

Philosophy 359-45  
**Philosophy and Slavery**  
Xavier University, Fall 2002  
TuTh 1:00-2:15, Logan 205

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course web site: xavier.xu.edu/~polt/slavery

Slavery is not only an enduring practical problem but also a stimulus to philosophical reflection on fundamental aspects of the human condition. What is enslavement? What is mastery? What is self-mastery? What is freedom? What is liberation? Is slavery always wrong? Does the fulfillment of some require the oppression of others? Is everyone capable of true freedom? Is Christianity liberating or is it only another form of enslavement? These are some of the challenging questions raised by the ancient and nineteenth-century texts we will read in this course.

### Required texts

Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Lord (Chicago)  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Yale)  
Epictetus, *The Handbook*, trans. White (Hackett)  
*Hegel's Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness*, Rauch and Sherman (SUNY)  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Clark (Hackett)

### Course requirements

First paper: 25%  
Second paper: 25%  
Midterm exam: 15%  
Final exam: 15%  
Class participation: 20%

The two *papers* (5+ pages each) will ask you to explain some central ideas in our readings and think critically about them. A guide to writing philosophy papers will be handed out at the time of the first paper assignment.

The *exams* will be short-essay tests. Study questions for them will be handed out in advance. The final will be cumulative, but will emphasize the second half of the course.

The *class participation* grade is a judgment I make at the end of the semester about the quality of your effort and your contributions to the class as a whole. The judgment is based on your participation in discussions and small-group work, any extra writing you may do (such as a rewritten paper, or your informal thoughts about an issue that came up in class or in the text), your communication with me outside class (office visits, e-mail, phone), and *pop quizzes* that may be given at any time.

Most of our time will be devoted to discussion, both among the class as a whole and in small groups of students. You are encouraged to speak your mind and to back up your opinions with arguments. The best way to participate in discussions is by making well-focused, articulate contributions that are useful to the whole class. Playing "devil's advocate" is necessary and welcome in this course, as long as it is done with respect for others.

## Calculating your grade

I assign each element of your grade a letter grade, then convert it to a number on a 4-point scale (like the scale used for your GPA), with pluses and minuses counting as 0.3 point: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc. I multiply this number by the percentage the element is worth, and add all the results to get your raw grade. This raw grade, adjusted to account for absences (see "Policies" below), yields the course grade. (A course grade of A is 3.5 or higher, a B is under 3.5 but at least 2.5, etc.) For example:

First paper	C	$2.0 \times 25\% = 0.5$
Second paper	B-	$2.7 \times 25\% = 0.675$
Midterm	B+	$3.3 \times 15\% = 0.495$
Final	C+	$2.3 \times 15\% = 0.345$
Participation	A-	$3.7 \times 20\% = 0.74$
Raw grade		2.755
Two missed days with no makeup work		-0.4
Course grade		2.355 = C

## Policies

When you miss a class for any reason, you do not need an excuse, but you are expected to turn in one handwritten page of makeup work when you return. (I do not usually take roll, but I will usually notice if you are absent.) The makeup work should summarize the reading for the class you missed and state your own reactions to the reading. Getting someone else's class notes is a good idea, but copying them and turning them in as makeup work is not acceptable; your work has to show that you read the text yourself. If you do not turn in makeup work promptly, I may subtract up to 0.2 grade points from your final course grade (on a 4-point scale) for each day you missed. Anyone who misses more than 6 classes may fail the course, even if makeup work is turned in.

*Late papers* will be penalized by up to one letter grade for each day they are late. Extensions are possible if you ask for them well in advance of the due date.

Papers may be *rewritten*. Rewrites will not change your grade on the paper, but they will count as class participation (extensive rewrites can make a significant difference to your participation grade). If you rewrite a paper, please turn in the new version along with the original version and my original comments. Rewrites may be turned in as late as the day of the final exam.

*Missed quizzes* cannot be made up. They will not count either for or against your participation grade.

*Plagiarism* is using someone else's words or ideas, even if you rephrase them, without giving credit to the source (such as a book, article, web site, or another student's writing). It's fine to consult such sources, but you must use quotation marks when quoting them, and you must acknowledge them whenever you use them (preferably using footnotes). In accordance with XU policy, deliberate plagiarism will lead to an F for the assignment or the course, and your dean will be notified of the incident. For Xavier's policy on academic honesty, see [www.xu.edu/registrar/ugrd\\_policies.html#Academic honesty](http://www.xu.edu/registrar/ugrd_policies.html#Academic%20honesty). For a helpful web site about plagiarism, see [www.nwu.edu/uacc/plagiar.html](http://www.nwu.edu/uacc/plagiar.html).

Please note the *philosophy department grading standards* which I am handing out on a separate sheet.

All assignments and the final exam must be completed in order to pass the course.

## Course web site

The web site at [xavier.xu.edu/~poltslavery](http://xavier.xu.edu/~poltslavery) will offer handouts from class (other than photocopies) in PDF format, as well as links to other sites about slavery and about the authors we are reading.

