

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The City University of New York

Department of Social Science

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY 100-1701

Sat 5:30 pm – 815 pm

Spring 2020

3 credit hours

BASIC INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Maksim Vak

Office Hours: Office hours will be maintained using Zoom. Please find below the time for office hours and the links to get on Zoom to contact me. You may install a Zoom app, but you are not required to do it. Your browser should be enough. If you will encounter any problem email me or call me.

M: 3:00 pm- 4:00 pm (Zoom:

[https://liu.zoom.us/j/616177475?pwd=eGdEVDIEeWozQjZRVGhhdzhRdkpMdz09"\);](https://liu.zoom.us/j/616177475?pwd=eGdEVDIEeWozQjZRVGhhdzhRdkpMdz09)

Th.3:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Zoom:

[https://liu.zoom.us/j/699285215?pwd=citDVWFic0FEOGJnQlZtTnpRS0R1dz09"\);](https://liu.zoom.us/j/699285215?pwd=citDVWFic0FEOGJnQlZtTnpRS0R1dz09)

Sa: 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm. (Zoom:

[https://liu.zoom.us/j/941445491?pwd=MU9wV0phREtWNDRDNzIRdi9La1NQdz09"\);](https://liu.zoom.us/j/941445491?pwd=MU9wV0phREtWNDRDNzIRdi9La1NQdz09)

E-mail: mvak@bmcc.cuny.edu

Phone: 917-557-1131

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An unexamined life is not worth living

- Socrates

This course is an introduction to the methods and problems of philosophical inquiry. Students will be initiated into the major philosophical problems and theories from the ancients to the philosophers of our time - ethics, metaphysical relativism, the paradoxical relationship of happiness and goodness, human nature, epistemology, rationalism, empiricism, transcendentalism, freedom of the will, will to power, etc.

Philosophy begins with the recognition of a dissatisfaction with a situation and the intention to ameliorate wrongs and harmonize the world. In our classes we will trace some beginnings of philosophy from Plato to our contemporary time. We will explore the reasons for dissatisfactions and examine the solutions offered by different philosophical schools. As we inquire into philosophical responses to dissatisfaction with world, we will address seminal values such as morality, God, truth, knowledge, as well as their origins and their influences. We will also try to see how we are mis-formed by unexamined opinions and values, and ask what might be an appropriate response to this mis-formation. We will be led in our studies by the Socratic demand for self-examination in its many modifications throughout history.

Course Student Learning Outcomes	Measurements (means of assessment for student learning outcomes listed in first column)
1. Students will be able to identify major philosophical problems and the methods of dealing with them.	1. Responses and paper.
2. Students will be able to read and interpret basic philosophical texts.	2. Paper and board discussions.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate the "philosophical attitude" as a form of resistance to any kind of dogmatism..	3. Paper and board discussions.
4. Students will improve their critical thinking and cognitive skills.	4. Responses and paper.
5. Students will examine the origin of the values that determine their judgments and actions; to identify their own prejudices; and to be able to make informed choices.	5. Responses and papers.

General Education Learning Outcomes	Measurements (means of assessment for general education goals listed in first column)
Communication Skills- Students will be able to write, read, listen and speak critically and effectively.	Responses and board discussion.
Scientific Reasoning- Students will be able to apply the concepts and methods of the natural sciences.	Responses and paper.
Social and Behavioral Sciences- Students will be able to apply the concepts and methods of the social sciences.	Paper and board discussions.
Arts & Humanities- Students will be able to develop knowledge and understanding of the arts and literature through critiques of works of art, music, theatre or literature.	Responses, paper, board discussions.
Values- Students will be able to make informed choices based on an understanding of personal values, human diversity, multicultural awareness and social responsibility.	Board discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS and Videos:

Readings, Syllabus, Lectures notes and homework assignments are posted on CUNY Academic Commons: <https://phi1001701.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>. The Links to the videos of the Lectures will be posted weekly on CUNY Academic Commons on Saturdays by 10:00 am. They also will be emailed using your BMCC emails and your preferred emails (for those of you who let me know their preferred emails). If you will have any problems with watching these videos, contact me asap.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS – the changes due the conversion

