

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**Course Outline**  
**PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy**

**Instructor:** Doug Al-Maini

**Class Room:** NH246

**Office:** NH 717

**Office Hours:** Monday 10:15-12:00, Wednesday 9:15-11:00, Friday 10:15-11:00

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This outline covers only the material that will be covered in the first semester; a separate outline will follow in semester two.

**Description:**

This course is intended to provide students with an introduction to the discipline of philosophy. In the history of philosophy, a few texts stand out as having played a major role in establishing what philosophy consists in, and the study of these texts serves as an excellent entry into the field. To begin with we shall examine one of these texts, Plato's *Republic*. The *Republic* confronts questions concerning metaphysics, knowledge, logic, value, ethics, art, and politics in a manner both accessible to the beginner and rewarding to the expert. Further to this, the *Republic* is a text embedded within a culture and a literary tradition, and we shall try to tease out some of the defining features of its relationship to that culture and tradition. In looking into the issue of why philosophy arose to prominence with the Greeks, and what this says about the place of philosophy, both for the individual and society, we can start to provide an answer to the question of why study philosophy today. Plato was alive to the philosophical problems of his day, and since many of those same issues are relevant to our society now, we will look into the substantive details of how problems were posed in the context surrounding Plato's text. This in turn will provide us with a deeper understanding of the philosophy of the *Republic*. **You must bring your copy of the *Republic* to each class.**

Early in the semester, we will put aside the *Republic* for one week and engage in a sustained analysis of the nature of logic, with the aim of honing our skills in the critical evaluation of ideas and arguments. With increased facility with the process of argumentation, we will then return to the *Republic* in order to give a more in-depth study of the various positions Plato puts forward in it.

**PLEASE DO NOT USE COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES, OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CLASS TIME.**

**Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Introduction; the Nature of Justice	<i>Republic</i> bk 1
2	Introduction to Logic	Handout
3	Utopias	<i>Republic</i> bk 2
4	Censorship; The Myth of the Metals	<i>Republic</i> bk 3
5	The Tri-partite Soul & City	<i>Republic</i> bk 4
6	Equality, Eugenics, Philosopher Rulers	<i>Republic</i> bk 5
7	The Nature of Philosophy and the Philosopher	<i>Republic</i> bk 5-6
8	The Forms; 2 Images	<i>Republic</i> bk 6
9	The Allegory of the Cave	<i>Republic</i> bk 7
10	Constitutional Decay	<i>Republic</i> bk 8
11	The Tyrant's Psychology; Happiness	<i>Republic</i> bk 9
12	The Immortality of the Soul	<i>Republic</i> bk 10
13	Wrap up	

**Students are obliged to keep a backup copy of each assignment they complete.**

**Technical Considerations for Written Assignments:**

1) All written assignments must be typed (black ink, please) and double-spaced on pages with at most 1 inch margins. No extra line spaces between paragraphs. Indent the first line of a paragraph. Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper is quite acceptable.

2) Please no title pages. Also no “Works Cited” or “Bibliography” pages referring to one work; do bibliographic references in a footnote if you must. Please no enormously large-fonted things like titles, names, dates, course numbers, student numbers, phone numbers, or due dates that take up half a page of space. Your title, name, and student number at the top of the first page is quite sufficient. Please visibly number any multiple-page assignments. If for some reason you must hand in the assignment to the office, please include my name at the top of the assignment as well.

3) No duo-tangs, folders, binders, or paperclips. Loose sheets are acceptable, but do remember to number them.

4) Under no circumstances will emailed assignments be accepted. Please hand in your assignments at the start of class on the day they are due.

This site gives an excellent overview on what a philosophy paper is all about and how to write it.

5) The final page of this outline is the evaluation form that will be used in the assessment of your writing. This evaluation form provides the clearest explanation of my requirements for an essay. Please, study it carefully before you write your work.

6) The late policy is a deduction of 3% per day that the assignment is handed in late. This course outline lets you know when assignments are due, and you have been given plenty of time to complete them. Consequently last minute excuses for not completing assignments on time will be met with skepticism.

7) Many of the above requirements are arbitrary demands on my part, but they really do facilitate the assessment of your work. If you do not follow these guidelines, your mark for organization on the evaluation form will be reduced.

8) Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. If you make use of an idea that is not of your own devising, you must cite the source of that idea. Failure to properly cite sources may result from removal from the course and expulsion from the school.

**Assignment #1: Worth 20%, 3 pages in length. Outline due October 12<sup>th</sup>, Essay due October 19<sup>th</sup>.**

In books 2 and 3 of the *Republic*, Socrates engages in an extended analysis of censorship, ultimately arguing that there are some texts that he simply will not allow to be brought into the city he is creating along with Glaucon and Adeimantus. Consider book 1 of the *Republic* as if it were a complete text itself. Would it make it past the censor board and be allowed into the city to be read?

**Assignment #2: Worth 30%, 5 pages in length. Outline due November 18<sup>th</sup>, Essay due November 25<sup>th</sup>.**

When Socrates starts discussing the Forms, he moves into a realm of abstraction that seems far removed from practical matters. At the same time he demands that rulers have a working relationship with the Forms. Why does Socrates make this requirement of rulers, especially since they are the ones charged with overseeing the practical affairs of the community?

**Midterm: Worth 20%, written October 28<sup>th</sup>.**

**Final: Worth 30%, check with Registrar for date and time.**

**EVALUATION FORM**  
**(Late assignments will not receive comments)**

Style:

Grammar: Are the sentences understandable? Are there any spelling mistakes? Is the diction clear and concise? Can the thought behind each sentence easily be grasped?

/10

Organization: Do the ideas logically follow each other, or were they haphazardly strewn together? Is there evidence of the student having constructed an argumentative outline? Is the structure of the argumentation explicitly stated and easily perceived?

/10

Content:

Thesis: Do the assignment give an answer to a question or problem put forward? Is the answer more than a simple “yes” or “no”? Is the answer insightful, being an interpretive idea itself? Is the thesis explicitly stated?

/10

Arguments: Are there arguments presented in the paper? Are the arguments interesting or banal? Do the arguments explicitly outline broad premises that act as guides to understanding and reveal the unquestioned perspectives adopted in the paper?

/30

Originality: Does the student provide input into the conceptual debates the text engages in? Is there evidence of insight on the student’s part into the topic? Are there any new ideas being explored in the assignment? Is the student able to go beyond ideas raised in class discussion?

/20

Evaluation: Does the student give a fair summation of the ideas contained in the texts used? Are passages from the text cited? Does the use of these ideas meaningfully contribute to the thesis of the essay, or is the use of material a mere addenda to the main arguments of the paper?

/20

TOTAL /100