Introduction to Philosophy (PHL 001)  
Pierce College  
Spring 2017 (section 0588)  
Tuesday & Thursday 2:15p-3:40p

Dr. Melanie McQuitty  
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Instructor Communication
• Instructor Office: FO 2604
• Office Hours: T 1-2:10p & 7-8:20p; TH 1-2:10p & 7-8:20p; by appt.
• Email: mcquittym@gmail.com: Please identify yourself by stating your full name and section. Please use an appropriate name for your address. In the subject line, please write: Philosophy 1 – Your Name. Practice proper grammar when writing emails. Think before you send. Remember that what you write in an email becomes part of a permanent record of interaction with me.
• Phone: (818) 710-3645 — Please do not call me. It is best to reach me via the Q&A Forum or email.

Course Description
Have you ever asked the question, Why me? You might not realize it, but this is a philosophical question, one which presupposes certain philosophical ideas about the nature of the universe. For instance, if you thought the universe was random and chaotic, rather than logical and rational, then you wouldn’t ask the question at all.

This course combines historical and contemporary sources as a way of introducing some of the main topics of philosophy as they have been dealt with by some of the most influential thinkers in Western history. We will follow a historical timeline starting in Ancient Greece and moving toward the twenty first century. We will probe basic philosophical themes, as well as issues at the intersection of philosophy, such as truth, values, and religion. In addition, the very notion of "philosophy" will be explored. For example: To what degree are we alone in terms of our philosophical thinking? What is the connection between our overall sense of reality and our ways of being in the world? What is the relation between one’s worldview and his or her understanding of morality? What is the difference between philosophical thinking
and scientific thinking? What is the relationship between philosophical and religious thought?

**Student Learning Outcomes**

My hope is that the student’s thinking will be transformed as a result of taking this class in the following ways:

1. Students will have the ability to formulate some of the core questions of philosophy and understand various philosophical responses to them in their historical and present context.

2. Students will have the ability to analyze and evaluate philosophical claims, arguments and theories using rigorous philosophical methods.

**Course Policies on Attendance, Participation, and Lateness**

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to come prepared. Coming to class allows you the benefit of the insight and experience of your peers and your professor, as well as adding your own voice to the discussion, all of which is essential to this course. It is imperative that anyone taking this course keeps up with the reading and attends class regularly. This course meets only once per week, so absences will be excused only under special circumstances. Excessive unexcused absences will result in “downsizing” of your participation grade, since if you are not present, you cannot participate. Please do not arrive to class late unless you give me advance notice. Unexcused lateness will not be tolerated and may result in downsizing your participation grade. The same applies to leaving early.

You are expected to have read ALL of the assigned material before class and be ready to participate in discussions and in-class activities. Always bring your book and/or handouts to class and be ready to refer to the reading. By participate I mean be present, be aware, be engaged, and be involved. Not doing so may have a negative impact on your participation grade. You need to be very honest with yourself at this point: Are you willing to take a class that will require 5-10 hours of work (in addition to class time) per week?

**Doing the Readings**

If you have not read philosophy before you may find the readings harder and stranger than most things you’ve read. Don’t take these difficulties personally; everyone finds philosophy hard to read at first, and a lot of it is very strange. On the other hand, once you get past the difficulties, the material may seem familiar. Philosophy deals with questions that people all over the world, adults and children, have been asking ever since there have been people. You have undoubtedly asked some of them yourself. What makes
philosophy difficult is the rigor with which philosophers approach these common questions.

Plan to read everything three times; once quickly, and a second time more carefully, before class; then once more after class to review what we talked about. Keep some written record of your thoughts, whether you do so in the margin of the text or in some other place. If you do this, and if you bring questions to class, you will probably find yourself both learning from and enjoying the class, and your grades on papers and the final should be good ones. If you miss lots of classes and do last minute cram reading, you are most likely not to have a clue, your grade will show it, and you won’t have gotten your money’s worth. The choice is yours.

Online resources do not take the place of carefully reading the assigned material. If you do not read carefully and instead get your answers and information from the Internet, your assignments will show it and passing the exams is unlikely.

