

Philosophy 104, Section 02
Personal Values
California State University, Chico, Fall Semester 2009
Tuesday / Thursday 12:30-1:45 Plumas 102

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THE TOPIC

The questions addressed in this course include the following: How should we live? What's right, what's wrong, and what's the difference? Is there anything that is valuable in itself, and if so, what is it? Do I have reason to be concerned with anyone's well-being other than my own? What do we owe to other people, and what do they owe to us? When should a person do what is expected of her, and when should she say no? What constitutes a fulfilling or meaningful life for a human being?

These are *philosophical* questions and in discussing them, we take a distinctively philosophical approach, centered on (i) close reading of ethical and philosophical texts, and (ii) discussions led by the professor, with the participation of the entire group. Because this is a philosophy course, a level of active effort and participation is demanded of the students. They are not merely passive receivers of information; rather, they are autonomous, self-directed colleagues engaged in a joint search for knowledge and understanding.

Philosophy 104 is an approved General Education Course in Area C3.

COURSE GOALS

1. To learn to read, interpret, and understand philosophical texts.
2. To develop critical thinking skills in connection with questions of ethics and value.
3. To increase familiarity with the ethical thought of some of the most important philosophical figures in the Western tradition.
4. To improve one's ability to discuss questions of value with others in a manner that is intelligent and critical, while at the same time respectful and tolerant.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING THE FURLOUGH SITUATION:

Due to extraordinary budget cuts to the CSU, fees to students have been increased 32%, many sections have been cut, many class sizes have been increased, and faculty will be required to take nine (9) furlough days each semester. These furlough days will mean that I will be unable to include all elements of this class that I believe would provide the best educational experience. I will not be able to cover as much material as I ordinarily would, nor will I be able to provide the level of attention and response to student work that I would normally provide.

This situation is the unavoidable result of a dramatic cut to the CSU by the state after years of underfunding higher education in California, and the CSU system in particular.

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REQUIRED BOOKS

- (1) Ronald Dworkin. *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate*. Princeton University Press. \$16.95. ISBN 0691138729
- (2) Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*. (Thrift Edition) Dover Publications, 2003. \$1.50. ISBN 0486275639.
- (3) John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*. (Thrift Edition). Dover Publications, 2002. \$3.00. ISBN 0486421309.
- (4) Colin McGinn, *Moral Literacy, or How to Do the Right Thing*. Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.\$9.95. ISBN 0872201961.
- (5) Epictetus, *Handbook of Epictetus*. Hackett Publishing Company, 1983.\$4.95. ISBN 0915145693.
- (6) Peter Singer, *How Are We to Live? Ethics in an Age of Self-Interest*. Prometheus Books, 1995. \$23.98. ISBN 0879759666.
- (7) Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, or, Life in the Woods*. (Dover Thrift Editions) Dover Publications, 1995.\$3.50. ISBN 0486284956.
- (8) Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Four Dialogues*. (Dover Thrift Editions.) Dover Publications, 1992. \$2.50. ISBN 0486270661.

*****All books are available for purchase at Lyon Books (121 W. 5th St., Chico – next to the downtown Post Office.)*****

Make sure to bring to class whatever texts have been assigned for that particular class period.

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE

The final grade is determined as follows:

In class midterms: There will be three scheduled midterms, each worth **20%** of the overall grade.

Final exam: There will be a final exam during final exams week, worth **30%** of the overall grade.

Final paper: A final paper (6 double-spaced pages) will be due on the last day of classes, worth **10%** of the overall grade. (Instructions will be distributed later in the semester.)

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A Note on the Meaning of Letter Grades

An 'A' indicates outstanding work. A 'B' indicates above-average (*not* simply average) comprehension and effort. A 'C' is the average grade; it indicates that a student has achieved a reasonable level of comprehension of the course material (often a genuine accomplishment in philosophy courses.) A 'D' indicates that the student has met the minimal requirements for passing the course. An 'F' indicates that he or she has not.

General Education Cultural Events Requirement

California State University, Chico requires all students in Area C General Education courses to attend four cultural events. For each event, you are required to submit to me a *very brief* report (one paragraph is plenty) explaining how the event was relevant to the contents of the course. (Course related, live events are sponsored by the college and the community every semester.) GE event reports are not graded and there are no formal requirements for them. You should submit at least two to the instructor by the end of week ten, and have submitted all four by the last day of classes.

Policy Regarding Late Assignments

Note that the instructor will not under any circumstances accept a final paper or other written assignment after the due date. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that an acceptable version of the paper is ready to go *several days in advance* of the due date (so that if there is a computer failure, act of God, etc., the student will still have a paper to hand in, and not receive a zero).

