

Approved by the Academic council
of the Educational programme

Protocol No. __ from __. __. 2019

Syllabus

Philosophy

Professors:

Dr. Aaron James Wendland
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: a.j.wendland@hse.ru

Dr. Nadia Moro
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: n.moro@hse.ru

Course Description:

Abstract: This course is designed to introduce students to key philosophical ideas and debates. In module one, this aim will be achieved via a close reading of two foundational texts in philosophy: Plato's *Apology* and Plato's *Republic*. Themes to be discussed include truth, knowledge, reality, justice, statecraft, science, morality, sexuality, and art. In module two, several of these themes will be discussed in greater detail, with particular attention dedicated to knowledge and science as well as the practical application of these ideas to information technology.

Pre-requisites: No course requirements need to be met in order to register for this class.

Course Plan:

Module 1: This module is divided into 8 lectures and 8 seminars. The first lecture will be an introduction to philosophy via a reading of Plato's *Apology*. The following six lectures will be based on the assigned readings and cover the *Republic* in its entirety. The seminars will be used to review and discuss the material delivered in the lectures, and the final lecture will be used to test students in order to determine their participation grade for the module.

Module 2: The module is divided into 8 lectures and 9 seminar sessions. It aims to introduce students to problems and foundational approaches to knowledge and science and to issues in applied philosophy. The first portion of the module will focus on what objective knowledge and science are and how the world can be understood accordingly. The second portion of the module deals with the changes and problems that information technology brings about in both our understanding of and action in the world. Finally, a test will be held at the end of the module to determine the students' participation grade.

Reading List:

Module 1:

Texts: Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, tr. Tredennick & Tarrant (New York: Penguin, 1993)
Plato, *Republic*, tr. Lee (New York: Penguin, 2003)

Week 1: **Lecture:** *The Last Days of Socrates* – Plato's *Apology*: 37-67 [17a-42a]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 2: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Justice and Injustice: 3-52 [327a-367e]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 3: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Justice in the City: 53-67, 112-129 [368a-376c, 412b-427c]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 4: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Justice in the Individual: 130-156 [427d-449a]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 5: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Communism in the Ideal City: 157-188 [449a-471c]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 6: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Philosopher Kings: 189-248 [471c-521b]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 7: **Lecture:** *Republic* – Art and Immortality: 335-368 [595a-621d]
Seminar: Discussion

Week 8: **Lecture:** Participaiton Test

Module 2:

Week 1: **Lecture:** Introduction: The problem of knowledge
Cassirer, E. (1923). *Substance and function*. Chicago: Open Court. Ch. 5: On the problem of induction, pp. 237–270.
<https://archive.org/details/substanceandfunc033163mbp/page/n6>
Seminar: Conceptual clarification and discussion

Week 2: **Lecture:** Immanuel Kant and the Copernican turn
Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason* (P. Guyer & A. Wood, Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Preface to the second edition.
Seminar: Conceptual clarification and discussion

Week 3: **Lecture:** Meaning and verification
Schlick, M. (1936). Meaning and verification. *The Philosophical Review* 45, 339-369.
Seminar: Quine, W.V.O. (1951), Two dogmas of empiricism. In: Quine, W.V.O. *From a Logical Point of View*. Cambridge etc.: Harvard University Press 1953. 2nd revised ed. 1961, pp. 20–46.

Week 4: **Lecture:** Demarcation: science and pseudo-science
Popper, K. (1963). *Conjectures and Refutations* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (pp. 33-9). In: *Philosophy of Science. Contemporary Readings* (Y. Balashov & A. Rosenberg, Eds.). Routledge 2001, pp. 294–301.
Seminar: Discussion

Week 5: **Lecture:** History, paradigms, and revolutions in science
Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2nd edition, 1970. Ch. III: The nature of normal science; ch. IV: Normal science as puzzle-solving; ch. V: The priority of paradigms; ch. VI: Anomaly and the emergence of scientific discoveries; VII: Crisis and the emergence of scientific theories; ch. IX: The nature and necessity of scientific revolutions.
Seminar: Incommensurability of scientific theories

Week 6: **Lecture:** Information technology and the understanding of the world
Floridi, L. (2014). *The Fourth Revolution. How the infosphere is reshaping human reality*. Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press. Ch. 4: Self-understanding. The four revolutions, pp. 87-100; ch. 5: Intelligence. Inscripting the world, pp. 129-143.
Seminar: Kate Crawford, The Hidden Biases in Big Data, *Harvard Business Review*, URL: <https://hbr.org/2013/04/the-hidden-biases-in-big-data>

Week 7: **Lecture:** Information technology and privacy
DeCew, J. “Privacy”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/privacy/>>.

van den Hoven, J., Blaauw, M., Pieters, W. and Warnier, M., "Privacy and Information Technology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/it-privacy/>>.

Seminar: Irina Raicu, "Do You Own Your Data?", URL: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/privacy/do-you-own-your-data/>

Week 8: **Lecture:** Technology and morality

Boenink, M., Swierstra, T., & Stemerding, D. (2010). Anticipating the interaction between technology and morality: A techno-ethical scenario study of experimenting with humans in bionanotechnology. *Studies in ethics, law, and technology*, 4(2), 1-38.

<https://doi.org/10.2202/1941-6008.1098>

Seminar: Participation Test

Week 9: **Final oral exams**

Grading System:

The final grade for the course will be determined by class participation and an oral exam. 50% of the grade will be based on class participation and 50% on the final oral exam. If the final grade for participation is at least 7.5 out of 10, then the student is exempt from the final oral exam. In both the first and second module, the grade of participation will be determined by a written test at the end of the module.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

The student is required to read, analyze, and reflect upon the ideas presented in the texts studied, and they should leave the course with an open mind: that is, they should be open to seeing and thinking about the world in ways they did not before.

Method of Instruction:

The course will consist of a series of lectures and seminars, but the students are encouraged to engage with the professors and ask questions when they have them!