**Work/Assignments/Grading**

- **Reading Questions (RQ)**—Essentially, you might treat these as “short answer” opportunities (i.e., a few sentences/paragraph). Although inevitably some questions will be more involved than others, these are basic comprehension questions. Be sure to answer the questions in your own words and in a way that demonstrates understanding of the material, rather than simply quoting the readings. Doing so will help you succeed on your tests and your final paper. Reading questions correspond to a particular reading(s) for a given week and are due at the beginning of each class. All answers should be typed, times new roman, 12” font, left justified.

- **Discussion Questions (DQ)**—Essentially, these are “short answer” opportunities (i.e., a few sentences/paragraph), forcing you to elaborate more on the ideas/concepts discussed by defending your justified opinion. Discussion questions correspond to a particular reading(s) for a given week and are due at the beginning of each class. All answers should be typed, times new roman, 12” font, left justified.

- **Reaction Papers (RP)**—Essentially, you might treat these as short essay opportunities, which will force you to elaborate more and provide reaction to some of the ideas/concepts discussed. Reaction Papers correspond to a particular reading and film for a given week and are due at the beginning of each class. Reaction Papers are 1 double-spaced, 12” font, left-justified page—no more, no less. Papers that do
not follow the guidelines will not be accepted. The point of these papers is for you to try your hand at essay writing in a shorter format while developing editing skills. There are 5 Reaction Papers due at various times throughout the course.

- **Exams**—There will be three in-class exams. Make-up exams are not an option unless there is proof of extreme, unavoidable circumstances such as a car accident, hospitalization, or imprisonment.

- **Participation/In-class Activities**—By participate I mean be present, be aware, be engaged, and be involved. There will also be several in class activities, such as a rough draft peer review, a debate, and a writing workshop.

**ATTENTION:** I do not accept emailed assignments under any circumstances. There are no exceptions to this rule, so please do not ask. Assignments handed in late will be downsized one level for every day late.

**Final Grade Breakdown**
Exams= 40%, Reaction Papers= 20%, Reading/Discussion Questions= 20%, Participation/Debate = 20%

A=90 or higher; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 or lower

**ATTENTION:** I do not discuss grades via email. If you'd like to discuss your grade, please see me in my office during office hours.

**Required Texts**

**Recommended Texts**


**Canvas:**
By enrolling in this course, you are enrolled in Pierce College’s online community, Canvas. I will use Canvas to post assignments, readings, and course
announcements from time to time. Canvas also provides us with an opportunity to discuss the readings more informally, raise questions, clear up confusion, and/or continue class discussions.

**Campus Resources**

Pierce College aims to create an environment where you are able to enjoy learning. Please take advantage of all the resources the College offers you. The following are some of these:

- **Center for Academic Success**: Provides basic reading, writing, and math assistance by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 9am-5:30pm, Fri. 10am-2pm. Pop in or call for an appointment: 818-719-6414.
- **Course Embedded Tutor**: A philosophy tutor has been assigned to this class and will be available for assistance during specified hours. The Philosophy tutor can be found in the Center for Academic Success.
- **Philosophy Workshops**: The Philosophy Department offers a series of workshops to help students succeed in their Philosophy courses. For more information, visit the Philosophy Workshops Canvas page.
- **Pierce College Library**: Offers a number of services to students, including a 1-unit (8-week) course on Internet Research Methods (Library Science 102).
- **Pierce Library Databases**: The Pierce library subscribes to a number of online databases, which includes academic journals. To access these databases, go to the library homepage and click the “online articles” tab. You may access these using your student ID and birthday month and day.
- **Online Writing Lab**: Provides help with proofreading, grammar skills, etc. and is available via Canvas.
- **Special Services**: Provides services to students with disabilities.
- **Financial Aid Office**: Helps pay for books and other college expenses. Visit the financial Aid Office online at http://www.piercecollege.edu/offices/finaid or in person at the College Services Building. Call the office at (818) 719-6428.
- **The Health Center**: Takes care of your health concerns and offers a wide range of services to students.

