HUMA 11500: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMANITIES – I
SYLLABUS, AUTUMN

II. DESCRIPTION

This course considers philosophy in two lights: as an ongoing series of arguments addressed to certain fundamental questions about the place of human beings in the world, and as a historically situated discipline interacting with and responding to developments in other areas of thought and culture. Readings tend to divide between works of philosophy and contemporaneous works of literature but we also include relevant readings from the twentieth century. The course is discussion-driven but writing-intensive and these activities will be mutually reinforcing. In Autumn Quarter, we explore fundamental ethical questions—concerning virtue, the good life, the role of the individual in society—as they were formulated by ancient Greek writers and philosophers. Our focus is on Plato, Aristotle, and Sophocles.

III. TEXTS

Our main readings will come from the following books. All are available for purchase in the Seminary Co-op. If you choose to purchase them from elsewhere then make sure you have the correct editions.

   Hackett Publishing Company, 1992

   Cambridge University Press, 2000

   Cambridge University Press, 2000

   Hackett Publishing Company, 2003

Any supplementary readings are available to download from the course website (under “Files”).
IV. SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Oct 2 (T)  Introduction
            Plato, *Phaedrus* (selections)

Oct 4 (R)  Plato, *Euthyphro*

Oct 9 (T)  Plato, *Apology*

Oct 10 (W) **FIRST PAPER TOPICS**

Oct 11 (R) Plato, *Crito*
            Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Oct 15 (M) **INTRO FOR FIRST PAPER DUE (9am)**

Oct 16 (T) Plato, *Meno*, 70a-86c
            Anscombe, “Understanding Proofs: Meno, 85d9-86c2, Continued”

Oct 18 (R) Plato, *Republic*, Bks. I-II (up to line 376e)

Oct 22 (M) **FIRST PAPER DUE (5pm)**

Oct 23 (T) Plato, *Republic*, Bks. III-IV (from line 394b up to 432b)

Oct 25 (R) Plato, *Republic*, Bks. IV-V
            Perictione, “On the Harmonious Woman”

Oct 26 (F) **SECOND PAPER TOPICS**

Oct 30 (T) Plato, *Republic* Bk. VI-VII (up to 521b)
            Annas, “Understanding and the Good: Sun, Line, and Cave”

Nov 1 (R)  Plato, *Republic* Bks. VIII-IX

Nov 5 (M) **DRAFT OF SECOND PAPER DUE (9am)**

Nov 6 (T)  Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*
            Dodds, “On Misunderstanding the Oedipus Rex”

Nov 8 (R)  Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*
            Lear, “Knowingness and Abandonment: An Oedipus for Our Time”

Nov 12 (M) **SECOND PAPER DUE (5pm)**

            Korsgaard, “Aristotle’s Function Argument”
Wolf, “Moral Saints”

Nov 20 (T)  Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk.VI, Bk. X. 6-9

Nov 21 (W)  THIRD PAPER TOPICS

Nov 22 (R)  THANKSGIVING – NO MEETING


Nov 29 (R)  Sophocles, *Antigone*

Nov 30 (F)  DRAFT OF THIRD PAPER DUE (9am)

Dec 4 (T)  Sophocles, *Antigone*

Dec 6 (R)  READING PERIOD – NO MEETING

Dec 7 (F)  THIRD PAPER DUE (5pm)

V. REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading
Students are expected to complete all reading assignments before coming to the relevant class and to bring the text to class.

2. Discussion and Participation (25% of course grade)
Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate actively in discussion. This means both asking questions and being prepared to answer them. That said, you may miss two meetings without it adversely affecting your grade (and without asking for permission).

We will be using an experimental system to keep track of who is speaking during class. This data may be taken into consideration in assigning a grade but it tracks quantity rather than quality—quality is important too!

You will have short canvas assignments (mostly discussion board posts) due the morning of every class. These should be easy to complete if you have done the reading. They are graded on a check/check plus/check minus scale (i.e., from 0 to 3 where 0 means no assignment and 3 is check plus). Late and incomplete posts get a check minus. The best five 5 posts get a check plus (with room for ties).
In addition, students must attend and contribute to all three writing seminars in order to pass the writing component of the course.

3. Writing

First Paper  
Due 10/22  
3 pages (20% of course grade)

Second Paper  
Draft Due 11/5  
Final Due 11/12  
5 pages (25% of course grade)

Third Paper  
Draft Due 11/30  
Final Due 12/7  
7 pages (30% of course grade)

For the first paper, you will submit an introductory paragraph containing a thesis statement for discussion in the Writing Seminar. For the second and third papers, we will ask you to submit a partial draft for discussion in the Writing Seminar. Drafts will not receive a grade, but submission of a serious effort at a draft will be a precondition of receiving a passing grade on the assignment.

All final papers should be submitted by uploading to the course website (under “Assignments”). We will be grading your papers anonymously, so please do not put your name on your paper. Instead, please put your Student ID number on the first page to identify yourself.

In general, there will be no extra credit assignments or rewrites, with the following exception. If you are dissatisfied with your grade on the first paper you may write a new paper on a different topic taken from the original prompt. I will use the grade from this new paper instead when calculating your final grade.

VI. Policies

i. Deadlines

Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B) per day, unless an extension has been agreed in advance with the Instructor.

ii. Technology

All devices with an ON/OFF switch—laptops, phones, etc.—must be switched OFF during class, unless they are serving a medical purpose. Your participation grade may be adversely affected if you don’t respect this policy.

iii. Statement on Disabilities

Your success in this class is important to me. If the setup of our learning environment or activities present any barriers to your full participation, please let me know as soon as possible, and together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the
requirements of the course. To this end, I invite you to discuss accessibility measures with me as soon as possible (in strict confidence).

If you have a documented disability, I encourage you to register with Student Disability Services. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met and SDS will tell me what these needs are without divulging details of your disability. Here is their contact information:

Address: 5501 S. Ellis Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637  
Phone: (773) 702-6000  
Email: disabilities@uchicago.edu  
https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/

Disclosure of disability status is always up to you, and that choice is protected by federal law. If you prefer not to disclose your disability status, we can still have a productive conversation about what specific adjustments might make our meetings and interactions more accessible. See the Student Manual for more details (http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/disability).

iv. Academic Integrity

All students are expected to understand and abide by the principles laid out in your Student Manual under Academic Honesty & Plagiarism (http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/policies).

The penalty for plagiarism is zero on that assignment, with no rewrites or makeups. Repeat offenders will fail the course. Any instances of plagiarism (including inappropriate use of online sources or inadequate citation) will be reported to the College Dean of Students in accordance with faculty guidelines.