

## Assignments and Announcements

### Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 1301)

#### Spring 2011

Last updated: Tuesday, May 10, 2011 at 4:27 PM.

**There may be more than one entry for one day. The most recent entries are at the top of the list.**

Tuesday, May 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't be disturbed if you find a zero in your Blackboard grades for test 4. If you take test 4 on Thursday (May 12), your grade will replace the zero.</li> </ul>
Wednesday, May 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The final test, test 4 (Thursday, May 12), will be a Scantron test like previous tests. The materials covered in test 4 will be the following:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of section 5, pages 160 to 231 (except just the part about analytic and synthetic propositions in the Leibniz subsection).</li> <li>The subsection on Nietzsche, pages 279 to 287.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Daoism notes (required reading 16), the little piece on the first page on Chuang-tzu's butterfly dream.</li> <li>Required readings 11, 12, and 13 (the short pieces by Berkeley, Hume, and Nietzsche).</li> <li>Your own lecture notes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Monday, April 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">An amazingly good and helpful article on meditation</a> from Huffington Post.</li> </ul>
Friday, April 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am still missing 2 essays. If I have received yours, you will have a grade for it on Blackboard. If you are missing a grade but have handed in an essay, that means it has gone astray, so email me a copy of it as an attachment.</li> </ul>
Wednesday, April 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your Blackboard postings for our course are up to date, including absences.</li> <li>Because I drop your lowest grade of the four tests + the essay (i.e., lowest one of five items), and if you have taken all the tests so far and handed in an essay, you may want to skip the final test, feeling you won't be able to improve your grade.</li> <li>Be aware, however, that attendance will still count.</li> </ul>
Sunday, April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One very short reading I forgot (see below for Descartes-related readings) is the little piece on Chuang-tzu's butterfly dream, in the Daoism notes.</li> </ul>
Wednesday, April 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test 3 is next Tuesday, April 19. The test will be the same Scantron format as the previous two tests.</li> <li>After that we have only six more class days, plus one day (Thursday, May 12) for test 4. I am presently working on how I can pare down all the material that I would like to discuss with you—since we have so little time.</li> <li>Tomorrow I will finish section three, by discussing Plotinus. We will probably have some class time after that, so I will start discussing Descartes (textbook page 160 ff.), which is the first philosopher in section four (re test 4).</li> <li>Before Thursday, April 21, read the Descartes' chapter and required readings 11 (Berkeley) and 12 (Hume).</li> </ul>
Saturday, April 9	<p>From today's news: Washington (SmartAboutHealth) – According to a new study, meditation practice is actually more powerful than medication in terms of its ability to <a href="#">relieve pain</a>.</p> <p>Researchers from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina worked on this breakthrough study to take a closer look at the type of impact <a href="#">meditation</a> had</p>

on pain, and how much relief it could provide.

Meditation is extremely complex, but breaking it down into simpler terms, it is a state you put your body in where your mind is free from the world around you.

The idea was to see how meditation compared to [pain relief](#) medication.

In a lab setting, researchers applied heat probes to male and female participants at a temperature of 120F.

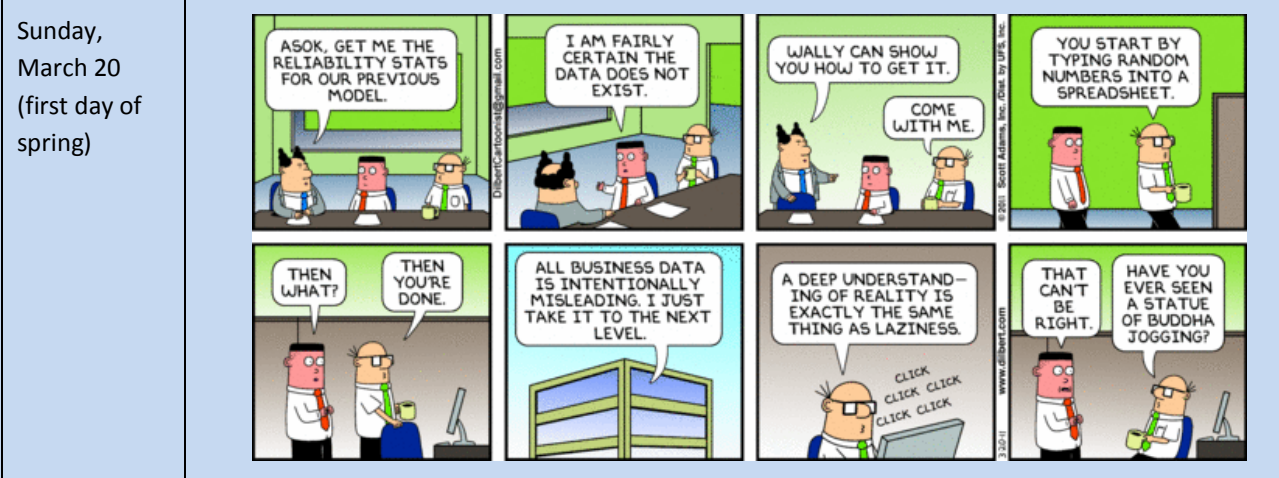
They did this first while they were on medications or pain relief drugs, and then while they were meditating.