Extra Credit Policy

There will be no opportunities for so-called "extra credit" in this course. Grades for the course are entirely determined by each student's comprehension of the material, as reflected by her performance on the quizzes, midterms, final exam, final paper, and her participation in class. Also, please note that except in cases of instructor error, **it is impossible to improve one's grade after the class is over and grades have been assigned.**

Examination Rescheduling Policy

If you must miss a scheduled examination (and have an adequate reason for doing so) you may ask the instructor **in advance** whether you can take it at another time. *If you miss a scheduled examination without prior authorized arrangement* you have missed the chance to take it and will receive a zero.

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A Word to the Wise: Why Bad Grades (Sometimes) Happen to Good People

Students should keep in mind that a grade reflects one thing and one thing only: the quality of the work submitted by that student *for that particular course*. The fact that a student does well in her *other* classes is not relevant; the fact that she is a very nice (or not nice) person, or that he *really needs* this grade in order to graduate, keep his scholarship or financial aid, etc., is not relevant at all. A grade is not an evaluation of a person's character or personality; nor is it an evaluation of what she does in her other courses, or what she could have done in this one under ideal conditions. Rather, one's final grade will reflect *the quality of the work actually submitted in order to complete the course*.

For this reason, personal circumstances, etc., are entirely irrelevant to the question of grading. A student who is having a difficult semester, for any of various reasons, might perform less well than he or she would have under other circumstances. Nevertheless, if the work she actually performs is of C quality, she will receive a C. Students, in other words, will be evaluated on the basis of the work they do, and not on the basis of the work they might have done under other, more favorable circumstances.

If a student should face extraordinarily difficult circumstances that prevent her from completing the course in a satisfactory manner (for instance, a serious accident or disruptive illness), the professor will be willing, should it be appropriate, to drop the student from the course without penalty. Under no circumstances, however, will the professor raise a student's grade in order to reflect his estimate of what that student might have done under better conditions. *Thus the only way to earn an A for this course is to submit work that merits an A.*

Academic Integrity Policy

The standards of academic honesty as set forth in the CSU, Chico University catalog are to be conformed to. **Cheating will result in a failing grade for the course, and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs for resolution. (Please note: there will be no exceptions to this policy. Please don't ask.) In particular, plagiarism will not be tolerated.** Students should understand that plagiarism includes *any* uncredited use of another person's words, ideas, or intellectual work, or any attempt to claim as one's own the product of someone else's intellectual labor. This means that assignments must be written in your own words, and that any use of other people's words or ideas *must* be footnoted and cited. The attached material, "What is Plagiarism and Why is it Important?", provides more information and assistance in distinguishing legitimate usage from plagiarism.

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Your Primary Responsibility: The Assigned Readings

Each student should understand that her main task in this course is to understand the assigned texts. The topics are difficult, the texts are often difficult. Therefore, you will have to put a lot of work into this task.

The general idea is that students are to come to class prepared. Prepared for what? Prepared to understand what goes on, and to take part in the discussion. This will require, at a bare minimum, that the student has *carefully read* the assigned readings. Make notes (i) summarizing what you understand, and (ii) noting what you do not (yet) understand. Also, make a note of any words whose meanings you do not know and look them up in a dictionary. *Write down the definitions.* After completing the initial reading, take a short break: go for a walk or bike ride, sit in the bath, or put some music on and mull over the ideas that have been presented to you. Ask yourself what you do and do not understand. Then return to the text and seek out the difficult passages; or, even better, read the whole thing again. **Philosophy is hard and a philosophical text rarely yields up its full meaning on the first attempt. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have not only looked over the assigned readings, but have made a significant and genuine effort to understand their meanings. You should *always* be able to answer basic, straightforward questions about the readings. Moreover, being able to do this is the *minimal* requirement for having adequately completed the reading assignment in question.**

Disability Policy

Please let the professor know if you have a disability and have course-related accommodation needs. It is your right, in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make such requests.

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CLASSROOM CONDUCT: THE CLASSROOM AS FREE SPEECH ZONE

It is important that students feel free to express or bring up any idea that they may wish to discuss. It does not matter if you are sure that it is true, if you think it might be true but is likely false, if you think it might offend somebody – what matters is whether you think it worth discussing. The point of philosophy is to try to get at the truth (or as near the truth as possible) and that will only happen if people are committed to free and open discussion. The philosophy classroom, then, ought to be a free speech zone—with one important exception, which is discussed in the box below.

