

CEL 100: Great Ideas in Politics and Ethics

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CEL 100-97079

Fall 2021

Tempe ART 246

T,Th: 10:30am-11:45am

Course Description and Learning Objectives

“As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves.... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation.”

— Michael Oakeshott

“Reading and listening are thought of as receiving communication from someone who is actively engaged in giving or sending it. The mistake here is to suppose that receiving communication is like receiving a blow or a legacy or a judgment from the court. On the contrary, the reader or listener is much more like the catcher in a game of baseball... The art of catching is the skill of catching every kind of pitch—fast balls and curves, changeups and knucklers. Similarly, the art of reading is the skill of catching every sort of communication as well as possible...”

There is one respect in which the analogy breaks down. The ball is a simple unit. It is either completely caught or not. A piece of writing, however, is a complex object. It can be received more or less completely, all the way from very little of what the writer intended to the whole of it. The amount the reader “catches” will usually depend on the amount of activity he puts into the process, as well as upon the skill with which he executes the different mental acts involved.”

— Mortimer Adler

This is a great books class in Western ethical and political thought. We will examine what some of the greatest texts ever written have to say about the art of living well, individually and in community, and discuss these texts in class dialogues together. We will begin examining ancient ethics and finish with modern theories of politics. The class will focus on practicing the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation—the skills and ethics of dialogue and of reading. We will have a series of visiting teachers for this class: Plato, Aristotle, Aristophanes, Machiavelli, the Gospel of St. Matthew, Locke, Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill.

Thematic questions:

1. What is the best way for me to live? What can be said about this question that’s common to everyone? What part of the answer is unique to me? What kind of character do I want to cultivate in myself?

2. What ethics are most conducive to productive, shared inquiry, learning, and understanding?
3. What kind of political order is most likely to secure this kind of life to me and others?

Learning objectives:

- To start becoming conversant with great texts in ethics and politics
- To develop skills in active, analytical reading and textual annotation
- To develop dialogue skills of speaking, listening, and reasoning together with others
- To develop writing skills

Questions about Class Structure & Policy

I will respond to questions about the course only if the student refers to the relevant section of the syllabus and why it does not answer his or her question. This will help promote student independence and responsibility, help me improve the syllabus, when appropriate, and economize on my time.

Grade Policy

There are **no makeup or partial credit** assignments (with the exception of Excused Absences listed below).

Late work will lose one letter grade for each day it is late.

Active Reading Annotations.....	30%
Attendance & In-class Participation.....	40%
Paper 1 Abstract.....	5%
Paper 1.....	10%
Paper 2 Abstract.....	5%
<u>Paper 2.....</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total.....	100%

Active Reading Annotations - 30% of your grade will depend on reading the required texts *actively* and for understanding and demonstrating that active reading by annotating your texts. Annotations will help you stay active and start learning how to read analytically. They will give you an idea of the overall structure of a text. They will also help you find what you’re looking for during class dialogues and when writing papers.

Annotations are due each class a reading is due. Having annotations will be a condition of staying in class that day.

You will turn in your books to have your annotations graded when indicated on the syllabus assignment schedule. Each set of annotations will be graded Pass/Fail. To receive a “Pass,” I must deem that you have *meaningfully* done the following:

1. Write your full name written inside front cover of your book
2. Write a *phrase* at the top of each page summarizing the topic of that page *to you* (don’t copy other’s!). Short phrases in margins can also often help to keep track of an argument.

3. Footnote your own questions at the bottom of the pages, showing you are thinking about what you're reading
4. Use horizontal bars, asterixis, boxes to "highlight" text that is particularly interesting to you (avoid underlining large amounts of text, as it clutters the page)
5. Numbers, (e.g. 1., 2. 3., a., b., c.) to show numbered items in a list the author makes, or a 1st, 2nd, 3rd definition offered for the same idea, etc.
6. Include a key in the front of the book of symbols you will use in the margins of the text to denote categories you wish to keep track of, eg:
 - D - Definitions
 - T - Important Terms
 - Q - Author's/Character's Questions
 - V - New Vocabulary
 - Any other categories you wish to keep track of and their symbol.

Attendance & In-class Participation - 40%

Quality of participation in class activities will be judged by, but not be limited to, the following:

PRESENT & PREPARED: The student is present throughout the class, has copies of the readings in physical form in hand. Student has done all the reading carefully, has annotated their text and comes to class ready to discuss the texts and to explore the material together (is ready to explain OR has specific questions about which parts of the he or she did not understand).

ACTIVE & ATTENTIVE: The student is attentive to the conversation, does not use phone or computer during class, is active and proactive, maintains a posture of respect and alertness, tries to understand the text and others, volunteers to read aloud, asks questions, volunteers his or her hypotheses about what the text means, actively listens to others, helps peers, is courteous, receives feedback and criticism humbly and respectfully, agrees or disagrees with others with reason and sensitivity, presents ideas in plain language, supports claims with reasons and textual evidence. Student demonstrates the elements of the evolving rubric generated during in-class debriefs.

