

Nature of Reality, East and West

PHI 286 / AST 286	Instructor E-Mail: brownjar@berea.edu
Class Meets: TR 1:00-2:50 in Draper 205	Instructor Office: Draper 203A
Instructor: Jarrod Brown	Office Hours: MW 10:30-11:30 TR 10:00-12:00

Description and Goals:

This course explores ideas about the fundamental nature of the world by considering different philosophical traditions' approaches to the question, "What is there, and what am I?"

Drawing on resources from classical Western philosophy and Indian and Buddhist debates, it explores questions such as "What is the fundamental nature of reality?", "What is the nature of causation?", "Do selves exist?" and "What are qualities?" Attention will be given to careful, critical reading of a variety of texts, reconstruction of arguments, and developing the skills needed to make responsible philosophical comparisons.

In addition to attending class, students will read a variety of texts from both the Western, Buddhist and Indian traditions and view documentaries and lectures by important thinkers. Students will produce a number of thoughtful responses to texts throughout the course. Students will also develop and write a philosophical essay, including an proposal, first draft and final draft, that approaches a single philosophical issue from a comparative approach. Through the course of writing their essays and responses, students will improve their ability to develop and critique arguments. Students will also be responsible for leading classes on assigned topics.



Required Texts:

All required readings will be provided to students electronically. This course makes use of a course Web site at <http://www.intrepidphilosopher.com/berea/>. Students are, however, expected to print and bring hard copies of all readings with them to class unless otherwise noted. Students will be provided a password to access all texts on the course Web site.

Course Calendar:

The course calendar is online at <http://www.intrepidphilosopher.com/berea/resources/course-calendar/>.



Instructor Expectations:

This course has very high expectations, and students should expect to spend 10-12 hours a week outside of class for readings and assignments. I expect you to come to class prepared, having read what was assigned for the day. Generally, electronics are not allowed out in class; please do not have phones, tablets, or laptops out in class. I ask that you treat myself and your classmates with respect. I also ask that you approach the subject in the spirit of critical inquiry.

Student Expectations:

You can expect from me an attitude that respects intellectual freedom and critical inquiry. You can expect assignments to be given far enough in advance for you to complete them. You can expect graded assignments and feedback to be returned to you within a timely manner. You can expect e-mails sent to me to be responded to within 48 hours.

Making Learning Accessible to Everyone:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or health condition is invited to contact Lisa Ladanyi (Disability & Accessibility Services (DAS), 111 Lincoln Hall, 859-985-3237, lisa.ladanyi@berea.edu). I would be happy to work with you and DAS to ensure every reasonable accommodation in my course.

Internet Access and E-Mail:

Some readings and assignments for this class require Internet access. Certain free software such as Adobe Flash and Adobe Reader may be required to watch online videos and read .pdf documents. You may access the Internet from the campus libraries. Some assignments may be e-mailed, and you are expected to read all e-mails sent by your instructor. Your instructor will introduce the course Web site and guide you to additional resources in-class.

Your Grade:

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following three areas:

Component	Percentage
Final Paper	50%
Reading Responses	30%
Student Seminar Sessions	20%

The quality of a student's academic achievement in each Berea College course is reported through final course grades in a grading scale adopted by the College Faculty, as follows:

A: Excellent work (90-100%)

B: Good work (80-89%)

C: Competent work (70-79%)

D: Poor work that is still worthy of credit (60-69%)

F: Failing work that is unworthy of credit

Please see <http://catalog.berea.edu/en/2014-2015/Catalog/Academics/Academic-Performance-Standards> for more information on grading at Berea College.

Academic Integrity:

According to the Berea College Student Catalog, "Students are expected to be scrupulous in their observance of high standards of honesty in regard to tests, assignments, term papers, and all other procedures relating to class work. Academic dishonesty as used here includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, theft of examinations or other materials from an instructor's files or office or from a room in which these are being copied, copying of an instructor's test material without the permission of the instructor, theft of computer files from another person, or attributing to one's self the work of others, with or without the others' permission. Falsification of an academic record with intent to improve one's academic standing also shall be construed to be academic dishonesty." If you have any question about whether something is academic dishonesty, then ask me before submitting your assignment.

Citations and References:

Students should use either APA Sixth Edition Style or MLA Seventh Edition Style to format papers and credit sources in this course.

Attendance:

Regular attendance at class is expected for all courses in which a student enrolls. Students with three or more unexcused absences will fail the course. Ὁφθαλμοὶ τῶν ὄτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες

Final Paper:

Students will write a final essay that is at least 2500 words but not more than 3000 words in length. Students will submit (1) a proposal, (2) an outline, (3) a first draft, and (4) a final draft of their essay. Students should plan to meet with the instructor at least twice to discuss their essay. Students will also be required to workshop the paper with a Peer Consultant at the Center for Transformative Learning (CTL) prior to submitting their both their rough draft and their final draft. Full details of the assignment, including the grading rubric, will be given to students in class.

Reading Responses:

You will be asked to submit five reading responses of two double-spaced pages during the semester. Full details of the assignment, including the grading rubric, will be given to students in class.

Student Presentations/Seminar Sessions:

Each student will be responsible for leading discussions in and out of seminar sessions. Students are expected to work with their instructor to prepare for these sessions. Additional details will be provided in class.

Midterm and Final Exam:

There is no midterm or final exam.

There will not be a midterm or final exam in this course.