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# Welcome to the first week of Philosophy class.

By Wednesday at 6pm, i.e., by the evening before class instruction begins on Thursday morning, you should have completed the following stuff:

1. Ordered your books, and maybe even received most (or at least some) of them.

2. Looked over the course requirements, schedule, self-evaluation guidelines (which means you’re already starting to keep records of your work for this course, right?), and all that other stuff in the "course information" area.

3. Posted a biography of yourself in the PHI Bio folder (and even hopefully included a photo, for those extra 3,963 extra credit points). The bio must be posted by Wednesday March 28th (especially for students with financial aid – for you folx this is the marker the financial aid people use to see that you’ve started to attend class, and they apparently need it by then).

And now we start the actual course.

By Thursday morning I will have posted a couple of things, including an assignment, here in the week one classroom, so you’ll want to look at them and then jump in and start discussing.

A few notes:

a. Throughout the quarter I’ll frequently be asking you to "discuss" certain ideas or questions in the classroom. For example, for the first day or two of the class (i.e., this Thur and Fri), I’ll be asking you to discuss what you consider the Plato’s Cave story to be about.

These discussions are yours, so you’ll be the ones doing the discussing. The discussions will be among all of you, not between you and me. I’ll definitely be listening in on the discussions, of course, and may even intervene here or there if there is some reason to, but the discussions are primarily yours.

As mentioned elsewhere, your main teachers this quarter are going to be Plato, Schopenhauer, Swedenborg, and the others. It is my expectation that the two primary places where you’ll be learning the most this quarter are i.) from those books, and ii.) from each other in your discussions. So you’ll want to take every possible advantage of those discussion periods to

i. ask questions of your colleagues

ii. express your own point of view on the issue being discussed

iii. learn from others’ points of view on that issue

iv. try to come to a more complete and thorough understandings of the topics being discussed by listening to what others have to say about them.

v. And all of this to be done in a courteous and respectful manner, of course (I’m assuming you don’t need a lecture about online courtesy).

b. I will consider your regular participation in these discussions to be the most important single indicator of your general involvement in the course, and to thus have a significant bearing on your grade/evaluation. Everyone is expected to post regularly to the classroom, and everyone is required to read all of everyone else's postings.

c. I would encourage you to wander around our Philosophy class website a bit; there are some valuable links available there to various tidbits of information on our class website, to resources on the web, to outside research sources, etc. The only thing missing from our website are the actual mini-lectures and discussion questions. Those I’ll be mounting weekly on the site as needed.

So let’s get to it. Next step: On Thursday morning you can start the Plato’s cave assignment. You’ll read the 2-3 page story on a website I’ll point you to, answer some study questions about it, and then dig into a discussion of it.

Best of luck to you.