

LIBS 497

Is Philosophy a Joke?

Dr. Mark A Menaldo

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Class Time Friday: 2:00 pm-4:30 pm.

Office Hours are by appointment: outdoors, phone, or Zoom meeting.

Course description:

Did comedy kill history's most famous philosopher? In ancient Athens, it might have helped kill Socrates. Comedy and Tragedy, where the two defining archetypes of theater. In 423 BC, Athens's most famous comic poet, Aristophanes, staged his most famous play, *The Clouds*, which depicts an over-intellectualized Socrates. In the play, Socrates turns young men into fast-talking repudiators of norms and religion, as they learn how to make the weaker speech the stronger. Fast forward 24 years, and we witness Plato's Socrates's, in the *Apology*, defending himself against the charges of corruption and impiety. In his ironic defense, Socrates points to a serious slander that arose against him with the staging of *The Clouds*. This class exams at least these two key texts, reading them in class, line by line, each in turn. If time permits we will read additional Platonic dialogues.

Learning objectives: This course will provide experiences for students to work on (1) close reading and enhancement of reading skills by carefully considering primary text materials, (2) engage in intensive writing exercises by writing short explications of texts, providing peer-to-peer feedback, and revising all writing assignments, and (3) participate in high-level discussion through explication of text, critical questions, and peer discussion.

Required texts:

Four Texts on Socrates: <https://www.amazon.com/Texts-Socrates-Euthyphro-Apology-Aristophanes/dp/0801485746>

Journal 15%

Explications 30%

Peer Assessment 20%

Midterm 15%

Final Exam 20%

Journal: You will keep a journal throughout the course. It can include: Your reading notes/class notes/question that arise during or after class/study notes. See this helpful website:

<http://new.math.uiuc.edu/netgeom/advice/howto-journal.html>

Reading Assignments: You must read the assignment material in advance of each class. Each class session, the instructor will announce how much material students should read. Although this course does not have a heavy reading load students are expected to read every line of the text carefully. In addition, students take a primary role in class discussion.

Writing Assignments: You will write in class responses, and must also write 4, 1.5-2 page (double spaced) critical explication of text that addresses a key problem in the reading. Although these assignments are short they are significantly more intense. An explication of text is not a summary or a defense of your own opinion. It is rather an exploration of an important, puzzling question about the meaning of the text. You are free to write creatively as long as the essay is grounded in the text. I will model an explication and the review process in class.

All writing assignments are due before the start of the class. I will not accept late assignments. You must bring a hardcopy to class and also upload your revised papers to the TURNITIN lessons tab.

Mid-term and Final: The mid-term and final exam are take home comprehensive questions.

Peer-Review: You will be asked to work in pairs throughout the session as a peer reviewer, rotating among peers for each assignment. Your job is twofold. You will comment on your peers writing assignment by: asking questions about the paper, suggesting points to revise, and being specific in your comments. You will comment and then discuss your comments with your peer. Your task is to help your fellow peer write for a reader and not for himself/herself or for the teacher. It is important to be polite in this exercise but also **frank**. As a class, we will model the peer review process, in which the class will review the instructor's explication.

Weekly Schedule:

Will be uploaded to D2L on August 24

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.