

PHIL 2005: HONORS CRITICAL THINKING
Fall 2023

Section 001 MWF 3:00 p.m. – 3:50 p.m. S 137

Instructor: Ian Albright

Physical Office: S 242 (upstairs in the renovated Science 1 Building)

Email: ialbright@csustan.edu
DO NOT email assignments – messages ONLY!
Please include PHIL 2005 and your section number in the title of all messages!
Should a problem arise, please notify me as soon as possible!

Learning Management System: Canvas

Office Hours/Zoom Office Hours: M/W 1:10 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. and
By appointment (tentative hours)

Zoom Link for Office Hours: <https://csustan.zoom.us/j/98810967662>

Class Meetings:

All class meetings will be conducted in person in our designated classroom unless circumstances require us to conduct classes via Zoom. Students are expected to attend all in-person class meetings unless they have legitimate reasons for not attending, i.e., you are sick, you are required to quarantine/self-isolate, you have a family emergency, etc. **Absences will only be counted as excused if you notify me about your absence(s) and provide legitimate reasons for missing class.** (See Attendance Policy for additional information.)

Important note about a possible work stoppage during the semester:

The California Faculty Association (the labor union of Lecturers, Professors, Coaches, Counselors, and Librarians across the 23 CSU campuses) is in a difficult contract dispute with California State University management. It is possible that we will call a strike or other work stoppage this term. I promise to promptly inform you of any schedule disruption. Our working conditions are your learning conditions; we seek to protect both. For further information go to www.CFABargaining.org.

Course Description:

Lecture. Introduction to the practice of philosophical inquiry, emphasizing critical reasoning skills and argumentative writing. Basic instruction in the composition of defensible arguments with an emphasis on philosophical composition and analysis. Satisfies G.E. area A3. Prerequisite: Open only to students in the University Honors Program.

To think critically means to actively examine and interrogate the beliefs held by others and ourselves rather than passively accepting them without rational justification. As such, this course on the fundamentals of reasoning and critical thinking will help you develop the skills to more effectively analyze and evaluate your own beliefs and many of the beliefs you encounter on a daily basis from the media, friends, parents, teachers, family members, co-workers, politicians, corporations, advertisements, authority figures, etc. Hence, the skills you will develop throughout this course will allow you to become a better thinker, more personally empowered, and less likely to be taken advantage of by others. In addition to being able to more critically engage the world around you, this course will also provide you with the skills to better articulate arguments to support and justify your well-reasoned beliefs. These skills will be developed through the critical examination and construction of arguments.

We will be focusing on various themes throughout the duration of the course in our praxis of critical thinking. Various questions will be raised to open up spaces for our pursuits.

General Education Goals and Outcomes:

This course meets *General Education Learning Goals and Outcomes* in area A3:

Goal 1: Develop the intellectual skills and competencies necessary to participate effectively in society and the world.

Students attaining the first learning goal will be able to:

3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively.

Goal 3: Develop abilities to integrate knowledge, make informed ethical decisions, and accept civic responsibility.

Students attaining the third learning goal will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze problems within local, regional, national, and/or global contexts.

General Education Learning Outcome	Assignments that will be used to assess learning outcomes
1.3 Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively. 3.3 Identify and analyze problems within local, regional, national, and/or global contexts.	Paper 1 Paper 2 Paper 3 Informed and active class participation

While this particular course emphasizes learning outcomes 1.3 and 3.3, additional learning outcomes will also be addressed.

In addition to addressing the learning outcomes listed above, there are several course-specific *Student Learning Outcomes* that students of this course will meet.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Better understand and articulate the importance of thinking critically in everyday life as well as in scholarly pursuits.
2. More effectively construct logically effective arguments in a variety of situations.
3. Accurately explain and critically discuss, analyze, and evaluate the various theories and beliefs explored.
4. Better engage the world from a critical perspective.

Required Text:

1. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition by Paulo Freire; **ISBN-13:** 978-0826412768; **ISBN-10:** 0826412769
This text is also available in digital format for free online through our Stan State Library.

2. *PHIL 2005 Student Reader*

You will need to download or access the articles from the *Student Reader* on your computer or mobile device (laptop, tablet, or smart phone) for viewing during class meetings or print out hard copies of the articles and have them available for viewing during class meetings. The articles from the *Student Reader* can be accessed in Canvas under the “Student Reader Articles” link. You are expected to have read the articles before the class meetings in which they will be discussed. After discussing the articles in class, you may want to reread the articles to gain an even deeper understanding of the material.

