

The Heights School
Philosophy 209: Natural Philosophy
2021-22

Dr. Kaiser (lkaiser@heights.edu) - ext. 213

Office hours: Mondays: 3:05-4:05 p.m.; Fridays: 7:15 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.

Course goals:

This course will offer students a very preliminary and age-appropriate introduction to the subject of “natural philosophy”. In addition to providing a deeper understanding of cause & effect in the natural world and the other “hard sciences”, the course hopes to provide students with a conceptual corrective to the predominant modern view of reality as merely corporeal.

Topics covered:

- The notion of a “science”
- The notion of “nature”
- The fact of “change” and its different modes
- Cause & effect
- The different kinds of causes
- “mobile” being vs. physics
- the notions of “substance” & “accidents”
- Aristotle’s theory of hylomorphism
- Fragmented knowledge & modern views of causality

Course requirements and grading criteria:

1. **Quizzes** (40% of the total/quarter). The subject of these will almost exclusively be based on a list of definitions handed out/posted on the site.
There is a re-take policy for quizzes and is as follows:
 - a. If a student determines he wishes to attempt a “re-take” of the preceding week’s written quiz, this must be done during my office hours. The original, scored quiz must be brought to the make-up session. The make-up quiz itself is oral and consists of several questions related to the original material quizzed. The two quiz scores are then averaged for a final score for that particular quiz grade.
 - b. If a student happens to miss a quiz for a legitimate health, personal, or familial reason, that particular quiz must be made up within the next calendar week (i.e. within 7 days). If a student needs time beyond the 7 days, yet does not take the initiative to at least communicate with me about a need for that additional time, the score for that quiz reverts to a “0”.
2. **Tests** (60% of the total/quarter). There will be two (2) tests each quarter. There are no re-takes offered for tests.

One extra-credit assignment is offered toward the conclusion of each quarter.

Texts:

- *Material Logic* by Martin Cothran
- *Elements of Philosophy* by William Wallace, O.P.

Successful Students

The hallmark of any academically successful student is *diligence*. In our circumstances, it is a “forward leaning” disposition towards academic work – its care and completion. The acquisition of this virtue should be highly sought-after for its applicability not only to academic studies, but a host of non-academic contexts throughout one’s life. Students can even have little interest in a given

subject, but still exhibit a diligence toward assignments or in tackling course difficulties, and yet remain academically successful in the course.