**Helpful Websites**
- **Study Tips:**
  - www.how-To-Study.com
  - www.studygs.net

- **Critical Thinking:**
  - Critical thinking Web: http://philosophy.hku.hk/think/

- **General Philosophy:**

- **Paper Style Guides:**
  - Easy bibliography formatting: http://www..easybib.com

**Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor: another person's ideas, words, or assistance. There are many forms of plagiarism: repeating another person's sentence as your own, adopting a particularly apt phrase as your own, paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own, or even presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were your own. All these forms of plagiarism are prohibited both by the traditional principles of academic honesty and by the regulations of Pierce College. The development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others is essential to intellectual growth. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating as a first offense is normally an F in the assignment in which the offense is committed. In such cases, the instructor will write a report to the College.

**Class Etiquette**

You are expected to treat one another with kindness and make any criticisms constructive. It’s basic courtesy to show up on time and refrain from eating & leaving the classroom (unless there is an emergency) during class time. Lateness will not be tolerated.

Disruptive behavior or any other activity that takes away from a professional classroom dynamic will also be dealt with immediately on the classroom and
college level. Each student should look at their handbook for the rules and regulations for classroom behavior and etiquette.

**Cell Phones**
This classroom is a cell phone-free zone. The use of cell phones in the classroom will not be tolerated (this includes sending and receiving text messages!). Please turn off all phones and other electronic devices before coming to class. Setting your phone to silent or vibrate is not sufficient. Sending or receiving text messages will not be tolerated and may result in your being dismissed from class that day.

**Disability Accommodations and Services**
Any student who has a need for an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Special Services on campus is available to assist with the coordination of reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Drop/Census Policy**
The No Penalty Drop Date is the day before Census, which is the end of the second week of classes. You must drop by the date or you will be assigned a ‘W’ for the class. You can only attempt a class three times. That includes withdrawals, incompletes, and substandard grades. Thus, ‘W’s count against your total attempts. Use your attempts wisely!

**Course Outline & Schedule**
Below is a tentative course outline, which may be revised as I see fit. It is your responsibility to check to the schedule regularly, so that you are aware of all reading and homework due dates, exams, and paper-related deadlines. All dates indicate the day the assignment is due.

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<th>Week 1 — Getting Started</th>
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<td>February 7 — Welcome, Introduction &amp; Expectations</td>
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<td>February 9 — What Is Philosophy?</td>
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**RQ:** p. 7 #1, 4

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**Week 2—Pre-Socratic Philosophy: The First Questions**

**February 14 — The Pre-Socratics**

James Fieser, “Pre-Socratic Philosophy,” handout available on Canvas, pp. 1-13 (stop at Parmenides).

**RQ:** handout pp. 28 #1-8

**February 16 — The Pre-Socratics**


**RQ:** handout pp. 28 #7-12

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**Week 3—Socrates & the Sophists: Questioning, Truth, & Persuasion**

**February 21 — Socrates & The Sophists**


**RQ:** p. 29 # 1, 3

**DQ:** p. 29 # 1

**February 23 — Socrates & The Value of Philosophy**

Film: *Dead Poet Society*, available on Canvas.

**RP#1:** As teachers, what do Socrates and Professor Keating have in common? Do you think that what they are teaching their students is either dangerous or valuable or neither? Defend your answer by providing support from the reading and film.

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**Week 4—Plato: Dualism, Idealism, & Knowledge**

**February 28 — Knowledge, Death, & Body vs. Soul**
Plato, “Phaedo,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 42-56.

RQ: p. 58 #1, 4  
DQ: p. 58 # 2

March 2 — Reality, Learning & The Soul


RP#2: Do you think The Matrix can be seen as a modern version of The Allegory of the Cave? Be sure to support your answer by referring directly to the reading and the film. What do The Matrix & The Allegory have in common? How are they different?

Week 5— Taking Care of Business

March 7 — Exam 1

March 9 — Writing Workshop

Week 6 (October 4)—Aristotle: Realism, Knowledge, and the Soul

March 14 — The Categories

Aristotle, “Categories,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 77-84.