1. Quizzes: These were supposed to be 35% of your grade. We had one quiz – it will be counted as 12% of your grade. There will be no more quizzes.
2. Students are required to write 1 short essay. The paper should be approximately 4-5 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. The paper must be uploaded to BlackBoard. It stays the same – 20 % of your final grade
4. You were asked to write in class 4 short responses to questions referring to one of the problems discussed in class. Now you will be required to write responses each week in response to the problem discussed in class. The questions will be posted weekly on Saturday by 11:59 am, starting March 21st. You will have to post your responses weekly on Wednesday by 11:59 pm, starting March 25. The questions for responses will be posted on BlackBoard. Your responses to these questions should be posted on BlackBoard. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade.
5. A new credit assignment. Each week students should contribute to the discussion of the class materials by posting one question and one answer to the fellow students' questions on the discussion thread. The questions and responses will be posted on <https://openlab.bmcc.cuny.edu/phi-100-intro-to-philosophy-vak-sp-2020/>
6. I will take in consideration your class participation preceding the conversion to distance learning. It will be reduced from 20% to 8%

GRADING

For the period before conversion:

Quiz:	12%
Participation:	8 %

After conversion:

Papers:	20 %
Responses:	40%
Board Discussion	20%

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE FOR THE REST OF THE SEMESTER

Schedule may be subject to change. All changes will be posted on CUNY Academic Commons <https://phi1001701.common.gc.cuny.edu/>. All readings are posted on CUNY Academic Commons: <https://phi1001701.common.gc.cuny.edu/>.

March 21	Moving from Medieval to Modern. Method of doubt as a way to certainty. Criteria of truth. Nature of the human mind.	Selections from Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> .
March 28 Apr 4 Apr 11	Proofs of God's existence. Problem of infinity. Descartes' dualism: <i>Res cogitans and Res extensa</i> . Rationalism: A new ideal for Knowledge.	Selections from Descartes' <i>Meditations</i>
Apr 18	Kant's Transcendental Idealism. Problem of the free will. The Categorical Imperative.	Selections from Kant
Apr 25,	Kant's Transcendental Idealism. Problem of the free will. The Categorical Imperative.	Selection from Kant.
May 2,	Nietzsche: Genealogy of values. Master, Priest and Slave moralities Overcoming of Plato-Christian model of thinking. Nihilism as a way of western being and thinking. Overcoming of nihilism. Antinatural character of morality and traditional values. Overcoming of platonic dualism.	Selections from Nietzsche's <i>On Genealogy of Morals</i> .
May 2	The death of God. Revaluation of all values. The problem of Socrates. Dialectical thinking as revengeful thinking (the problem of <i>ressentiment</i>). Antinatural character of morality and of traditional values. Errors of reason.	Selections from Nietzsche's <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>

May 9	Overcoming of Plato-Christian dualistic model of thinking. <i>Nihilism</i> as a way of western being and thinking. Overcoming of nihilism – <i>Amor fati</i> . Antinatural character of morality and traditional values.	Selections from Nietzsche's <i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
May 16	Review. The final paper is due.	

BMCC is committed to the health and well-being of all students. It is common for everyone to seek assistance at some point in their life, and there are free and confidential services on campus that can help.

Single Stop www.bmcc.cuny.edu/singlestop, room S230, 212-220-8195. If you are having problems with food or housing insecurity, finances, health insurance or anything else that might get in the way of your studies at BMCC, come by the Single Stop Office for advice and assistance. Assistance is also available through the Office of Student Affairs, S350, 212-220- 8130.

Counseling Center www.bmcc.cuny.edu/counseling, room S343, 212-220-8140. Counselors assist students in addressing psychological and adjustment issues (i.e., depression, anxiety, and relationships) and can help with stress, time management and more. Counselors are available for walk-in visits.

Office of Compliance and Diversity www.bmcc.cuny.edu/aac, room S701, 212-220-1236. BMCC is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment free of unlawful discrimination/harassment, including sexual harassment, where all students are treated fairly. For information about BMCC's policies and resources, or to request additional assistance in this area, please visit or call the office, or email olevy@bmcc.cuny.edu, or twade@bmcc.cuny.edu. If you need immediate assistance, please contact BMCC Public safety at 212-220-8080.

Office of Accessibility www.bmcc.cuny.edu/accessibility, room N360 (accessible entrance: 77 Harrison Street), 212-220-8180. This office collaborates with students who have documented disabilities, to coordinate support services, reasonable accommodations, and programs that enable equal access to education and college life. To request an accommodation due to a documented disability, please visit or call the office.

BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC's Web site, www.bmcc.cuny.edu. For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).