Course Requirements:

1. **Informed and active class participation. / 10%**

Participation is an important aspect of any philosophy class. Although it is important to attend class on a regular basis to gain a better understanding of the material, participation is much more than simply showing up. Participation involves relevant, thoughtful, and insightful engagement in full-class or small-group discussions. Additionally, participation may also include various activities. If you are not in class, you can’t participate; therefore, chronic absence may significantly lower your participation grade. (Assessment of learning outcomes 1.3 and 3.3)

2. **Three Papers (4-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font). / 30% each (90% total)**

Throughout the duration of the course you will be required to compose three papers. Each paper will allow you to explore in more detail one of the main themes that emerges in the course. (Assessment of learning outcomes 1.3 and 3.3)

The grades for papers will be based on the following criteria:

1. Accuracy of Comprehension
2. Depth and Detail of Exposition
3. Critical Reflection and Original and Insightful Comments
4. Clarity of Thought: Proper Organization, Order, Structure, and Clear Phrasing
5. Correct Grammar and Spelling
6. Ability to Support Claims

A Few General Expectations of Students:

1. Computers, smart phones, etc. should only be used for class work and class-related activities during class meetings.
2. Remember to be kind and courteous to others (even when disagreeing).
3. Be open to exploring ideas, beliefs, and perspectives that may differ from your own.
4. Be prepared to offer reasons for your beliefs, not just descriptions of them.
5. Be open to critically examining your own ideas, beliefs, and perspectives.
6. Behave and conduct yourself in a collegiate manner.

A democratic society can only thrive through the robust exchange of ideas and points of view. This robust exchange of ideas is precisely what the collegiate environment in general, and this class in particular, attempts to foster. Thus, it is to be expected that through the exchange of different ideas conflicts of opinion and belief will emerge. It is important when

disagreements occur, that we continue to conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. Many of the topics we will be exploring can at times be divisive and emotionally charged. Additionally, some ideas explored could be potentially uncomfortable and/or offensive to some individuals. Please keep these points in mind when conducting oneself in a collegiate manner. **Students who do not conduct themselves in a collegiate manner may be asked to leave class for the remainder of the class meeting.**

For more information on classroom speech and behavior, their protection, and possible limitations to them, please see the positions of the Office of General Counsel and Stanislaus State below:

Student Classroom Speech — from the Office of General Counsel

Students' right of free expression is not without limits in the classroom. The classroom is not an open forum and is therefore subject to reasonable speech regulation. *Bishop V. Aronov*, 926 F.2d 1066, 1071 (11th Cir. 1991). Students do not have a right to insist that a class be viewpoint neutral; e. g., students may be required to write papers expressing a particular point of view with which they may not agree as long as the assignment promotes legitimate pedagogical interests. *Edwards V. Aguillard*, 482, U.S. 578, 586 n. 6 (1987); *Brown v. Li*, 308 F.3d 939, 953 (9th Cir. 2002).

Student behavior that "materially disrupts class work or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others is [. . .] not immunized by the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech." *Tinker V. Des Moines Comm. School Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503, 513 (1969). Faculty are in charge of their classrooms and can expect students to comport themselves in a manner that is consistent with a healthy learning environment. If a student continues after fair warning to engage in disruptive behavior, it may be necessary to involve the Student Conduct Officer and pursue possible discipline.

Stanislaus State Time, Place and Manner of Free Expression

Students and faculty are free to express their opinion and views in the classroom without censorship provided that such expressions are not disruptive and are related to the subject matter under discussion in the class or are invited by the class instructor. Those not enrolled in a class or specifically invited by the instructor to attend a particular class do not enjoy such rights.

MAINTAINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Maintaining academic integrity is of the utmost importance. The following are violations of academic integrity:

Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; misrepresenting or non-reporting of pertinent information in all forms of work submitted for credit.

Facilitating academic dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Plagiarism: There are many different ways of defining plagiarism. One possible definition of plagiarism is as follows: the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own, without acknowledgement. Another possible definition of plagiarism appears on the website plagiarism.org. The website provides a definition taken from *The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*; it states:

TO "PLAGIARIZE" MEANS

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

The website continues to provide examples of plagiarism. This is what it states:

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

A Note on AI: Any work written, developed, created, or inspired by artificial intelligence (AI), including but not limited to the use of ChatGPT, is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. While the ever-changing (and exciting!) new developments with AI will find their place in our workforces and personal lives, in the realm of education and learning, this kind of technology does not belong. This is because the use of AI robs us all of the opportunity to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this class is specifically a space for learning how to improve our thinking and writing. AI simply cannot do that learning for us.

