

Phil 3130: American Philosophy — Spring 2022

<i>Professor:</i>	Daniel Campos
<i>Office:</i>	3311 Boylan
<i>Virtual Office Hours:</i>	W 1:00 - 2:00 PM or by appointment
<i>Email:</i>	dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu
<i>Course times:</i>	MW 9:30 - 10:45 AM
<i>Classroom:</i>	TBA
<i>Course site:</i>	Blackboard through CUNY

Course Description: In this course we will examine a variety of American approaches to classical philosophical topics, including (a) the origin and purpose of the natural world, (b) the nature and place of human beings within it, as influenced by society, (c) the sources and types of human knowledge, (d) the pursuit of the good life in natural and social environments; (e) the nature of the political community, and (f) the origin, purpose, and legitimacy of social relations and institutions such as freedom, slavery, and democracy.

We will study a plurality of views, both of those figures who are usually considered “classical American philosophers” and of other philosophers from the Native-, African-, Latino-, and Asian-American traditions. By the end of the course, the student should be able to reflect on the distinctive characters and mutual influences of these views and to articulate a personal position on whether there indeed exist “American philosophies.”

The format of the class will be lecture-discussion; students are encouraged to participate and to ask questions at any point.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout the course students will develop the following skills:

1. Analytic:
 - a) Ability to identify arguments and distinguish premises and conclusions
 - b) Ability to formulate an argument in support or in opposition to a claim
 - c) Ability to evaluate (by providing reasons) the validity and/or cogency of an argument
 - d) Ability to apply an argument to a practical case
2. Interpretive:
 - a) Ability to explain a selection from a philosophical text
 - b) Ability to analyze and evaluate a selection from a philosophical text
 - c) Ability to provide a reasoned response to a selection from a philosophical text, a philosophical theory, issue, or argument

Texts and Materials

This will be an Open Education Resource course, so all texts and audiovisual materials will be provided.

Course requirements and grades

The main requirement is the commitment to read, discuss and write every week. The instructor will provide guiding philosophical questions for reflection and learning. Students must be committed to think about them, read modern philosophers' investigation of these questions, and write and discuss their own, reasoned views.

Self-introduction — 2%

Discussion board (8 entries, each worth 6%) — 48%

Short essays (3 due) — 45%

Professional demeanor — 5%.

Discussion board posts and essays will respond to a question prompt provided by the instructor. They must be completed or submitted in Blackboard within the time frame allowed.

Discussion board posts will be short assignments, between 100 and 300 words.

Short essays will be somewhat more involved assignments. They will typically be between 2 and 3 pages (12-point font, double-spaced, regular margins). But they will require careful thinking about the topics we will be discussing.

The most important habit you need to succeed in this course is to read, think, and write regularly, with discipline. Notice there are no very large assignments or exams. Rather, this course requires that you work regularly. The point is for you to learn to construct your own knowledge on a continuous, steady pace.

Instructions and rubrics for all assignments will be provided in Blackboard. For convenience, the grading rubric for essays, and the grading scale, is provided at the end of this document.

Communication

You can find more information about me, including the ways to contact me, by clicking on the **Contacts** tab on the left side menu. The best way to reach me is by email to dcampos@brooklyn.cuny.edu. Please include your name and course in the subject line. I respond within 36 hours on weekdays.

Technology Needs

You will need a computer or laptop with high-speed internet access and speakers. In addition- the computer needs to be able to play videos as I have assigned some video clips to watch. You will need a web browser (Mozilla, Chrome, etc.), Microsoft Word or a similar text editor, and a PDF reader such as Adobe Acrobat. If you do not have access to these – please contact me, and we can make alternate arrangements.

Procedures

The Blackboard course site will be main hub for our course. On the course menu you will find:

- **Announcements**
- **Contacts**
- **Syllabus** with the **Course Schedule**
- **Discussions** where you will submit your posts and reply to your classmates,
- **Assignments** where you will upload your essays. Files must be labeled with your first and last name and essay number; for example, DanielCampos1. No essays will be accepted by email or any other means.
- **Weekly Folders** inside which you will find a folder with the Activities, Materials, and Assignments for each week of the semester.
- **Blackboard Help** to find Q&A and assistance on technical matters related to the use of Blackboard.