RQ: p. 85# 3, 4  
DQ: p. 85 #2

March 16 — On The Soul


RQ: p. 67 #1, 4  
DQ: p. 67 #2

Week 7—Augustine: Free Will & the Problem of Evil

March 21— Augustine & Free Will
Augustine, “The Free Choice of the Will,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 136-146.

RQ: p. 147 #1, 4
DQ: p. 147 # 4, 5

March 23— The Problem of Evil

TV Episode: Southpark “Cartmanland,” available on Canvas.

RQ: (1) Explain the logical problem of evil as it refers to the Southpark episode? (2) What is the logical problem of evil in formal philosophical terms? (3) Which solution do you think best resolves the problem and why?

Week 8— Aquinas & Approaches to God

March 28— Aquinas, Knowledge, & God

Aquinas, “Summa Theologiae,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 119-124.
Aquinas, “Summa Theologiae,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 127-134.

RQ: p. 126 #1; p. 135 #1, 3
DQ: p. 135 #4

March 30— Is There God?

FILM: Religulous, available on Canvas.

RP#3: Do you think Religulous offers any support for Russel’s conclusions? Be sure to defend your answer by referring to the essay and the film. Some folks argue atheism requires also requires faith. Explain how Russell refutes this by referring to a specific fallacy by way of the teapot analogy. Is he successful? Why or why not?

Week 9 — Spring Break!

Week 10 — Taking Care of Business
April 11 — Exam 2

April 13 — Film: Waking Life

Week 11— Descartes: Rationalism & Cartesian Dualism

April 18— Descartes’ Meditations

Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, Meditation 1, pp. 176-188.

RQ: p. 189 #1, 2, 3
DQ: p. 189 #1

April 20 — Descartes Meditations (continued)

RQ: p. 189 # 4, 5
DQ: p. 189 #2

RP#4: Explain how the main character’s dilemma is related to Meditation 1? How would Descartes attempt to resolve this dilemma by referring to Meditations 2 and 3? Does Descartes adequately resolves the dilemma? Support your answer by referring to the reading and the film.

Week 12— Hume: Empiricism & The Senses

April 25— Hume’s Empiricism


RQ: p. 221 #1, 2, 3

April 27— Hume’s Empiricism (continued)

RQ: p. 221 #4, 5
DQ: p. 221 #3, 5

Week 13— Kant: Knowledge, Reason, & the Senses

May 2— Kant’s Transcendental Idealism
**Kant, “Critique of Pure Reason,” from Introduction to Philosophical Thought, pp. 251-264.**

**RQ:** p. 265 #2, 3, 5

**May 4— Kant’s Transcendental Idealism (continued)**

**DQ:** p. 265 # 1, 3

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**Week 14— Nietzsche: Perspectivism, Anti-Realism, & ‘God Is Dead’**

**May 9— Nietzsche on Truth & Reality**


**RQ (handout):** (1) According to Nietzsche, what is the difference between truth and lies? (2) Provide one quote from the essay that sums up how Nietzsche’s philosophy be seen as a critique of the history of Philosophy?

**May 11— God Is Dead & The Ubermunch**

Nietzsche, “Zarathustra’s Prologue,” handout posted on Canvas.

**RQ:** (1) “God Is Dead” is a metaphor. Explain what Nietzsche is telling us with this metaphor. (2) How does the “Superman” replace God as the meaning of existence?

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**Week 15— Sartre: Existential Freedom & Responsibility**

**May 16— Sartre’s Existentialism**

Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” posted on Canvas.

**RQ (handout):** (1) According to Sartre, what is existentialism? (2) What cue does Sartre’s take from Nietzsche’s metaphor, “God Is Dead”? (3) How is the relationship between freedom and responsibility essential to understanding existentialism?

**May 18— Sartre’s Existentialism**

**Film: Ex Machina, available on Canvas.**

**RQ#5:** How does the role of consciousness speak to both our existential freedom and our humanity. Does the main character in *Ex Machina* posses
the ability to be an existentially free being and, thus, human? Support your answer by referring directly to the essay and the film.

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<td>May 23— <em>In-class Activity: Debate preparation</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25— <em>In-class Activity: Debate</em></td>
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| Week 17—*Final Exam: Tuesday, June 30 @ 2:15p-4:15p* |