Grade Scale:

A+: 98-100% (Truly outstanding work throughout), **A:** 93-97% (Excellent work), **A-:** 90-92%,

B+: 88-89% **B:** 83-87% (Solid work), **B-:** 80-82%

C+: 78-79%, **C:** 70-77% (Average work), **D:** 60-69% (Barely passing work), **E:** 0-59% (Failing work)

Required Texts & Technology Policy

You are expected to read all readings **before** attending class. You must also bring **physical copies** of each of the readings each class they will be discussed. And your readings must be **personally annotated**. Since familiarity with the texts is a prerequisite for productive conversation about them, **students who fail to bring their physical texts to class or whose texts do not show personal annotations will be asked to leave class and will be marked absent for that day.** Readings found on Canvas must be printed out, annotated, and brought to class.

Phones, laptops, tablets, and other electronics will not be permitted in class. Research shows students learn better when this policy is in effect. It will also help us develop a common culture in the classroom.

The following texts are required:

1. Plato, *Five Dialogues*, Hackett, ISBN-13: 9780872206335
2. Plato, *Gorgias*, Hackett, ISBN-13: 9780872200166
3. Aristophanes: *The Clouds*, Focus Publishing, ISBN-13: 9780941051248
4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, University of Chicago Press, ISBN-13: 9780226026749
5. The Holy Bible: The Gospel of Matthew (Any translation. I recommend either the J.B. Phillips translation or the New Revised Standard Version.)
6. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, University of Chicago Press ISBN-13: 9780226500447
7. Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Hackett, ISBN-13: 9780915144860
8. Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, Hackett, ISBN-13: 9781603846738

Email Communication and Class Updates

I may need to update students on class activities and assignments. I will be emailing students at their ASU email address. Students are responsible for checking this email regularly. Please also send all official communications to me via your ASU email address.

When emailing me, I expect you to begin your email with “Dear Mr. Humphries” and end your email with a salutation and your name, e.g., “Best wishes, Joan Smith.” **If you do not start and end your email this way, I will write back to you to send it again with that information** and your answer will be delayed.

Covid Related Policies & Additional Information

Masks

The Provost office guidance regarding masks is a default requirement for wearing appropriate/effective masks in classes starting Fall 2021. Everyone will need to keep checking the updated links about the Fall learning expectations and face coverings; the following links also include a range of further information and support services:

- <https://provost.asu.edu/fall-2021-learning-expectations>
- <https://www.asu.edu/about/fall-2021#face-coverings>
- <https://www.asu.edu/about/fall-2021>
- <https://eoss.asu.edu/health/announcements/coronavirus/faqs>

Remote Learning Contingencies

In the event that ASU suspends in person classes, we will hold class at the regular time on Zoom this address: <https://asu.zoom.us/j/5994082241>

You will also be responsible to drop off your **book annotations, paper abstracts, and papers** at my office by 4:00pm on the day they are due, or in the case that the suspension leads people to leave the area, I will arrange a special Zoom meeting with you to see your annotations over video, and ask you to send me several pictures of pages I pick at random to grade.

Excused Absences

In a limited number of cases, the university protects absences. If you can document the following causes of absence, we will arrange for a special meeting in office hours to drop off assignments and have a make up conversation about anything you missed in class:

1. A student diagnosed with COVID should immediately report this to the Dean of Students (deanofstudents@asu.edu) and notify me, and follow the quarantining and other guidelines at <https://eoss.asu.edu/health/announcements/coronavirus>. I will also contact the Dean of Students. If notified of close contact with a diagnosed person, which would require quarantining, notify me immediately as well.
2. Information on excused absences related to religious observances/practices that are in accordance with [ACD 304-04](#) "Accommodations for Religious Practices."
3. Information on excused absences related to university-sanctioned events/activities that are in accordance with [ACD 304-02](#) "Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities."

Accommodating students with disabilities

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services office should contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS Tempe office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. SAILS staff can also be reached at (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc.

Expected conduct and freedom of inquiry and discourse

Please be conscientious and kind to everyone. Please be aware of potentially disruptive or distracting behavior such as ringing cell phones that may detract from an environment of concentrated learning. Again, laptops, cell phones, MP3, IPOD, listening to music, messaging, side talking, eating food noisily, etc., are not permitted.

ASU has a fine set of resources for the university community under the Dean of Students page on "Free Speech at ASU," including a statement on "The First Amendment and you" and President Crow's 2019 statement on "free speech, civil discourse, and student conduct," at <https://eoss.asu.edu/resources/free-speech>.

In the spirit of those policy statements and resources I will add for this course that freedom of inquiry and discourse is essential to our work together as a community of learners. All of us should know that our rights and duties regarding free speech and civil discourse are both an end and a means to a successful course, for faculty and students alike. With the aim of advancing and deepening everyone's understanding of the ideas and issues addressed in the course, and in accord with longstanding principles on the rights and duties of academic freedom, students are urged to speak their minds respectfully, explore ideas and arguments, play devil's advocate, and engage in civil but robust discussions. You are expected to be tolerant of thought or language within these broad boundaries. The expectation is that all of us will work together in the proper spirit of mutual charity and intellectual discourse. The currency of this kind of discourse is reason, evidence, and argument; all ideas or positions within those broad boundaries, relevant to the inquiries of our course are welcome.