Most of the course will be asynchronous. This means that you will mostly work at your chosen time and at your own pace. But note that there are weekly time frames and deadlines for Activities, so you must work at a steady pace every week.

Some of the course will be synchronous. This means that we will meet virtually on select dates during the class time originally scheduled by the Registrar, using Zoom. We will discuss central aspects of our philosophical questions and main readings for the week. You will find dates for meetings in the Course Schedule, so you can plan your calendar now. Attendance is not required, but it will be to your advantage, as it may help you to understand the materials, prepare for the writing assignments, and interact with each other and with me.

Virtual office hours will not substitute class meetings. They are meant for you to ask specific questions about class content, assignments, and so on.

Advice

The most important habit to succeed in his course will be to read and write every week. It will help you if you can establish a work routine.

Class Netiquette

Brooklyn College students are professionals in training. Accordingly, they should approach class sessions as professional meetings. Fully professional demeanor will be expected in the virtual classroom. This demeanor includes coming prepared to class sessions, arriving on time, staying until the end unless there is a compelling reason to leave, contributing to the intellectual objectives of the session, and so on. If there are reasons why you cannot attend virtual classes, communicate them to the instructor. Make sure that you turn in all work on time. Evaluation of professional demeanor will be part of the grade.

Netiquette is etiquette on the internet. You can find Brooklyn College's Guide [here](#).

Remember that the online classroom is still a classroom and it is up to each of us to foster a positive learning environment for everyone. Treat others how you want to be treated. Be kind, be patient, have compassion. We are all adults who want to do our best. How a person behaves online reflects one's willingness to learn, seriousness and motivation both as a student and as an individual

Make-up policy

All writing assignments must be completed on the scheduled date. No make-ups will be permitted. An exception will be made only in the case of a medical or personal emergency. In order to be granted an extension due to a valid excuse, the student must request it in advance and turn in a draft of the project on the due date.

Academic Integrity

"Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion, as provided herein." -- CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity, adopted by the Board of Trustees 6/28/2004. Please go to <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies/> for further information about: CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity; BC Procedures for Implementing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity; Flow Chart of the BC Procedures for Implementing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity.

Special Circumstances

If you have any special circumstance such as a learning disability, religious, or military obligation that could affect your participation in this course at any time throughout this semester, it is your responsibility to bring it to your instructor's attention and review the appropriate documentation and procedures for each circumstance.

Additional Assistance

You can find instructions to seek assistance at the following links:

1. [Learning Center](#)
2. [Center for Student Disability Services](#)
3. [Health and Wellness](#)

The Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS) will be working remotely for the fall semester. In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with CSDS. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to schedule an interview by calling (718) 951-5538 or emailing testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu. If you have already registered with CSDS, email Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu or testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu to ensure the accommodation email is sent to your professor.

Code of Conduct

Read [Brooklyn College Policies](#)

Grading Rubric for Essays

Students will receive writing prompts and instructions for each of the assigned essays at least two weeks in advance of the due date.

All essays respond to direct question(s) given in the instructions. The main criteria for assessing philosophical essays will be:

- (1) The essay states a clear thesis that addresses the question or issue directly.
- (2) The essay presents a well-structured argument supporting the main thesis in such a way that:

The premises to support the conclusion [thesis] are clearly stated.

Good reasons are provided to support the premises.

The premises do serve to support the thesis (conclusion) according to a well-organized logical pattern (e.g. deduction, induction, analogy).

- (3) The essay demonstrates a thoughtful command of the relevant readings from the course, and relevant interpretations of these readings serve to support the argument(s).

- (4) The essay demonstrates good writing style and correct grammar and spelling.

Grading Scale

A	>94	[Outstanding]
A-	90 – 94	[Excellent]
B+	88 - 90	
B	83 – 88	[Very good]
B-	80 – 83	
C+	78 – 80	[Good]
C	73 – 88	
C-	70 – 73	[Satisfactory]
D+	68 - 70	
D	63 – 68	
D-	60 – 63	[Dissatisfactory]
F	< 60	[Fails to meet minimum standards]