrelated to course content, or if you are working on materials for another course.

The expectation is that you are fully present and prepared to be engaged with the materials, myself and your classmates.

Failure to meet the above criteria will count as an absence.

More than two absences will result in a reduction of the final class grade by one-half letter grade (i.e., a "B" becomes a "B-"). Being late 3 times is equivalent to one absence. This means arriving to class anytime after the scheduled class time or leaving early without clearing this with me before the start of class.

Please note that nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal; it is up to students to manage their enrollment in a course.

### Attendance and Participation Rubric:

A: Attends class consistently. Has prepared the readings well in advance of class and positively contributes to class discussion. Does not merely state opinions, but uses the texts to interrogate one's own opinions and struggles honestly with the texts. Is not disruptive during class.

B: Attends class regularly. Has completed the readings for each class day. Contributes to class discussion with regularity. Is on occasion unprepared or not participatory. Is never disruptive.

C: Exceeds the attendance policy. Participates sporadically, but does not consistently represent having done the readings in advance of class. Is sometimes disruptive.

D: Exceeds the attendance policy, and/or consistently demonstrates not having done the readings, and/or is often disruptive.

F: What's your name again?

## Short Writing Assignments (SWAs) and Quizzes:

Short writing assignments and quizzes will always be announced at least one class day in advance. Some of the short writing assignments are already listed in the tentative reading schedule (in the syllabus); however, this is not a complete list, therefore, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate if you miss class and do not know what is due (or, if you cannot reach a classmate, contact me).

In the short writing assignments, you will respond to prompts or questions I provide. You may type or hand-write your responses; if hand-written, your responses must be legible and you must get your assignment initialed at the beginning of the class session. Quizzes will be short answer, multiple choice, and fill in the blank.

You must be in class to turn in the SWA (or take a quiz); asking a classmate to turn in an assignment for you or emailing it to me will not be sufficient in order to receive credit (unless you receive permission from me prior to the due date). Although SWAs are always to be completed on your own before class, I will sometimes ask you to work in groups in order to compile a master document; all members of the group will receive the same grade for that document. If you did not bring your individual SWA with you to class, you will not receive a grade for group work.

I will drop your two lowest SWA/quiz grades for the semester; this includes a quiz or SWA missed because you were absent or late. You will not be permitted to make up a quiz or SWA.

## Exams:

There will be three exams in this course. 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., no use of lecture notes or electronic devices). 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.

## Course Communication

The best way to reach me is by emailing me at [kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu](mailto:kmirzakh@kennesaw.edu). **If you send me an email that includes "view.usg" as part of my email address, I will not receive it.** Please double check the email address before sending.

Allow 24-48 hours for a response. You may also stop by my office to speak with me during regularly scheduled 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. Mirzakh,"), 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?

You may only send me emails from your official KSU email address.

## Devices and Classroom Etiquette

No electronic devices are permitted in the classroom during examinations. No recordings of the course lectures will be permitted.

You must bring a copy of the reading with you to class each day. You may only have an electronic device out during class (such as a kindle or other e-reader) if you are using it to access the reading for that day. No other use of electronics is permitted during class time. If you elect to read the assignments electronically, find a way to underline, highlight, or take notes within the text.

You may bring drinks and snacks so long as they are not a distraction to any other students or the instructor. Please be respectful to the instructor and your classmates during class lectures and discussions. I reserve the right to ask a student to leave class who is being disrespectful or disruptive during class.

## Late Work

No late assignments will be accepted. You will receive a ZERO for any assignment handed in late. This means that assignment was turned in after the beginning of the class date on which it was due.

## 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.

## Electronic Communication

The University provides all KSU students with an "official" email account with the address "students.kennesaw.edu" or "kennesaw.view.usg.edu" (in D2L). As a result of federal laws protecting educational information and other data, this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other University officials.

## 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.

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..."