Academic integrity

All written work must be your own. Any quotations or paraphrase must be accompanied by citations showing the author, title, and page number where you got the idea. When in doubt, cite a source.

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, and laboratory work, academic transactions and records. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity>

Policy against threatening behavior

Each syllabus must include ASU's policy against threatening behavior (Student Services Manual [SSM 104-02](#) "Handling Disruptive, Threatening or Violent Individuals on Campus"):

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Reporting Title IX violations

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Policy on Sexual Discrimination

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

Copyrighted materials

You must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

If you have any questions, please refer to [ACD-304-10](#) Course Syllabus or contact Amanda A. Smith or Jenny Smith in The College Office of Students and Academic Programs at (480) 965-6506.

Assignment Schedule

You will have approximately 10 pages of hard reading to do every single day for the rest of the semester in this class. **To be successful you must pick both a time and a place to do your reading for this class every day.** I recommend annotating with a single pencil as your annotating tool.

WEEK 1

Thurs Aug 19: Adler "An Invitation to the Pain of Learning" [~3 pgs] (in class)

WEEK 2

Tues Aug 24: Plato Meno [~29 pgs]

Meno annotations due

Thurs Aug 26: Plato Gorgias – (447.a-470.c3) [~23 pgs]

WEEK 3

Tues Aug 31 Plato Gorgias – (470.c4-500e) [~31 pgs]

Thurs Sep 2 Plato Gorgias – (500.e-end) [~25 pgs]

Gorgias annotations due

WEEK 4

Tues Sept 7 No class meeting - Labor Day

Thurs Sept 9 Aristophanes The Clouds [~78 pgs]

Clouds annotations due

WEEK 5

Tues Sept 14 Plato Apology [~20 pgs]

Thurs Sept 16 Plato Crito [~12 pgs]

WEEK 6

Tues Sept 21 Plato Phaedo – (57a–89a) [~29 pgs]

Thurs Sept 23 Plato Phaedo – (89b–118a) [~24 pgs]

Apology, Crito, & Phaedo annotations due

Paper 1 Abstract due

WEEK 7

Tues Sept 28 Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book I (1094a1–1103a10) [~25 pgs]

Thurs Sept 30 Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book II (1103a11–1109b26) [~17 pgs]

****Voluntary Abstract Workshop 1 (TBD)****

WEEK 8

Tues Oct 5 Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book III (1109b30–1119b18) [~25 pgs]

Thurs Oct 7	Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book IV.3-4 (1123a35–1125b25) AND V.1–7 (1129a1–1135a15) [~22 pgs]
Fri Oct 8	Paper 1 Due (Friday Oct 8 by 4pm)
WEEK 9	
Tues Oct 12	<i>No class - Fall Break (Oct 9-12)</i>
Thurs Oct 14	Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book VI (1138b18–1145a12) AND VII, 1–10 (1145a15–1152a35) [~41 pgs]
WEEK 10	
Tues Oct 19	Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII (1155a1–1163b27) [~25 pgs]
Thurs Oct 21	Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book IX (1163b30–1172a16) [~22 pgs]
WEEK 11	
Tues Oct 26	Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics Book VII, 11–14 (1152b1–1154b34) AND X, 4–9 (1174a13 to end) [~28 pgs] Nicomachean ethics annotations due
Thurs Oct 28	The New Testament: Matthew Chs. 3-10, 13, 15:1-15:20, 22:34-22:40, 26-28 [~26 pgs]
WEEK 12	
Tues Nov 2	Machiavelli The Prince I-IX [~41 pgs]
Thurs Nov 4	Machiavelli The Prince X–XVI [~26 pgs]
WEEK 13	
Tues Nov 9	Machiavelli The Prince XVII–XXVI [~42 pgs] <i>The Prince annotations due</i>
Thurs Nov 11	Locke Second Treatise of Government 1–51 [~36 pgs]
WEEK 14	
Tues Nov 16	Locke Second Treatise of Government 57, 87–100, 119,123-158 [~36 pgs]
Thurs Nov 18	Locke Second Treatise of Government 199, 211–243 [~24 pgs] <i>Second Treatise annotations due</i>
WEEK 15	
Tues Nov 23	Rousseau Discourse on Inequality – Letter to the Rep of Geneva, Preface, Part I [~40 pgs]
Thurs Nov 25	Rousseau Discourse on Inequality – Part II [~24 pgs] <i>Discourse on Inequality annotations due</i> AND Paper 2 Abstract due
Voluntary Abstract Workshop 2 (TBD)	
WEEK 16	
Tues Nov 30	The Declaration of Independence (2nd paragraph only); Wollstonecraft A Vindication of the Rights of Women (on Canvas) [~20pgs] <i>Vindication of the Rights of Women annotations due</i>
Thurs Dec 2	Mill, On Liberty (selections on Canvas) [~27 pgs] <i>On Liberty annotations due</i>
WEEK 17	
Thurs Dec. 6	Paper #2 Due (Thurs Dec. 6 by 4:00pm)