Note what the phrase “free speech zone” *does* mean and what it *does not* mean. It *does* mean that students should be free in, and should not be prevented from, introducing and discussing any idea they think is worthy of discussion—even ideas that might strike some people as offensive.¹ It does *not* mean that everything that is said must be “respected” or treated (by the professor or by other students) as true or reasonable. (One can respect a person’s right to speak freely and truly while not respecting what is being said. Indeed, if we *prevent* others from disagreeing, or even from strongly disagreeing, then we are violating *their* right to free speech.) And it does *not* mean that there are no standards, or that it does not matter what is said in the classroom since, after all, “anything goes.” Some contributions are better—more reasonable, more articulate, better thought out—than others, and in the context of the classroom, students should always be trying to think and speak at the highest level possible.

The one exception to the free speech rule

The one exception to the free speech rule is this: **no one, student or professor, may address another individual in an abusive manner or launch a personal attack.** At the risk of repetition: you may criticize the *ideas* of other people as strenuously as you like – indeed, we should all feel *obligated* to criticize all ideas as strenuously as we can – but at the same time, the people who voice the ideas must always be treated with respect. This is a fine but usually clear line; if the professor feels it is being crossed, he will say so, and students are expected to defer to his judgment on this matter. (Of course, if you feel you are being personally attacked and the professor doesn’t say anything, then you should speak up. But don’t respond by attacking the attacker.)

Self-criticism

As mentioned above, students are encouraged to be critical of the ideas discussed. The hardest, but perhaps most important, part of this is being critical of one’s *own* ideas. The talent for being self-critical—for asking “why do I believe this, and is my reason for believing it good enough?”—is what separates many otherwise competent thinkers from those who truly shine. We all know people who are so bound up in their own beliefs and prejudices that they cannot even take seriously the possibility that they might be mistaken. What is hard, but *essential*, is that you do your best to make sure that you yourself are not one of those people.

¹ What do you do when someone offers an idea you find offensive? You don’t have the right to keep them from speaking; but you certainly do have the right, as well as the obligation, to speak up and say what you think of the proposal under consideration, and why you disagree. (Students also have the right to leave the room if they feel very uncomfortable. It’s usually better, however, to stay and speak up, than to get up and leave.)

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Do I *really* have to do *all* of the assigned reading for a given day *before* the class begins?

A. Yes!

Q. What if I miss a class?

A. Find out what you missed *from one of the other students*. (Do *not* come into office hours expecting the instructor to re-present the material he has already presented during the regular class session.)

Q. If I miss a class, do I need to get the instructor an excuse?

A. No.

Q. If I am e-mailing the instructor about something related to the class, what should I put in the subject line?

A. Just make sure the course number (104) is in the subject line. This will make it much less likely that your e-mail will get lost in the ether.

Q. Is it okay to read newspapers during class time?

A. No! It's very rude (and this applies to all your classes, not just this one.) Reading newspapers is fine, and indeed a good thing to make a habit of; but do it in the coffeeshop, or by the creek, not the classroom.

Q. Are we allowed to use laptops to take notes, etc.? Or cell phones (including texting)?

A. No. First, the "etc." is worrying—the instructor can never know whether you are actually paying attention, or whether you are surfing the web, *etc.* Second, even if you are paying attention, it tends to distract other students. Third, even if you *think* you are paying attention most laptop users are *themselves* fairly distracted, and are rarely capable of fully participating in classroom discussions. While taking notes is a good practice, and indeed quite necessary, your *primary* focus of attention should be the conversation in the classroom; and for some reason, taking notes by hand, with a pen, does not seem to require the kind of attention that taking notes via a computer keyboard does.

As for cell phones (including texting): NO! Any cell phone used during class will be confiscated and donated to needy people in Africa.

Q. What if I *really need* an A (to keep my scholarship, keep my parents from strangling me, etc.)?

A. Then you better work hard! Grades are assigned on the basis of merit, not on the basis of need. "I really need an A" is something *you* need to keep in mind, not something *I* need to know; so you needn't bother telling me.

Q. What sort of extra credit is available in this class? And if I'm not happy with my final grade, is it possible to improve it after the course is over?

A. None and no. That's why you need to come to every class, keep up with the readings, get your paper in on time, and generally stay on top of things. As John Steinbeck said, "It is the nature of man to rise to greatness, if greatness is what is expected of him."