What researchers found is that the meditation allowed for further pain relief than the drugs.


Participants in meditation during this were 57% less unpleasant under these painful circumstances. They also stated that the heat was not as intense.

The study has been published in the Journal of Neuroscience.

- Sunday, April 3
- I forgot one of the required readings for this section and test 3: Required reading #16, the short section on the Cynic philosophy.
  - I also forgot to tell you to turn your essays back in to me after I have returned them to you graded and corrected.



- Sunday, March 6
- Test 2 will be on March 22, the first class day after Spring Break. It will be a Scantron-type test just like test 1 was. It will cover the following:
    - Textbook on Parmenides, Zeno, and Empedocles.
    - Readings, audio, and video 5, 6, 7, 8, 15 (last page), 17, 18, and 27.
    - I have made an addition to my notes on Parmenides. On page 6 now there is a note on the connection between the Two Ways or Two Truths.
  - After test 2:
    - Readings for section 3/test 3:
      - Textbook pages 42 to 107.
      - Required reading 9, Plato's Allegory of the Cave.
    - Your essays are due on Tuesday, April 5.
      - Recommendation concerning the essays: read the textbook sections on Berkeley, Hume, and Nietzsche, and the essays by these three, required readings 11, 12, and 13. These three essays are 3 of 4 required readings for section 4 (the other is 25). Then decide if you want to do your essay on one of these.
      - However, there are other essay topics.
      - See [Rules for Essays](#), linked on our homepage.
    - Test 3 will probably be on Tuesday, April 19.

