

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

IONA COLLEGE



PHL 110 C

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2010

Tu-Th-F 1:00–1:52 Doorley 117

Dr. Adam M. Goldstein

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<http://www.iona.edu/faculty/agoldstein>

This course is an historical introduction to problems of metaphysics (what is real) and epistemology (what and how we know), beginning with a study of ancient philosophy before Plato and ending with a modern or contemporary thinker. The central themes of the course are the *problem of change* and the nature and evaluation of *realism and idealism*.

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Course Texts

All texts assigned for this class are available online at

<http://www.iona.edu/faculty/agoldstein>.

No texts need to be purchased for this course.

Evaluation

Course readings Students are required to complete all assigned course readings in time for the appropriate class meetings. Consult the schedule of course readings and assignments below. No particular grade weight is assigned to course readings; but students that do not keep up will most likely not be able to complete graded assignments, and will not be able to make good contributions to class discussion. If it becomes apparent that the class as a whole is not consistently keeping up with the readings, random quizzes will be instituted.

Students are expected to bring a copy of the reading being addressed in a given class session with them to that session. Failing to do so will result in a penalty to a student's class participation grade. Whether a student has brought his or her reading to class will be checked by way of random inspections: students will be asked, on randomly selected days, to produce the reading assigned for that week.

Attendance (10% of the grade) Students are required to be present and on time for every class meeting, and to remain for the full class period. Please inform Dr. Goldstein if there is some reason you cannot or did not attend class on a given day. Student athletes must present written documentation of their participation to Dr. Goldstein if they wish for their participation in these events to be given consideration when determining their attendance

grade. The same is true of those who have missed class due to a medical or family emergency. The College’s attendance policies, stated in the most recent edition of the *Iona College Undergraduate Catalog*, will be strictly adhered to. See Table 1 below for more information about how attendance will affect a student’s grade. Students absent nine or more times will be failed in the course with a grade of “FA.” Absences for athletic events and in general other events that are not emergencies will not be excused for the purpose of assessing whether a student fails the course with an “FA” grade.

Table 1: How will absences affect my grade?

Absences	Penalty to att. & part. grade (units: letter grades)
0–3	none
4–5	-2
5–6	-3
7–9	-4
≥ 9	FA course grade

Class participation (15% of the grade) Students must engage in an active manner with the course material during class in order to understand it. At a minimum, a student must be an engaged listener, prepared to respond to questions asked by the instructor or comment on classmates’ contributions. Students should aim, however, to originate lines of thought or questioning in class. Friday class sessions will be devoted to work in small groups; every student is expected to contribute significantly to his or her group. As mentioned above, students failing to bring the appropriate reading material to class will receive a penalty to their participation grade. On random occasions, students will be asked to present their class reading for the day.

It is clear that no one reading the newspaper, text messaging, surfing the WWW, or holding private conversations with other students can be engaged with course material during class. *The use of phones or other*

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telecommunications devices for text messaging or talking is strictly forbidden in this class. The use of phones, laptops or any other device for purposes not directly related to class activities is also strictly forbidden. There are no exceptions to these rules. A student failing to comply with this rule will receive a penalty to his or her participation grade. Students will not be warned or notified when such penalties are applied. Those whose distracting and uncivil activities become a problem during a particular class session or who engage in a pattern of such activities may be asked to leave that class session, and will be referred to the Dean or other campus services that aim to help students struggling with college-level work.

All students will begin the semester with a participation grade of “B.” Students must fully participate in class in order to attain a higher grade at the end of the semester. Those using cell phones for text messaging or talking *even once* should expect their participation grade to suffer.

Homework (2.5% each, 10% total) Five homework assignments will be distributed during the semester; see the schedule of reading and assignments below for their due dates. A student’s lowest homework grade will be dropped: a student’s best four homework scores will be the basis for his or her semester homework grade.

Homework must be turned in at the start of the class session on the day it is due. Homework cannot be accepted after class starts on the day the homework is due: late homework cannot be accepted, except in case of documented family or medical emergency. Student athletes or those engaging in other campus events are expected to turn homework in before the due date, or have a classmate or friend deliver the assignment to class on the day it is due. Homework cannot be accepted by email, and homework attached to an email or included in its message body submitted in advance of the hard copy as evidence that the assignment was completed on time will be ignored.