## Schedule

Assignments marked “optional” are recommended, especially for philosophy majors, but will not be covered by tests.

Aug. 27 Tu Introduction to the course

### *Douglass: a journey out of slavery*

Aug. 29 Th Born into slavery:  
for today, read Douglass, *Narrative*, Chaps. I-VI (pp. 13-33)  
Optional for all Douglass assignments: end notes (pp. 87ff.)  
Handout in class today: from *The Columbian Orator*

Sept. 3 Tu Learning to read: Douglass, *Narrative*, Chaps. VII-IX (pp. 33-46);  
*The Columbian Orator*, “Dialogue Between a Master and Slave”

Sept. 5 Th Resistance: Douglass, *Narrative*, Chap. X (pp. 46-70)

Sept. 10 Tu Escape: Douglass, *Narrative*, Chap. XI and Appendix (pp. 70-86)  
Handout: life of Epictetus (from Jason Xenakis, *Epictetus*)

### *Epictetus: the liberated mind*

Sept. 12 Th What is within our power:  
Epictetus, *Handbook*, chaps. 1-28 (pp. 11-19)  
Optional: Tuesday’s handout

Sept. 17 Tu Appropriate actions: Epictetus, *Handbook*, chaps. 29-53 (pp. 19-29)  
Handouts: selection from Epictetus’ *Discourses*;  
first paper assignment; guide to writing philosophy papers

Sept. 19 Th The nature of freedom: Epictetus, *Discourses* (handout)  
Handout: selections from Aristotle

### *Aristotle: the aristocratic ideal*

Sept. 24 Tu Introduction to Aristotle: Aristotle, selections (handout)

Sept. 26 Th Introduction to the *Politics*:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, chaps. 1-2 (pp. 35-38)  
Optional: Lord’s introduction, pp. 1-2, 17-24  
Handout: study questions for the midterm

Oct. 1 Tu Natural slaves: Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.3-5 (pp. 38-41)  
**First paper due.**

Oct. 3 Th No class—Fall holiday

- Oct. 8 Tu Unjust slavery; different types of rule:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.6-7, 1.12-13 (pp. 41-44, 52-54)  
Review session for the midterm
- Oct. 10 Th **Midterm exam**
- Oct. 15 Tu No class—Academic Day
- Oct. 17 Th The good human being and the good citizen; types of regime:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.4-7 (pp. 90-96)
- Oct. 22 Tu Political justice:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.9, 3.12-13 (pp. 97-99, 103-8)
- Oct. 24 Th The best way of life: Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.1-3 (pp. 197-203)
- Oct. 29 Tu Class distinctions in the best city:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.7-10 (pp. 207-213)
- Oct. 31 Th Education and leisure:  
Aristotle, *Politics*, 7.13-15, 8.1-3, 8.5 (pp. 217-223, 229-237)

*Nietzsche: slave values vs. noble values*

- Nov. 5 Tu Introduction to Nietzsche:  
Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface (pp. 1-7)  
Optional: Clark's introduction, pp. vii-xvii; end notes (pp. 119ff.)
- Nov. 7 Th The meanings of "good":  
Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Treatise, §§1-5 (pp. 9-14)
- Nov. 12 Tu The slave revolt in morality:  
Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Treatise, §§6-12 (pp. 14-24)  
Handout: second paper assignment
- Nov. 14 Th An evaluation of Christianity:  
Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Treatise, §§13-17 (pp. 25-33)

*Hegel: the journey to free self-consciousness*

- Nov. 19 Tu Introduction to Hegel:  
Hegel, *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, ¶¶22-24 (p. 47);  
The Truth of Self-Certainty, ¶12 (pp. 19-20)  
Optional: Sherman's introduction, pp. 1-3 top  
(All Hegel assignments are in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness*.)

- Nov. 21 Th Life-and-death struggle: Hegel, ¶¶20-24 (pp. 22-24)  
Optional: *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, ¶32 (p. 49);  
Rauch's commentary, pp. 57 middle-58 middle, 87-95 top
- Nov. 26 Tu Master consciousness: Hegel, ¶¶25-28 (pp. 24-26)  
Optional: *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, ¶33-35 (pp. 49-50)  
**Second paper due.**
- Nov. 28 Th No class—Thanksgiving
- Dec. 3 Tu Slave consciousness: Hegel, ¶¶29-31 (pp. 26-28)  
Optional: *Philosophical Propaedeutic*, ¶36-37 (p. 50);  
Rauch, 58-59 middle, 95-101
- Dec. 5 Th Stoic consciousness: ¶¶32-36 (pp. 28-31);  
review Epictetus and bring his texts to class  
Optional: Rauch, pp. 106-108  
Handout: study questions for the final
- Dec. 10 Tu Medieval Christianity as an unhappy consciousness:  
Hegel, ¶¶41, 44, 51, 52, 60, 63-65 (pp. 34-46)  
Optional: omitted paragraphs; Rauch, pp. 111-120
- Dec. 12 Th Review session for the final
- Dec. 19 Th **Final exam**, 10:30-12:20