

Phil 150: Introduction to Philosophy Fall 2026

Syllabus

Instructor

Dr. Eugene A. Clayton Jr

Please do not address me as Sir.

Email

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Office Hours

Sierra Tower 530

Monday/Wednesday: 1-2 pm, or by appointment

Class:

Section 1

Monday & Wednesday

11:30am-12:45pm

EU 132

Course Description

Introduction to some of the main topics and methods of philosophy, with attention to both contemporary and historical texts. Questions may include: What is a self? What does it mean to live a good life? Is right and wrong just a matter of opinion? What is justice? What is freedom? Do we have free will?

Available for General Education, GE Area 3B Humanities.

Student Learning Outcomes

Each course meeting the Humanities requirement must fulfil at least two of the following student learning outcomes.

Students will:

1. Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning and values within and across the human experience, as expressed in the arts, literatures, religions, philosophies, and/or thought traditions.
2. Analyze, interpret and reflect critically upon creative expression, discourse, or thought traditions from diverse perspectives.

3. Demonstrate the ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the humanities.
4. Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work or thought tradition was created or emerged.
5. Critically analyze how the humanities as disciplines of memory and imagination reflect upon the current conditions of the human experience and help envision progression as a society.

<https://catalog.csun.edu/general-education/student-learning-outcomes/>

Required Texts

The following books are required for this course:

Barthes, *Mythologies* (Hill & Wang)

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press)

Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford University Press)

Plato, *Symposium* (Oxford or Penguin)

Attendance & Participation

Attendance will be taken and constitutes a percentage of the grade for this course.

Students are expected to participate. This means asking and answering questions and collaborating effectively and respectfully with your classmates and instructor.

Assignments

Students must complete their assignments and submit them before the due date. Late work may not be accepted.

All assignments must be written according to the formal rules of standard academic English. All assignments must be submitted according to the Chicago Manual of Style. All assignments submitted as attachments must be in either .pages or .pdf format. All assignments must reference the assigned reading as the primary source. Failure to adhere to these criteria will result in the deduction of points.

Writing Assistance

Those experiencing writing difficulties should seek assistance from the CSUN University Writing Center.

<https://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/learning-resource-center/university-writing-center>

Request for Accommodation

If students require special accommodation to participate in this course based on physical abilities or learning impediments, please notify your instructor.

Academic Integrity

<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>

Submission of an AI-generated assignment will constitute a failure.

Grading

Attendance & Participation: 10 points

Quizzes: 10 points each (40 total)

Two papers: 15 points each (30 points total)

Final Exam: 20 points

Quizzes, Papers, & Final Exam

The quizzes will consist of questions related to both the readings and the lectures. They will be either multiple choice or short answer in form.

The papers will be 2 pages each at 12-point font, Times New Roman, and double-spaced.

The final will be cumulative, covering the entirety of the semester.

Calendar

Week 1 (24 Aug): Introduction and Syllabus
On Writing a Thesis Paper

Week 2 (31 Aug): Plato, *Symposium*

Week 3 (7 Sept): **7 Sept: Labor Day Holiday**
9 Sept: cont.

Week 4 (14 Sept): cont.

Week 5 (21 Sept): **23 Sept: Quiz I: Plato**

Week 6 (28 Sept): Barthes, *Mythologies*
30 Sept: Thesis Paper Due

Week 7 (5 Oct): cont.

Week 8 (12 Oct): cont.

Week 9 (19 Oct): **19 Oct: Quiz II: Barthes**

21 Oct: Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques*

Week 10 (26 Oct): cont.

28 Oct: Mythologies Paper Due

Week 11 (2 Nov): cont.

Week 12 (9 Nov): **9 Nov: Quiz III: Descartes**

11 Nov: Veterans' Day Holiday

Week 13 (16 Nov): Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*

Week 14 (23 Nov): cont.

Week 15 (30 Nov): cont.

Week 16 (7 Dec): **Quiz IV: Hume**

9 Dec: Final Review

Final Exam: 16 December 2026, Wednesday 10:15am-12:15pm