

Western Philosophy Syllabus: 2018-2019

Instructor: Ron E. Scrogam: St. Pius X High School: Room # 107

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Office hours: Before school (7:15 AM), after school (2:40-3:30 PM), study hall, late start Wednesdays and Thursdays, seminar, and by appointment.

Course Description:

Western Philosophy examines four seminal works of philosophy that have significantly influenced contemporary Western thought, including that of the Church: Plato's *The Meno* and *The Republic*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. Consistent with the instructional approach of all courses at St. Pius X High School, the framework for evaluating the truth-claims of these philosophies will be the Magisterial Teachings of Holy Mother Church—for the Spirit Himself preserves all her official teachings from errors (Cf., *Matthew* 16:19; *1 Timothy* 3:15). Class will be conducted in a seminar format, where each participant will have read the considered text and will be prepared to contribute with others to build understanding. Students will read, discuss and write an essay at the end of each six-week grading period.

Objectives:

- Students are able to read and reasonably interpret primary texts of philosophy, without reference to secondary materials.
- Students are able to discuss in a seminar-format these philosophical texts in a constructive way.
- Students are able to write expository essays that explore a philosophical question prompted by these texts.
- Students are able to think philosophically - to reason methodically in order to approach wisdom.

Texts:

Plato *The Meno* (Photocopied text provided.)

Plato *The Republic of Plato: Second Edition*

Translated by Allan Bloom

ISBN-10: 0465069347; ISBN-13: 978-0465069347

Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*

Translated by David Ross

ISBN-10: 0199213615; ISBN-13: 978-0199213610

St. Augustine *Confessions: Second Edition*

Translated by Frank (F.J.) Sheed

ISBN-10: 0872208168; ISBN-13: 978-0872208162

These are required editions, in print format. Common editions and formats facilitate discussion and obviate discussions about differences in translations. These editions are easily found in new and used conditions at online booksellers and libraries.

Course Requirements:

To demonstrate a serious engagement with these texts, students will be expected to complete all reading assignments prior to class, to participate daily in the conversation about the readings, to write three essays (four-to-five pages) on topics chosen by the students. **The due dates for the essays are as follows: September 28, November 9, and December 17.** (Dates are subject to change.) Reading assignments will be posted for the week. As this class is a seminar-format, preparation and participation are essential for the success of learning of the class. Block-schedule days will consist of scheduled seminars and films with philosophical subjects. There will also be weekly lessons concerning critical thinking from Khan Academy.

Grading:

Papers: 100% of total grade

Grading Scale:

A 100-94	A- 93-90	
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60
F below 60		

Course Policies:

A) Attendance/Tardiness: Frequent absences will impede students' progress, and avoidable tardiness disrupts the class and disrespects the instructor and colleagues. Disciplinary actions will follow those of the St. Pius X High School Student Handbook.

B) Late submissions: As due dates for projects will be announced and posted well in advance, late assignments will then be accepted only through prior arrangement with the instructor. Planned absences should accommodate deadlines. Students can submit work in advance or as an attachment via email if they are absent on the due date. The instructor will accommodate emergencies or extraordinary circumstances. Students will receive an INCOMPLETE (INC) on progress reports until late or missing assignments are received.

C) Hall passes: Students have standing permission to leave the classroom for the restroom, their lockers, or for other reasons. Please minimize disruptions to others and choose opportune moments to leave the classroom. Students must always carry their planners as a pass.

D) Beginning/End of class: Class begins upon entering the room. Please arrange the desks for a seminar. Class ends upon dismissal of the instructor.

E) Conduct: Students are to listen respectfully when others are speaking. Any derogatory reference to the differences of others is not permissible and will receive a disciplinary demerit.

F) Plagiarism/Academic Honesty: Students are to do their own work and properly cite their sources. Any occurrence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be addressed in accordance with the St. Pius X High School Student Handbook.

Invitation

Learning best occurs when students are ultimately responsible for it. Concerning the course, students are welcome to make suggestions, express concerns, and discuss disagreements. The instructor will respond with respect and sincerity.

The organization of the class, coursework, examinations, and course policies are subject to modification at the discretion of the instructor in order to best meet the goals of the class.

Reading Schedule

Week One: *Meno*.

Week Two: *The Republic*: Books I & II.

Week Three: *The Republic*: Books III & IV.

Week Four: *The Republic*: Books V & VI.

Week Five: *The Republic*: Books VII & VIII.

Week Six: *The Republic*: Books IX & X

Week Seven: *The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book I & II.

Week Eight: *The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book III & IV.

Week Nine: *The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book V & VI.

Week Ten: *The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book VII & VIII.

Week Eleven: *The Nicomachean Ethics*: Book IX & X.

Week Twelve: *The Confessions*: Book I & II.

Week Thirteen: *The Confessions*: Book III & IV.

Week Fourteen: *The Confessions*: Book V & VI.

Week Fifteen: *The Confessions*: Book VII & VIII

Week Sixteen: *The Confessions*: Book IX & X.

Week Seventeen: *The Confessions*: Book XI

Revised July 2018: Mr. Ron Scrogam