



The unexamined life is not worth living.  
— Plato, *Apology*



**Philosophy 1000**  
Knowledge, Reality, Self  
**Foundation Question**  
What can I know?

**Philosophy 1000** is one of a group of five courses that we call the foundation courses. The courses make a Villanova education distinctive and work together to answer a series of related questions:

**WHO AM I?**

Augustine and Culture Seminar 1000 (Ancients) and 1001 (Moderns)

**WHAT CAN I KNOW?**

Philosophy 1000:  
Knowledge, Reality, Self

**WHAT DO I BELIEVE?**

Theology and Religious Studies 1000:  
Faith, Reason, and Culture

**HOW SHOULD I LIVE?**

Ethics 2050:  
The Good Life—  
Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

By seeking answers to these questions, you will conduct an interdisciplinary inquiry that is informed by Augustinian and Catholic intellectual traditions, develop your skills in critical thinking and communication, deepen your understanding of yourself and the world, and engage with issues of personal responsibility and social justice.

**PHI 1000 H05**  
**FALL 2015**  
**PROFESSOR: GABRIEL ROCKHILL**

**Time:** T/Th 10-11:15 a.m.  
**Location:** Garey Hall 115  
**Office Hours:** 1-2 p.m. or by appointment (SAC 171)  
**E-mail:** gabriel.rockhill@gmail.com or gabriel.rockhill@villanova.edu  
**Phone:** 610-519-3067  
**Teaching Assistant:** Jasmine Wallace <jwalla14@villanova.edu>  
**T.A. Office Hours:** TBA

**OVERVIEW**

Drawing on an array of texts that surpass the standard 'Western' canon, this course will grapple with some of the most expansive and intimidating philosophic questions: What is the meaning of life? What is the nature of reality? Who are we? What—if anything—can we know? What is philosophy itself, and how might it help to elucidate some of these questions? In each case, we will approach these issues from multiple and diverse perspectives, often reframing or displacing them in order to reveal hidden philosophic assumptions.

Rather than seeking to find definitive closure or unanimous consensus, this seminar will cultivate a process of open-ended collective inquiry in which students will be encouraged to think autonomously and challenge facile solutions. The material covered will include ancient, Christian, modern and contemporary sources, as well as texts from beyond the canonized—and largely white, male, middle-class, European—history of philosophy. This will allow us to critically reflect on the deep-seated presuppositions of particular cultural traditions, while engaging with radically different practices of philosophic interrogation. Students should come away from the course with an expanded sense of theoretical possibilities, as well as an arsenal of critical tools for developing creative and rigorous thinking.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Engage with major philosophic issues from multiple and varied perspectives, thereby opening up avenues of reflection and critical interrogation.
2. Analyze philosophic arguments as well as develop the skills of logical argumentation.
3. Hone the ability to undertake fine-tuned textual analysis.

4. Develop the capacity to clearly and convincingly express ideas in both writing and speech.
5. Cultivate critical acumen and broad cultural sensibilities.

#### REQUIRED MATERIAL

1. Daniel Bonevac and Stephen Phillips (eds), *Introduction to World Philosophy: A Multicultural Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2009): ISBN 019515231X
2. Plato, *Phaedo* (Oxford World Classics, 2009): ISBN 019953893X
3. René Descartes, *Meditations on World Philosophy* (Oxford World Classics, 2008): ISBN 0192806963
4. St. Augustine, *Against the Academicians and The Teacher* (Hackett Classics 1995): ISBN 0872202127
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ* (Penguin Classics, 1990): ISBN 0140445145
6. All of other readings will be available via Blackboard
7. Optional book: Lewis Vaughn. *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

#### REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation – 15%**. The class will be conducted as a seminar so it will be very important for you to come to class on time having engaged with the required material. This means taking notes on the films and readings, preparing informed questions and comments, and reviewing the material after class discussion. A cursory, passive overview of the material will prove insufficient. In addition, you should make sure that you organize your time wisely since some sessions will require more out-of-class work than others. Finally, it is your responsibility to arrive on time and make sure that your name has been checked on the attendance list (no changes will be made retroactively).
2. **Readings on Hand – 10%**. This course will be grounded in textual analysis, and it is therefore imperative that you bring a *print* version of the readings to every class. Every time that you do so, you will receive a point. The points will be tallied at the end of the year and translated into a percentage.
3. **Philosophy Journal – 20%**. You will be expected to write one single-page, single-spaced entry in your journal every week. This can include reflections on the readings, on the lectures, on the classroom discussion, or on related themes and issues in current events or your other work. The journal is meant to be a place for you to personally articulate what it is that you are thinking about. It will also be an opportunity to develop a constant practice of active learning through writing, as well as work on the mechanics of written expression. You *will not* be graded on the quality of your arguments but instead on your diligent participation in autonomous reflection on the material. In other words, the journal is a space for your subjective thoughts and experimental meditations, although you are encouraged to give them precise form.

4. **Discussion Questions – 15%**. Every class session, one student will be in charge of preparing 2 questions about the reading. We will rotate through the roster alphabetically by last name so that you can anticipate when you will present your questions. If you have to miss class for any reason, you will be expected to send your questions via e-mail (so please prepare in advance).
5. **Mid-Term Paper – 20%**. You will be expected to write a 5-page double-spaced mid-term paper that critically responds to and engages with one of the readings and/or films from the first half of the semester. You will need to carefully review the material you choose and consult other relevant sources. The aim of this exercise is to have you succinctly present a core theme or issue and carefully work through its implications via rigorous philosophical argumentation and precise textual analysis. You can choose any of the required material from the first half of the semester.
6. **Final Exam – 20%**. A comprehensive final oral exam will be scheduled at the end of the semester. I will provide you with guidelines and study hints in advance of the exam. The best way to ensure a solid performance on your final exam is to take detailed notes on the lectures and readings. With the exception of students with disabilities that require alternative test-taking arrangements or other university approved exceptions, all tests must be taken in class at the day and time listed on the syllabus. No other make-up tests will be administered.

