

The University of Calgary
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 315 Lecture 01
Philosophy in Literature
Winter 2009 –E. Brake

Instructor: Elizabeth Brake
Office: 1220 Social Sciences
Office hours: Wednesday 11-1 p.m.
Phone: 220-3163
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Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday 2–3:15 p.m., Education Classroom 284

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*, Penguin Classics, 2003 (reprint)
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw and other stories*, Oxford World's Classics, OUP
Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Oxford World's Classics, OUP
Jane Smiley, *A Thousand Acres*, Anchor 2003 edition
Course Reader (available from the bookstore)

Course description:

The course will focus on issues in ethics and epistemology (the theory of knowledge) as exemplified in works by Henry James, William Shakespeare, and Jane Smiley. We will read *King Lear* (in conjunction with philosophical works by Plato, Descartes, and Stanley Cavell) as addressing problems of scepticism, *The Turn of the Screw* (with works by Sartre and Robert Pippin) as illustrating ethical questions, and *A Thousand Acres* (with work by John Stuart Mill) as examining feminist issues. We will discuss the relationship between philosophy and literature, with special attention to work by Plato, Aristotle, and Martha Nussbaum. The course will emphasise careful reading of philosophical texts.

Assessment:

<i><u>Weight</u></i>	<i><u>Assignment</u></i>	<i><u>Due dates</u></i>
10%	Quizzes	Surprise
15% each	2 short essays	2/3, 3/24
25%	In-class test	March 5
10%	In-class test	April 16
25%	Final paper	April 20

There will be no Registrar-scheduled final exam.

To pass the class, you must complete all assignments (except quizzes). Detailed instructions will be given in advance of each assignment. *Late work* will be penalised **3 points** a day, unless there is a documented excuse such as illness, a court date, or serious family problems.

Assignments handed in outside class must be placed in **the box on the 12th floor of Social Sciences**. Do not e-mail assignments.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any instance thereof – downloading papers from the Internet, copying or paraphrasing material from a book, web-site, or a fellow student – will be reported to the Faculty of Humanities and I will assign an F for the course or the assignment.

As stated in the University Calendar, letter grades reflect the following standards:

A: Excellent — superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.

B: Good — clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.

C: Satisfactory — basic understanding of the subject matter.

D: Minimal pass — marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.

F: Fail — unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

I will use the following scale:

A+	97-100	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	60-66		
F	59 and below				

There is a Blackboard site for this course. Log in at <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/> using your U of C e-mail username and password. I will use Blackboard

- to store grades
- to make announcements
- to post course documents (outline, assignments, handouts).

I will accommodate students with disabilities. If you need accommodations, you may wish to contact the *Disability Resource Centre* (220-8237).

READING SCHEDULE:

- Jan 13, 15** **Justice and metaphysics in Plato's *Republic***
- Jan 20, 22** **Philosophy and poetry in Plato's *Republic***
- Jan 27, 29** **Knowledge and doubt in Descartes' *Meditations***
- Feb 3, 5** ***King Lear*** **SHORT ESSAY 2/3**
- Feb 10, 12** ***King Lear*; Aristotle on tragedy**
- Feb 17, 19** **READING WEEK – NO CLASS**
- Feb 24, 26** **Stanley Cavell on scepticism in Shakespeare**
March 3
- March 5** **IN-CLASS TEST**
- Mar 10, 12** **John Stuart Mill – *The Subjection of Women***
- Mar 17, 19** **A feminist *Lear*: Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres***
- Mar 24, 26** **Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*** **SHORT ESSAY 3/24**
- Mar 31, Ap 2** **James as nihilist?: Jean-Paul Sartre and Robert Pippin**
- April 7, 9, 14** **Nussbaum on philosophy and literature**
- April 16** **IN-CLASS FINAL**

Books on reserve (ask at reserve desk):

Aristotle. *Poetics*.

Cavell, Stanley. *Pursuits of Happiness*.

Cavell, Stanley. *Disowning Knowledge in 6 Plays of Shakespeare*.

Descartes, Rene. *Meditations*.

Farrell, Susan. *Jane Smiley's A Thousand Acres*.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*.

James, Henry. *What Maisie Knew*.

James, Henry. *Daisy Miller*.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Love's Knowledge*.

Pippin, Robert. *Henry James and Modern Moral Theory*.

Plato. *Republic*.

Putt, Gorley. *A Preface to Henry James*.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*.

Smiley, Jane. *A Thousand Acres*.

Further suggested reading/viewing:

Stanley Cavell and *King Lear*. Cavell also writes on *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet*, and *The Winter's Tale* (in *Disowning Knowledge*). His *Pursuits of Happiness* explores the same philosophical problems in the context of Hollywood screwball comedies of the 1930's and 40's: 'The Lady Eve', 'It Happened One Night', 'Bringing Up Baby', 'The Philadelphia Story', 'His Girl Friday', 'Adam's Rib', and 'The Awful Truth'.

Henry James: *Daisy Miller* and *What Maisie Knew* are good starting points to get to know James better. Other good choices are *The Portrait of a Lady*, *Washington Square*, *The Golden Bowl*, and *The Wings of the Dove*. Gorley Putt's *A Preface to Henry James* contains biographical material and pictures as well as discussions of the works.

COURSE READER CONTENTS

- 1) René Descartes [1596-1650], *A Discourse on Method; Meditations and Principles*, trans. John Veitch (London: Everyman's Library, 1986), pp. 71-94. *Meditations on the First Philosophy* was originally published in France in 1641.
- 2) Aristotle [384-322 BC], *The Art of Poetry*, in *Aristotle*, translated and edited by Philip Wheelwright (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1951), pp. 296-312.
- 3) Stanley Cavell, 'The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*', in *Must We Mean What We Say* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 267-340.
- 4) John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, with the Subjection of Women, and Chapters on Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 117-145.
- 5) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Existentialism is a Humanism', from *Ethics*, ed. Cahn and Markie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 460-467.
- 6) Robert Pippin, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 89-92, 114-125.
- 7) Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 1-53.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE

The Humanities Representative is Daniel Pagan, MSC 251, humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca or 220-3913.