Midterm exam (25%) A midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the course. The date of this exam is indicated below; see the schedule of readings and assignments.

Final exam (40%) A cumulative final exam will be administered during the final exam period assigned to the course by the registrar. The date of this exam will be announced shortly after the registrar has published the final exam schedule, which is at

<http://www.iona.edu/admin/sfs/register/finalExamSchedule.cfm>.

Policies

Minimal work for passing A student must take the midterm and final exam to pass the course.

Alternative exam administration Students having registered with the CAP program or with other campus offices and who have obtained permission from those offices to take exams in a setting other than the usual classroom should notify Dr. Goldstein of their need for such an alternative setting. It will gladly be provided.

Academic Integrity

If a student turns in work by someone else to fulfill an assignment requiring that he or she (the student) be the work's sole creator, then that student has cheated. Copying another student's homework or exam paper are central examples of cheating, though not the only ones. Cheating is morally wrong, and is destructive for the person cheating and the Iona community, and is strictly forbidden in this class. Moreover, Dr. Goldstein particularly dislikes cheating and considers it his duty to punish it. Disciplinary action in accord with college policies on academic dishonesty, stated in the most recent edition of the *Iona College Undergraduate Catalog*, will be pursued against those found cheating. Note that these policies allow that an instructor may fail a student cheating; and Dr. Goldstein believes that, except in a very few types of cases, failing a student is the appropriate remedy.

Course & teacher evaluation

Iona College now uses an on-line course and teacher evaluation system (“CTE”), which is administered by a corporate subcontractor, not by the College itself. Data are confidential; no instructor will be able to identify which of his or her students is responsible for any response entered into the system. The corporate subcontractor will provide the College and the instructor with information derived from the aggregation of student input. Students using the CTE system will also be provided with some of this information. The College and its faculty value students’ feedback about courses and their instructors, which is essential to the College’s ongoing effort to improve instruction and to assess its course offerings. Students will be notified by email about how and when the CTE will be administered.

Schedule of Readings & Assignments

Week no.	Date	Readings and Assignments
1	19 Jan	KRS, "Sources;" "Forerunners."
2	25	KRS, "Ionian Thinkers."
3	01 Feb	KRS, "Philosophy in the West."
4	08	No new reading. HW #1 due Friday.
5	15	<i>Republic.</i>
6	22	<i>Republic.</i> No class Thursday & Friday.
7	01 Mar	<i>Republic.</i>
8	08	No new reading. HW #2 due Tuesday.
	15	Spring Break. Yay! Be good . . .
9	22	Descartes, Meditation 1. Midterm Thursday
10	29	Descartes, Meditation 2.
11	05 Apr	No new reading. HW #3 due Friday.

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Week no.	Date	Readings and Assignments
12	12 Apr	Berkeley.
13	19	Putnam. HW #4 due Friday.
14	26	Putnam.
15	03 May	No new reading. HW #5 due Friday.
	TBA	Final exam.

Appendix: Course Learning Goals

After a student has taken PHL 110, Introduction to Philosophy, he or she should be able to do the following:

1. Define key terms in specific contexts concerning topics such as logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion. For example, the student should be able to define terms such as “argument,” “valid,” “necessary and sufficient conditions,” “substance,” “dualism,” and “empiricism.”
2. Explain various approaches to the study of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion. For example, the student should be able to explain the rationalist and empiricist approaches to the question of what it means to know.
3. Understand how logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion are similar and how they are different from one another.
4. Understand the scope and range of each of the traditional subject matters of philosophy and the scope and range of philosophy itself, that is, how philosophy compares with religion, science, and art.
5. Have some idea of the historical perspective of the traditional subject matters of philosophy. Here, the student will have a clear idea that philosophy does not happen in an historical vacuum, i.e., that it influences strongly and is strongly influenced by various historical factors both internal and external to philosophical endeavor.
6. Understand why philosophy, i.e. the love of wisdom, is significant to one’s life. Implicit in all philosophical discussions is the enhancement of critical thinking, fair play, and life long learning. In this sense every philosophy course, both core and non-core, is essentially connected to the Iona College mission and developing an understanding of the modern world.

Each of the assignments, together with course lectures and discussion, contribute to the accomplishment of each of these learning goals.