## Tentative Reading Schedule

**Note: This reading schedule is only tentative and based upon a best-case scenario for the course and can be changed at any time by the instructor. The syllabus is designed to meet the educational objectives of the course, and is, therefore, also subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Date	Topic	Assignment Due that Day
Tuesday (8/20)	Introduction to the course	Read: syllabus (Syllabus quiz ONLINE)
Thursday (8/22)	Ancient Greece & Plato	Read: Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (D2L) Read: Plato's <i>Republic Book X</i> , pp. 240-241 (Stephanus pp. 595a-602b)

Tuesday (8/27)	Plato	Read: Plato's Republic Book X, pp. 246-25 (Stephanus pp. 602b-608b) AND 257-263 (Stephanus 614b-621d) DUE: SWA
Thursday (8/29)	Plato	Read: Plato, Meno 70a-80e (Stephanus pagination) DUE: syllabus quiz (online D2L)
Tuesday (9/3)	Plato	Read: Plato, Meno 80a-86c
Thursday (9/5)	Plato	Plato, Meno 86c-100b (Stephanus)
Tuesday (9/10)	Descartes	Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy ["Letter of Dedication", Meditation One and beginning of two: pp. 35-37, pp. 40-43]
Thursday (9/12)	Descartes	Descartes, Meditations One and Two, pp. 4-47
Tuesday (9/17)	Descartes & Code	Finish Descartes, Meditation Two Lorraine Code, "Sex of the Knower"
Thursday (9/19)	Exam 1	In class exam covering Plato, Descartes, & Code
Tuesday (9/24)	Freedom vs. determinism	Baron d'Holbach, "Are We Cogs in the Universe?" Karoline von Günderode, "Magic and Destiny"
Thursday (9/26)	Nietzsche & the critique of the canon	Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies"
Tuesday (10/1)	Nietzsche	Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies" and Gay Science (selected aphorisms)
Thursday (10/3)	Mills & Race	Mills, "But What Are You Really?" (Read Part I of essay, up to Problem Cases)
Tuesday (10/8)	Mills & Race	Mills, "But What Are You Really?" (Read entire essay)

(Note: Wednesday Oct 9 is last day to withdraw without academic penalty)		SWA: Go through the "Problem Cases" and come up with your own example of each.
Thursday (10/10)	Lorde & Age, Race, Class and Sex	Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" SWA: generate your own example of each the three ways that Lorde says we are programmed to respond to difference.
Tuesday (10/15)	Lorde & Anzaldúa	Read: "Age, Race, Class & Sex", cont'd Read: Anzaldúa, "Mestiza Nation" SWA: come up with three of your own examples of the surface level multicultural that the essay critiques. Consider: how Lor three ways we respond to difference map o Anzaldúa's life experience?
Thursday (10/17)	Anzaldúa & shifting identities	Anzaldúa, "Mestiza Nation" SWA: come up with your own examples (a least 2) of whiteness as a cultural default position
Tuesday (10/22)	Exam 2	In class exam: D'Holbach, Günderrode, Nietzsche, Mills, Lorde, and Anzaldúa
Thursday (10/24)	Buddhism, 4 Noble Truths	Read: selections from <i>What the Buddha Taught</i>
Tuesday (10/29)	Buddhism, 4 Noble Truths	Read: selections from <i>What the Buddha Taught</i>
Thursday (10/31)	Buddhism, 4 Noble Truths & Mindfulness of Body	Read: selections from <i>What the Buddha Taught</i>
Tuesday (11/5)	Buddhism, 5 Aggregates and No Self	Read: selections from <i>What the Buddha Taught</i>
Thursday (11/7)	Daoism	Read: "Daoism Explained and Four Chapters"
Tuesday (11/12)	Daoism	Read: Dao De Jing (selected chapters)
Thursday (11/14)	Daoism	Read: Dao De Jing (selected chapters)
Tuesday (11/19)	Daoism	Read: selections from <i>Zhuangzi</i> "Inner

		Chapters"
Thursday (11/21)	Daoism	Read: selections from <i>Zhuangzi</i> "Inner Chapters"
Monday, November 25 - Sunday, December 1	Holiday/ NO CLASSES	
Tuesday (12/3)	Daoism	Read: selections from <i>Zhuangzi</i> "Inner Chapters"
Thursday (12/5)	Cixous & Knowing through art	Read:"The Last Painting" DUE: SWA (Reading Questions PowerPoint on D2L: answer on separate sheet of paper
Tuesday, December 10 - Monday, December 16	FINAL EXAM WEEK	Exam 3: You will take exam 3 during the officially scheduled time for this course