

Philosophy 118a&b: The Making of the Modern Mind

Fall, 2009

Ed Langerak

Office; Holland 601C; office hours: M, 2-3:15; W, 3-5; Th, 3:45-5; and by appointment

Phones: 3494; 645-8321. E-mail address: <langerak>; class aliases:

2009-10-semester1-philosophy-118a@stolaf.edu

2009-10-semester1-philosophy-118b@stolaf.edu

We survey the development of historically significant conceptions of reality, knowledge, and ethics in the West from Socrates to Nietzsche (with some references to recent philosophers). We study major philosophers in their cultural context, emphasizing how they relate their explanations of the universe to their conceptions of morality and of a meaningful human life.

Our aims: **1. Intellectual history and cultural literacy:** understanding the major influences on the development of our world-and-life views and on how we think and talk. Some attention to what constitutes historical evidence and how intellectual historians select and use it.

2. Self-examination: thinking about our thinking; knowing ourselves and our implicit metaphysics, epistemologies, and ethics, and why we believe what we do; learning how to combine personal commitment with respect for pluralism and a global perspective.

3. Philosophical skills: interpreting texts charitably but critically, analyzing and synthesizing ideas gracefully and carefully, and evaluating and constructing arguments creatively and rigorously.

4. Integration: relating philosophy and its history to other disciplines and to some of the intellectual and practical issues we face as persons, students, citizens, family members, and friends.

Text: Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation*, 5th ed., and handouts.

Websites: This web site is an excellent encyclopedia with articles on most of the thinkers, concepts, and topics that we discuss: <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

This comprehensive site has many resources and links: <http://dir.yahoo.com/arts/humanities/philosophy>

See also our own library philosophy site: <http://www.stolaf.edu/library/research/web/phil.html>

This St. Olaf Library site provides citation and style guidelines: <http://www.stolaf.edu/library/instruction/styles.html>

Honesty: here are some links to St Olaf's policy on academic integrity and the honor system:

<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/integrity.html>

<http://www.stolaf.edu/stulife/thebook/academic/honor.html>

Student contributions: Regular attendance, and quantity and quality of participation (10%); quizzes (10%). Ten weekly 125-200 word paragraphs (summaries, evaluations, and questions) on the reading for the day, sent to my email address by 8am before class; the syllabus lists some of the questions in the book as suggestions for consideration (10%). A midterm exam (15%). A brief paper that presents a Socrates argument (5%). A 1000-1250 word (4-5 pages) paper (25%). Final exam (25%). If you have a documented disability that will affect your work in this class, please confidentially discuss that with me soon after classes begin. I prefer that students not eat food in class (beverages are fine); if this creates a problem for you, please talk with me.

Agenda

Date: Topic. Assigned reading (recommended reading) **Writing (Suggested Issues)**

Sept. 10: Introduction. References to *Great Conversation* (GC), chapters 1-2.

15: Presocratics and Sophists. GC 2, pp.29-35 (pp. 1-28) and GC 3, pp.37-49 and handouts on "Dialectical Inquiry" and "Types of Claims." **First Tuesday paragraph [T1] (Page 35: 2, 5, 6; p.36: For Further Thought 3; p.49: 3-6; p. 58: FFT 1, 2).**

17: Socrates, conceptual analysis, and "cultivating humanity." GC 3, pp.50-58 and GC 4 and GC 5, pp.71-85 and GC 23, pp.630-32 (Wittgenstein on "family resemblances) and Nussbaum, pp.16-22. Th 1 (83: 18)

- 22:** Socrates' trial and death. GC 5, pp.85-116. **T and *Th*:** present a Socrates argument.
- 24:** Plato's epistemology and metaphysics. GC 6, pp. 117-141. **Volunteers (141: 1, 2).**
- 29:** Plato's metaphysics and ethics. GC 6, pp.141-154 and Nussbaum, pp.22-28. **T 3 (145: 2, 3; 150:1).**
- Oct. 1:** Aristotle's epistemology and metaphysics. GC 7, pp.156-79, esp. 169-173. **Th 3 (173:2-4).**
- 6:** Aristotle's psychology and ethics. GC 7, pp. 179-96, esp. 186-93. **T 4 (189: 5, 6; 196:3).**
- 8:** Epicureans and Stoics. GC 8, pp.198-209 and Epicurus and Epictitus handouts. **Th 4 (204: 4, 6; 209:1, 7).**
- 13:** Skeptics. GC 8, pp.209-14 and Nussbaum, pp.28-41 and last page. **T 5 (215: 5-7).**
- 15:** Christians and Augustine. GC 9 and GC 10, pp. 226-246. **Th 5 (225: FFT; 232: 7; 236:2; 246: 7).**
- 20:** Catch-up and review for midterm exam.

24: Midterm exam

Fall Break

- 29:** Augustine con't. GC 10, pp.246-262. **Th 6 (251: 3; 259: 1).**
- Nov. 3:** Anselm and Aquinas. GC 11, pp.264-85 and 287-292. **T 6 (275: 2).**
- 5:** From Medieval to Modern. GC 12. **Th 7 (302: 3; 304: 3; 309:4; 318:6).**
- 10:** Descartes' doubt. GC 13, pp.319-27 and 336-38. **T 7 (326: Q2, Q3; 327: Q7).**
- 12:** Descartes' certainty. GC 13, pp.327-29 and 338-341 (349-56) and 356-59. **Th 8 (329: Q13-Q15).**
- 17:** Hobbes and Locke. GC 14, pp.360-384 and Rousseau p.455. **T 8 (372: 5-7; 385: 1, 4).**
- 19:** Toleration. GC 14, pp.384-5 and Langerak's "Theism and Toleration." **Th 9 (385: 6, 7).**
- 24:** Hume and Kant: epistemology and metaphysics. GC 15, pp. 397-419 and GC 16, pp. 426-46 (447-50). **T 9 (403: 1; 415: 1-3; 431: 2; 434:3; 441: 3; 450: 3).**

Thanksgiving Break

- Dec. 1:** Hume and Kant: ethics. GC 15, pp. 419-25 and GC 16, pp. 450-460. **T 10 (423: 1; 460: 1, 4, 6).**
- 3:** Catch up and **paper due.**
- 8:** Marx, Mill, and Wollstonecraft. GC 18, pp. 507-14 and GC 19. **T or Th make-up or volunteers: 10 (511: 2, 4; 525: 1, 4, 7, 11; 531: 2-4).**
- 10:** Nietzsche. GC 20, pp. 533-34 and 538-52 (rec. rest of chapter). **(Th 10: 552: 1-6, 8).**
- 15:** Catch-up, review, and conclusions. Possible references to Pierce (GC 21, pp. 565-70) and Dewey and James (GC 21, pp. 580-85).

Final Exam: 118a: Thurs, Dec. 17, 2-4; 118b: Monday, Dec 21, 2-4