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SEMESTER SCHEDULE: *Subject to change by decision of the instructor!*****

Week		
1. August 25, 27		No class Thursday August 27: Furlough.
2. September 1, 3	Plato, "The Apology" (<i>Trial & Death of Socrates</i>)	
3. September 8, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Singer, <i>How Are We to Live?</i>, Chapter One • Plato, from "The Republic" (online) • News item: "an immigrant finds..." (online) 	No class Tuesday Sept. 8: Furlough.
4. September 15, 17	• Peter Singer, <i>How Are We to Live?</i> , Chapters Two and Three	No class Thursday, September 17: Furlough.
5. September 22, 24	• Peter Singer, <i>How Are We to Live?</i> , Chapter Five	Thursday, Sept. 24: Midterm 1.
6. September 29, Oct. 1	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Sections I-II (pp. 1-45)	
7. October 6, 8	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Sections IV –V (pp. 63-97)	No class Thursday, October 8: Furlough.
8. October 13, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McGinn, "Sex" (<i>Moral Literacy</i>) • Anscombe, "Contraception and Chastity" 	No class Thursday, October 15: Furlough.
9. October 20, 22	• Lucas, "Because You Are a Woman" (online)	Thursday, October 22: Midterm 2.
10. October 27, 29	• McGinn, "Drugs" and "Violence" (<i>Moral Literacy</i>)	
11. November 3, 5	• Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (pp. 1-18)	No class Thursday, November 5: Instructor traveling.
12. November 10, 12	• Dworkin, <i>Is Democracy Possible Here?</i> , Chapter One	
13. November 17, 19	• Dworkin, <i>Is Democracy Possible Here?</i> , Chapter Two	Thursday, November 17: Midterm 3.
WEEK 14: THANKSGIVING – NO CLASSES		
READING ASSIGNMENT: Ronald Dworkin, <i>Is Democracy Possible Here?</i>, Chapters Three, Four, and Five		
15. December 1, 3	Dworkin, <i>Is Democracy Possible Here?</i>	
16. December 8, 10	Epictetus, <i>Handbook of Epictetus</i> .	No class Tuesday, December 8 (furlough)

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What is Plagiarism and why is it Important?

(Produced by Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN)

In college courses, we are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information.

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings--any pieces of information--that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

How to Recognize Unacceptable and Acceptable Paraphrases

Here's the ORIGINAL text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Bordens lived), which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

Here's an UNACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is plagiarism:

The increase of industry, the growth of cities, and the explosion of the population were three large factors of nineteenth century America. As steam-driven companies became more visible in the eastern part of the country, they changed farm hands into factory workers and provided jobs for the large wave of immigrants. With industry came the growth of large cities like Fall River where the Bordens lived which turned into centers of commerce and trade as well as production.

What makes this passage plagiarism? The preceding passage is considered plagiarism for two reasons:

- the writer has only changed around a few words and phrases, or changed the order of the original's sentences.
- the writer has failed to cite a source for any of the ideas or facts.

If you do either or both of these things, you are plagiarizing.

Here is an ACCEPTABLE paraphrase:

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. Steam-powered production had shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, and as immigrants arrived in the US, they found work in these new factories. As a result, populations grew, and large urban areas arose. Fall River was one of these manufacturing and commercial centers (Williams 1).

What is Plagiarism and why is it Important? (page 2)

Why is this passage acceptable? This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer:

- accurately relays the information in the original
- uses her own words.
- lets her reader know the source of her information.

Here's an example of quotation and paraphrase used together, which is also ACCEPTABLE:

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. As steam-powered production shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, the demand for workers "transformed farm hands into factory workers," and created jobs for immigrants. In turn, growing populations increased the size of urban areas. Fall River was one of these manufacturing hubs that were also "centers of commerce and trade" (Williams 1).

Why is this passage acceptable? This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer:

- records the information in the original passage accurately.
- gives credit for the ideas in this passage.
- indicates which part is taken directly from her source by putting the passage in quotation marks and citing the page number.

Note that if the writer had used these phrases or sentences in her own paper without putting quotation marks around them, she would be PLAGIARIZING. Using another person's phrases or sentences without putting quotation marks around them is considered plagiarism EVEN IF THE WRITER CITES IN HER OWN TEXT THE SOURCE OF THE PHRASES OR SENTENCES SHE HAS QUOTED.

Plagiarism and the World Wide Web

The World Wide Web has become a more popular source of information for student papers, and many questions have arisen about how to avoid plagiarizing these sources. In most cases, the same rules apply as to a printed source: when a writer must refer to ideas or quote from a web site, she must cite that source.

If a writer wants to use visual information from a web site, many of the same rules apply. Copying visual information or graphics from a web site (or from a printed source) is very similar to quoting information, and the source of the visual information or graphic must be cited. These rules also apply to other uses of textual or visual information from web sites; for example, if a student is constructing a web page as a class project, and copies graphics or visual information from other sites, she must also provide information about the source of this information. In this case, it might be a good idea to obtain permission from the site's owner before using the graphics.

Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text especially when taking notes.
2. Paraphrase, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. Instead, read over what you want to paraphrase carefully; cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you can't see any of it (and so aren't tempted to use the text as a "guide"). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking.
3. Check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.