Phil 11: Intro to Philosophy
Fall, 2026

Tuesday and Thursday, 5:20–6:55pm, Kresge Acad 3105

Contact Information

Professor: Abe Stone (abestone@ucsc.edu)[1]
Office: Cowell Annex A-106
Phone (office): 459-5723
Website: https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses
Zoom class meeting: here
Zoom office hours: Mon. 1:30–2:30pm; Wed. 11:00am-12:00pm (or by appointment)

Teaching Assistants:
Michael Armen (marmen@ucsc.edu)
Karl Fisse (kfisse@ucsc.edu)
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[1]Please feel free to contact the instructor and/or your TA with questions about the substance of the course (philosophical issues, questions about the meaning of the texts, questions about paper topics, etc.). On administrative issues (grades, lateness/extensions, due dates, section times, etc.) please try your TA first.

Discussion Sections

Section	Time	Place	TA
01A	Mon. 8:00–9:05am	J Baskin Engr 165	Terri
01B	Mon. 7:10–8:15pm	J Baskin Engr 372	Terri
01C	Tue. 7:10–8:15pm	Kresge Acad 3301	Michael
01D	Wed. 8:00–9:05am	Cowell Com 134	Michael
01E	Wed. 7:10–8:15pm	Steven Acad 152	Karl
01F	Thu. 7:10–8:15pm	Kresge Acad 3301	Rini
01G	Fri. 8:00–9:05am	PhysSciences 136	Rini
01H	Fri. 12:00–1:50pm	PhysSciences 136	Karl
01I	Fri. 2:40–3:45pm	Earth&Marine B214	Tate
01J	Fri. 4:00–5:05pm	Earth&Marine B214	Tate

Course Description

Philosophy is unlike many other disciplines in that it is not at all obvious how it should be introduced. This course will essentially be a course about Socrates (c. 469—399 BC), the ancient Athenian philosopher who is in a certain way the intellectual ancestor of all later philosophers. One of the things we will need to think about as we go on is how, and to what extent, that could be considered an introduction to the subject.

Modality: I will lecture in person in our assigned classroom at the scheduled times. But I will also live-stream every lecture over Zoom, and make a recording of every lecture available on YouTube.

Course Requirements

Participation in discussion sections (good participation will be possible grounds for raising course grade, especially if it is on a borderline).

Beginning with the day of the fourth class session, there will be eleven short assignments (two in some weeks, one in other weeks, and none in still other weeks), to be done on-line via the "Quizzes" section of the course on Canvas. Each assignment consists of a single multiple choice question designed to help you focus on details of the reading, and a single short answer question, which can be answered via two routes (AI and independent), as explained in the

instructions for each assignment.[2] In the later part of the course, some of the assignments will be designed to prepare you to write the final assignment. All of these short assignments together will be worth 60% of the course grade, based on a point score which will be translated into a letter grade on a curve to be determined. Note that, although Canvas will be set up to accept late submission of these short assignments, no credit can be given for a multiple choice question after the correct answer has been made public.

A final assignment is due, as an attachment via the "Assignments" tool on Canvas, on Wednesday, December 9, and will count for 40% of the grade. Please submit it in MSWord or a format easily convertible to MSWord. This assignment, too, can be fulfilled in two different ways: as an AI dialogue or as a traditional paper. See the instructions for details.

You can find answers to some commonly asked questions about my assignments and grading in my FAQ (`https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses/faq.html`).

AI policy: I encourage the use of AI assistance with proper caution (i.e., keeping in mind that current AI is often wrong). Moreover, all the assignments in this class can optionally be done in a way that requires use of AI. Beyond that required use: you may use AI assistance in any way that would not constitute cheating if you used a human for the same thing. Similarly, you should cite the AI in cases where you would cite a human. If in doubt, feel free to ask me for clarification.

All assignments are due by 11:55pm on the due date.

Texts

Plato, *Euthydemus*, tr. Mary P. Nichols and Gregory A. McBrayer (Focus/R. Pullins, 2010) (ISBN: 978-1585103058)).

[2]The AI version of the assignment is based on Robert Smithson and Adam Zweber, "Reviving the Philosophical Dialogue with Large Language Models," *Teaching Philosophy* 47 (2024): 143–171, which can be freely downloaded here. Smithson and Zweber's ideas required some significant changes for use in this course, however, and they should not be held responsible for my version. Thanks to Tate Krogstad, who is himself doing interesting work on the use of AI in philosophy assignments, for drawing my attention to this article.

Plato, *Meno*, tr. George Anastaplo and Laurence Berns (Focus/R. Pullins, 1998) (ISBN: 978-0941051712).

Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, eds., *Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito and Aristophanes' Clouds* (Cornell, 1998) (ISBN: 978-0801485749).

The above texts can be ordered and/or purchased as e-books at the UCSC Bookstore (Akademos), and are also on reserve at McHenry.

Readings

Thursday, September 24: (no reading, first class). (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, September 29: Diogenes Laertius, "Prologue," "Thales," and "Anaxagoras,"reading (PDF) from *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, October 1: Plato, *Ion*. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, October 6: Plato, *Euthyphro* (from *Four Texts on Socrates*: note that this is different from the *Euthydemus*, which we'll be reading later). Short assignment 1 due. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, October 8: Aristophanes, *Clouds* (from *Four Texts on Socrates*), lines 1–813. Short assignment 2 due. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Tuesday, October 13: Aristophanes, *Clouds*, lines 814–end. Short assignment 3 due. (Lecture on YouTube.)

Thursday, October 15: Plato, *Apology* (from *Four Texts on Socrates*), 17a–35d. Short assignment 4 due.

Tuesday, October 20: Plato, *Apology*, 35d–end. Short assignment 5 due.

Thursday, October 22: Plato, *Meno*, 70a–80b. Short assignment 6 due.

Tuesday, October 27: Plato, *Meno*, 80b–89c. Short assignment 7 due.

Thursday, October 29: Plato, *Meno*, 89c–96d. Short assignment 8 due.

Tuesday, November 3: Plato, *Meno*, 96d–end; *Gorgias*, 515a–522c.

Thursday, November 5: Plato, *Euthydemus*, 271a–282e. Short assignment 9 due.

Tuesday, November 10: Plato, *Euthydemus*, 283a–293a, through the end of Socrates' first speech ("... the rest of our lives beautifully").

Thursday, November 12: Plato, *Euthydemus*, 293a–end. Short assignment 10 due.

Tuesday, November 17: Plato, *Charmides*, 163e–175d.

Thursday, November 19: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.1–4, 1.7, 1.13, 2.6–7; *Politics*, 1.1 and 1.13. Short assignment 11 due.

Tuesday, November 24: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.5, 1.8, 4.5, 4.7; 10.6–8.

Thursday, November 26: **No class (Thanksgiving)**

Tuesday, December 1: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.3–7, 6.12–13; *Metaphysics*, 1.1–2, 4.1–2.

Thursday, December 3: Diogenes Laertius, "Diogenes," from *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*.

Wednesday, December 9: **final assignment due**.