#### **POLICY ON E-MAILS AND COMPUTER USE**

1. I will try to respond to all e-mails in a reasonable time frame. As a general rule of thumb, this means that you will get a response within 24 to 48 hours. If you send an email over the weekend or late at night, do not expect to receive a response back immediately, even if you deem it to be an emergency.
2. I will **not grant extensions via e-mail** except in extreme cases.
3. In general, I will not provide my lecture notes, PPT slides or other material that you could have obtained in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain this material from other students' notes.
4. I will not provide information already available in the syllabus via e-mail.
5. **No computers, tablets, cell phones or other electronic devices** will be allowed in the classroom unless you obtain explicit consent from the instructor.

#### **POLICY ON GRADE CHANGES, LATE WORK AND ABSENCES**

1. I will not change grades based on oral negotiation. If you feel that I have overlooked something in my grading policy, please submit a detailed written explanation of what has been overlooked along with the graded copy of your work.
2. **No late work will be accepted.**

#### **POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND RESEARCH RESOURCES**

Any form of plagiarism is unacceptable. This includes, but is not limited to, referencing or paraphrasing someone else's ideas without proper citation as well as handing in someone else's work as your own. This also includes using any part of an

Internet resource without proper citation. Any assignment that is at all plagiarized will automatically receive an F and, depending on the circumstances, may constitute grounds for failing the course. Moreover, every incident will be reported to the university and could constitute grounds for expulsion.

All students are expected to uphold Villanova's Academic Integrity Policy and Code. For the College's statement on Academic Integrity, you should consult the [Enchiridion](#). You may view the university's Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway [web site](#):

<http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>

For a good list of resources on what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing <http://directory.google.com/Top/Reference/Education/Educators/Plagiarism/Prevention/> see

You should be aware of the fact that not all of the information on the internet is equally accurate. This is why I strongly encourage library research—which includes electronic databases—over the use of standard research engines. Of course, you should also be wary of the quality of published sources and try to get a feel for what is reliable (based on the author's name, the publisher, journals' reputations, etc.). If you have any questions regarding the quality of resources, please contact me.

#### **POLICY ON DISABILITIES AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES**

Students with disabilities who require reasonable academic accommodations should schedule an appointment to discuss specifics with me. It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. You must present verification and register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5176 or at [learning.support.services@villanova.edu](mailto:learning.support.services@villanova.edu) or for physical access or temporary disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email [Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu](mailto:Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu) Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

**PROGRAM (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

**Introduction**

8/25 Jorge Luis Borges, "Borges and I"

**What Is—or Can Be—Philosophy?**

8/27 Simone Weil, "The Needs of the Soul," p. 105-140

9/1 Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism," p. 341-367

**Whence Did We Come, and Whither Are We Headed?**

9/3 Errol Morris, *A Brief History of Time*, 1991 (film), available online here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAfxKExKjVQ>

Cornelius Castoriadis, "Intellectuals and History," p. 3-12

9/8 *World Philosophy*, "The Self in Indian Philosophy" p. 205-235

9/10 *World Philosophy*, "The Self in Chinese Buddhism," p. 236-248

9/15 Plato, *Phaedo* (first half of dialogue)

9/17 Plato, *Phaedo* (second half of dialogue)

9/22 Viola Cordova, "What Is It to Be Human in a Native American Worldview?"  
p. 97-115

**What Is Real, if Anything?**

9/24 René Descartes, *Meditations*

9/29 René Descartes, *Meditations*

**Mid-Term Paper Due**

10/1 René Descartes, *Meditations*

10/6 *World Philosophy*, "Princess Elizabeth's Critique of Descartes' Dualism," p.  
270-273

Selections from *Women's Political and Social Thought*:

"Sor Juana's Admonishment" (p. 83-84, 91)

Mary Astell, "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of  
Their True and Greatest Interest" (p. 99-111)

Phillis Wheatley, selection (p. 123-124, 129-130)

10/8 *World Philosophy*, "African Philosophy of Mind," p. 291-305

*World Philosophy*, "Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Theories of  
Knowledge," p. 399-406

10/12-10/16 Fall Break

10/20 Visit to Philadelphia Museum of Art

**Belief, Certainty, Doubt**

10/22 Augustine, *The Teacher* (first half)

10/27 Augustine, *The Teacher* (second half)

10/29 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Forward" – 'Reason' in Philosophy"

11/3 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "How the 'Real World' at last Became a Myth"  
– "The 'Improvers' of Mankind"

11/5 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "What the Germans Lack" – "Expeditions of an  
Untimely Man"

11/10 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "What I Owe to the Ancients" – "The Hammer Speaks"

11/12 Frantz Kafka, "Before the Law"

**Who Are We, Really, and What Can We Become?**

11/17 Mahatma Ghandi, "What *Satyagraha* Is" (selections from *Non-Violent Resistance*), p. 3-19, 34-36

11/19 Anne Waters, "Language Matters: Nondiscrete Nonbinary Dualism" in *American Indian Thought*, p. 97-115

11/25-11/27 Thanksgiving Break

12/1 Donna Haraway "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," p. 149-165

12/3 Donna Haraway "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," p. 166-179

12/8 Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," p. 488-497

12/10 Final Discussion

12/17 **Final Exams** (8:30-11)