Academic Integrity Policy: *It is your responsibility to understand the various ways in which academic integrity can be violated and to ensure that you do not commit any violations. If a student cheats, facilitates any academic dishonesty, or plagiarizes in any form, the student will receive an F for the entire course and further disciplinary measures may be taken. This policy applies to all work submitted for the course, including any group-work assignments.*

Attendance Policy: *Whether class meetings are conducted in person or online, students are expected to regularly attend class meetings. If a student misses the equivalent of 2 weeks or more of the course without reasonable cause (unexcused absences), the student may be dropped. Additionally, if a student has numerous missing assignments, the student may be dropped as well. I am more than willing to make reasonable accommodations when circumstances warrant such accommodations. But you need to let me know as soon as possible should a problem arise. **For in-person class meetings, if you are feeling sick and/or experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms and/or your daily student screening results indicate that you are not cleared to come to campus, DO NOT COME TO CLASS and notify me via email.***

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: *Students with disabilities should contact the DRS office regarding any accommodation needs and speak with the instructor at the beginning of the semester regarding accommodations.*

NOTE: It is your responsibility to keep abreast of the assignments. Remember, the final paper for the course must be submitted at or before our scheduled final. This course is graded on a “plus-minus” grading scale.

Grading Scale:

100-94 = A
93-90 = A-
89-87 = B+
86-84 = B
83-80 = B-
79-77 = C+
76-74 = C
73-70 = C-
69-67 = D+
66-64 = D
63-60 = D-
59-0 = F

Course Reading Assignments and Schedule [Subject to Change]

What is critical thinking? Why is it important? What are Arguments?

- W1** 8/21 – 8/25 Syllabus/Introduction
Plato, “The Cave” (handout)
Power Point 1: Critical Thinking, Arguments, Conclusions, Premises.

How do reason, emotion, and desire affect us?

- W2** 8/28 – 9/1 Power Point 1: Critical Thinking, Arguments, Conclusions, Premises.
Student Reader: Plato, *The Republic*

- W3** 9/4 – 9/8 **(Monday, 9/4) NO CLASS – Labor Day**
Student Reader: Plato, *The Republic*

What are some common impediments to critical thinking? What is a world view and how does it affect our perception?

- W4** 9/11 – 9/15 Power Point 2: Impediments to critical thinking
Student Reader: Benjamin, “World views and ways of life”
Student Reader: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

History: How do the stories we tell affect our perception and identity?

- W5** 9/18 – 9/22 *Student Reader:* Zinn, *The Peoples History of the United States*, Ch. 1
Student Reader: Dussel, “Was America Discovered or Invaded?”
Student Reader: Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States*, “Introduction”

Authority/Obedience/Disobedience: Do we have a duty to (dis)obey?

- W6** 9/25 – 9/29 **(Monday, 9/25) PAPER 1 DUE**
Video: Milgram, *Obedience*
Class Discussion
Student Reader: Milgram, “The Perils of Obedience”
- W7** 10/2 – 10/6 *Student Reader:* *Obedience-Disobedience Packet* (various authors)
Student Reader: Scanlon, “Free expression and the Authority of the State”
- W8** 10/9 – 10/13 Video: most likely either Zinn, *The People Speak* or *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*
Class Discussion

Education: What is the purpose of education? Can education be oppressive? Can education be liberatory?

- W9** 10/16 – 10/20 *Student Reader:* *True and False Democracy Packet* (various authors)
Student Reader: Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “Introduction,” “Forward,” “Preface”
- W10** 10/23 – 10/27 *Student Reader:* Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ch. 1
- W11** 10/30 – 11/3 **(Monday, 10/30) PAPER 2 DUE**
Student Reader: Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ch. 1
Student Reader: Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ch. 2
- W12** 11/6 – 11/10 *Student Reader:* Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ch. 2
(Friday, 11/10) NO CLASS – Veterans’ Day

Freedom/Responsibility: What is freedom and what might it entail?

- W13** 11/13 – 11/17 *Student Reader:* Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”
- W14** 11/20 – 11/24 **NO CLASSES – Thanksgiving/National Day of Mourning/Indigenous Peoples Sunrise Ceremony (Unthanksgiving Day)**
- W15** 11/27 – 12/1 *Student Reader:* Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”

Representations/Images/Roles: How do they affect of our perceptions of others and ourselves?

- W16** 12/4 – 12/8 Video: *MissRepresentation*
Class Discussion

(Friday, 12/8) LAST DAY OF CLASS

**W17 12/11 – 12/15 FINALS WEEK – NO CLASSES
(Wednesday, 12/13) PAPER 3 DUE**

Note: Provisions of this syllabus are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of any changes made.