

The Heights School

Philosophy 209: Natural Philosophy

2022-23

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Course website: www.heights.edu⇒Upper School⇒Philosophy⇒Natural Philosophy

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. The course's terminology and related concepts serve as a foundation for the next course in The Heights' philosophy sequence, “metaphysics”.

Topics covered:

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

Course requirements and grading criteria:

1. **Quizzes** (40% of the total/quarter): these are weekly and will be announced on the course 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 established office hours (see below). The two quiz scores are averaged for a final score for that particular quiz grade.
 - b. If a student happens to miss the regularly scheduled quiz on Thursday for a legitimate health, personal, or familial reason, that particular quiz must be made up *before the following Thursday (i.e. within 7 days)*. There are no make-up quizzes offered for a missed, scheduled quiz. If the student does not take the initiative to make-up that quiz within that time, the score 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 may be offered toward the conclusion of each quarter.

Assignments: Students will find their assignments posted on *the Friday preceding each academic week*. For example, our first full week of school begins the week of Sept. 12. Therefore, students will be able to access the assignments for that week on Sept. 9. The location for students to consult the week's assignments is the course website (see above).

Office hours: In addition to class times, I have established two, fixed days/times to make myself available to students each week so as to facilitate asking questions about course material, resolve doubts, and otherwise discuss philosophy. Additionally, this is also when quiz make-ups must be completed. The weekly office hours schedule is:

- Each Monday after school (in the Bullpen) from 3:05 p.m. until 4:05 p.m.
- Each Friday before school (in the Bullpen) from 7:15 a.m. until 8:15 a.m.

Texts:

- *Material Logic* by Martin Cothran (selections via handouts)
- *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.