<p>Friday, March 4</p>	
<p>Friday, Feb 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our class is having an attack of bad manners, specifically people just getting up and leaving the room, often but not always returning. Kindly stop this behavior immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reread (!) lines 136-150 in the course syllabus.</li> <li>• If you have a real problem (e.g., you're ill and your bladder isn't working correctly) let me know about it before class starts. (You don't have to give me the details, just tell me you're ill and may have to leave class temporarily. Also, sit near the door at the back of class.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Class participation yesterday was wonderful! I'm amazed at how so many are getting the deep implications of what I am teaching you. Especially the understanding that while we are trying to get back home (a la Prodigal Son), the reality is we're already home and the feeling that we're not is an illusion.</li> <li>• Information about section 2 and test 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In class yesterday I suggested I would show the video lecture (req. reading 18) I have discussed next class (Tues Feb 22), but I think that's going to be too early. So I probably will show it next Thursday and repeat it Tues March 1.</li> <li>• Preparation for the <u>next class</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and reread and reread the textbook on Parmenides and Zeno.</li> <li>• Go over my notes on Parmenides (req. reading 17). Be sure you understand the tremendous implications for philosophy and for your life of what I call Parmenides' "Great Tautology."</li> <li>• Learn the new page I have added to the required reading on meditation (#15). Know and understand those 4 important points.</li> <li>• Read Parmenides' poem (#24). It is quite difficult to understand some of its points, even experts on ancient philosophy have trouble with it. I will go over all of it with you in class, but read it before we do that and it will make much more sense to you.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Required readings, audio, and video for this section and test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #1: Textbook on Parmenides, Zeno, and Empedocles.</li> <li>• Readings (also audio and video) 5, 6, 7, 8, 15 (last page), 17, 18, and 24.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Friday, Feb 4 #2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have made a lot of additions and changes to the notes on classical Daoism (required reading #16). Some of the new items give a simple explanation of poem 1 of <i>Tao Te Ching</i>, and of Shinn's book in relation to the concept of naming. I recommend you print this new version for yourselves.</li> <li>• Over the past years I have created two outlines of Shinn's book for myself. If you think they might help you, you will find them <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Friday, Feb 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test #1 will be on Tuesday, Feb 15. Next week we will have two days to discuss <i>Tao Te Ching</i>. If we finish on <i>Tao Te Ching</i> before the end of class on Thursday, Feb 17, we will move on to discussing Parmenides, using the textbook (but Parmenides will not be on the test).</li> </ul>
<p>January 27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next class (Tuesday, February 1) we will start on <i>Tao Te Ching</i>, and on the chapter from Shinn's book. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This may take three class meetings, which would push the date of test #1 back to February 10 (instead of February 8).</li> <li>• In our first class on <i>Tao Te Ching</i> I will focus on poem 1, and I will discuss Shinn's book in relation to the idea of "naming" in poem 1.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• However, if you have any questions about the other material we have covered, bring them up in class.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure you understand why Heraclitus “You can’t step into the same river twice” is saying that we live in a world of incessant change in which “things” can only be an illusion.</li> <li>• Be sure you understand what Anaxamander meant by the disaster that disturbed the apeiron (text p. 19), and what it might mean for human life, and how it relates to Heraclitus’ idea of incessant change and the illusory nature of all the things that make up the universe.</li> <li>• Note: I don’t normally do reviews for tests, nor do I prepare review sheets prior to tests. I feel that everything for the test should have been well covered in class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means that your last chance to ask questions about the test will be in class the last class day before the test.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1/21/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings for section 1/test 1 of our course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook pages 1 to 35. We have finished to page 9 in class so far.</li> <li>• Required reading #2 (prodigal son). Covered in class.</li> <li>• #3 (<i>Tao Te Ching</i>).</li> <li>• #4 (Shinn, <i>Game of Life</i>, chapter 1).</li> <li>• #15 (on meditation). Covered in class.</li> <li>• #16 (study guide on Daoist terms).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Even if we have covered a reading in class, you can still go back to it and ask questions about it in class.</li> <li>• Read the textbook selections several times for next week.</li> <li>• Try out meditating and see why it is necessary for doing ontology, and why merely using logos (talking and thinking), though essential, isn’t enough to know Being. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you want a mantra, try “I am, I just am.” That’s from the story of Moses and the burning bush that we discussed in class.</li> <li>• Note the quotations at the beginning of the meditation article, and especially the one by Sontag (which may have been missing on some of the earlier versions of this article that I uploaded).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Another thing I’d like you to practice, to try out (besides meditation), is Shinn’s philosophy (reading #4). If you can, read beyond chapter 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is another practical part of our course that, if you get it and practice it, can change your life for the better. We will discuss it in class when discussing poem 1 of <i>Tao Te Ching</i> and its concept of “naming.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Let’s discuss your experiences trying out these practical things in class.</li> <li>• The course calendar gives Feb. 8 as the date for test 1. Class interaction/discussion, etc., may lengthen the section and thus push back the test date. All test dates on the calendar are estimates.</li> </ul>
1/13/2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday, January 18, 2011 is the first day of class.</li> <li>• Required readings for the next class meetings (numbers refer to items on the Required Readings list, linked on the <a href="#">course homepage</a>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 (textbook, pages 2 to 23). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always read ahead (i.e., read the required readings before I discuss them in class). This will make learning easier and more efficient for you, and will greatly improve class discussion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2 (story of the prodigal son). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This story, from the Christian New Testament, states the theme of our course in an allegorical form. Humans have lost touch with reality, and spend their lives wandering around like drunks and sleepwalkers because (as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE philosopher, Parmenides, said) they have no idea what is real and what is an illusion of reality.</li> <li>• The course is about discovering reality; actually, about uncovering the Truth that we have hidden from ourselves (for reasons we can no longer remember). Basically, rediscovering what is real and what is not is, and has to be, an individual effort. We will follow some of the most important philosophers in history to find out how to use our main philosophical “tools,” experience and logic, to rediscover what is real—that is, to “go home” as the prodigal son did.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15 (on meditation).<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is an article of mine on meditation; besides reading it, try it out so that we can discuss one another's meditation experiences in class.</li><li>• The most important teachings of my course are things that you can and must prove for yourself using meditation/stillness and simple logical reasoning.</li></ul></li></ul>
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