

COURSE INFORMATION

Texas A&M University: Fall 2016
Department of Philosophy
Course: PHIL371: Philosophy and/in/of/as Literature
Time: T/Th 2:20-3:35pm
Location: YMCA 109

CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor: Amir R Jaima
Office Location: YMCA 415
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs, by appointment:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"Philosophical analysis of the major recurrent themes in world literature including fate, the meaning of tragedy, death, odyssey, good and evil, time and eternity, hope and salvation; works selected from a variety of cultures and historical periods." (TAMU course catalog)

In order to gain insight and perspective on the question, "What is the relationship between philosophy and literature?" we will examine the various ways in which they relate vis-à-vis the four most common connecting words: Of, And, In, and As. We will read texts that seem most at home, so to speak, when read through the lens of one manner of relating or another. Furthermore, students will produce texts that relate literature to philosophy in a variety of ways, in order to evaluate the question from more than one methodological stance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will become familiar with philosophical and literary texts from various genres and cultural traditions that pose philosophical questions.
- Students will identify and evaluate rhetorical strategies and patterns of reasoning employed in these texts.
- Students will generate their own good philosophical questions, and explore strategies and techniques for answering their questions persuasively.

TEXTS*:

Required:

- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus Pub./R. Pullins Co., 2006. ISBN: 978-1585101870
- Calvino, Italo. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*. Everyman's Library, 1993. ISBN: 978-1857151381
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor, and Anne Fremantle. *The Grand Inquisitor*. Revised ed. edition. Bloomsbury Academic, 1981. ISBN: 978-0804461252
- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from the Underground*. Watchmaker Publishing, 2010. Print. ISBN: 978-1603863490
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. Mariner Books. ISBN: 978-0156091800
- Plato. *Plato Symposium*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1989. ISBN: 978-0872200760
- Sade, Marquis de, Richard Seaver, and Austryn Wainhouse. *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*. New York: Grove Press, 1990. ISBN: 978-0802132185
- All other texts will be available through eCampus.

EVALUATION & COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation: 10%

Active participation includes (but is not limited to): keeping up with the assigned reading, asking questions and sharing comments/criticisms, listening attentively, and responding to your classmates' questions and comments.

Reading Responses: 15%

Each week, students should pose two questions that relate to the reading for that week, and attempt to answer one of those questions in approximately ~400-words. Bring a hard-copy of your reading response and questions to the Tuesday class. You are expected to do 8 responses over the course of the semester.

Essay #1: Secondary Lit: 20%

Each student will write one ~1000-word essay (~3-4 pages) engaging a work of secondary "philosophical" literature.

Essay #2: Book Review: 20%

Each student will select a work of literature and write a critical review. Approx. ~1000 words. NB: Critical, in the philosophical sense, does not necessarily mean "negative;" it does not necessarily imply *criticism*, though it may include criticism.

Essay #3: Short Story: 20%

Students will write a short story (~3000-word /10 pages) on a philosophical theme of your choosing.

Final Essay: 15%

Each student will write a ~1500-word essay on a topic of your choosing, subject to professor approval. This essay will be due on the day and time of the Final.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

DATE			TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENTS	
wk	date	day				
1	8/30	T	Introduction			
	9/1	Th	Of/And/In/As	Danto, "Philosophy as/and/of Literature"		
Philosophy <u>OF</u> Literature						
2	9/6	T		Lamarque, PoL, ch.1&2	RR1	
	9/8	Th		Aristotle, Poetics		
3	9/13	T		Plato, Republic, X	RR2	
	9/15	Th		Sartre, "What is Literature?" Tolstoy, "What is Art?"		
4	9/20	T		Nussbaum, Love's Knowledge, Intro	RR3	
	9/22	Th	Library Visit			Abstract Due
Philosophy <u>AND</u> Literature						
5	9/27	T		Posner, "Against Ethical Criticism" Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly"	RR4	
	9/29	Th		Wharton, The Writing of Fiction, excerpts		
6	10/4	T		Forster, Aspects, chs 2&3	Essay 1 Due	
	10/6	Th		Forster, Aspects, chs 4&5		
7	10/11	T		Morrison, "Home" Morrison, Playing in the Dark, excerpts	RR5	
	10/13	Th		Sontag, "Against Interpretation"		
Philosophy <u>IN</u> Literature						
8	10/18	T		Gaarder, Sophie's World, excerpts	RR6	
	10/20	Th		Plato, Apology		
9	10/25	T		Dostoyevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"	Essay 2 Due	
	10/27	Th		Dostoyevsky, "Notes from the Underground"		
10	11/1	T		de Sade, "Philosophy in the Bedroom"	RR7	
	11/3	Th		Asimov, "Runaround"		
11	11/8	T		Bell, "The Racial Preference Licensing Act"	RR8	
	11/10	Th		Ellison, "Backwacking"		
Philosophy <u>AS</u> Literature						
12	11/15	T		Plato, Symposium	RR9	
	11/17	Th		Bell, "Space Traders"		
13	11/22	T	NO CLASS			Essay #3
	11/24	Th	Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS			
14	11/29	T		Calvino, If on a winter's night a traveler	RR10	
	12/1	Th		Borges, "The Library of Babel" Borges, "On Exactitude in Science"		
15	12/6	"Th"		Proust, Time Regained, excerpts	RR11	

A FEW PHILOSOPHY RESOURCES:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.iep.utm.edu/

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The University is clear and thorough on what constitutes an “excused absences” (see: <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). You are responsible for acquiring appropriate documentation substantiating any “excused absence.” Beyond that you are permitted one absence, for whatever reason. Additional absences will be negatively affect your grade, **2.5% points** per class off of your final grade.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

Please silence cell phones during class time. Unless otherwise indicated, please take notes using only “old” technologies, i.e. pen/pencil and paper. Furthermore, Google is not taking this class; you are.

LATE WORK POLICY:

Assignments must be turned in on time in order to be candidates for full credit. Late Papers (essay and short story) will be penalized **5% points per 24-hr period**. That said, if you *anticipate* needing more time in order to do your best work, for a compelling reason, I will consider granting an extension.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

http://library.tamu.edu/services/library_tutorials/academic_integrity/index.html

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637.

For additional information visit

<http://disability.tamu.edu/>

AGGIE HONOR CODE

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

<https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/>

WRITING CENTER

<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/>