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Howdy folks,

Welcome to the Washington Online (WAOL) Introduction to Philosophy course. You have successfully started to learn a little about this Angel software. Congratulations. Learning any new software can sometimes be a frustrating experience.

Our class will officially begin on Thursday March 31st. But between now and then there are several things you’ll need to do.

1. You’ll need to order your books. One option is to order them from WAOL’s online bookstore by going to http://www.waol.org . Then click on “Getting Started,” or “Bookstore.” When you get to the bookstore it may ask the name of your instructor, and that’s where you type in my name (Kerns); or it may ask for the course number, which is 3500. That will then take you to a list of the five required books for the course. You can also see the list of required books on our class website [here](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/bkorder-spr99.html).
2. You’ll need to learn how to use the Angel software. A good way to get a quick introduction to the Angel software is to look through the WeekZero tutorial. Here's how to do that:
   1. Go to: [http://angel.waol.org](http://angel.waol.org/)
   2. Then enter Username: weekzero; Password: guest
   3. Once logged in look for the ‘Courses’ box then click on “Week Zero – Getting Started with ANGEL”

If (or when) you need help with something in Angel you can contact the Angel support folks any time of day or night by clicking [here](http://d2.parature.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8161) for online tech support. You can also call tech support at 866-425-8412. Or during business hours you can call WAOL at 888-580-9011 (or 509-533-3005 if you are in Spokane). You may also want to just ask a fellow student for help by posting a question in the Student Lounge. By the time Thursday rolls around, you’ll need to be very familiar with this Angel software.

1. You may want to print out this message if it isn’t comfortable to read on your screen. In fact, I find that if something is more than one screen long it is sometimes easier to just print it out and read it away from the computer. You may also want to do this for many of the mini-lectures you'll be reading this quarter. You may also want to do it for the class schedule (though I may be making slight changes to it as the course progresses), just so you have a printed version of when things are due.
2. You’ll need to write a short biography about yourself, maybe a page or so long, or as long as you like. You’ll post this in our classroom in the Discussion Board area. The first forum in there is titled "Your Biographies," and that's where you'll post yours and respond to anyone else's if you like. Simplest way to do this is to first write your bio however you like, probably in a word processing program (like MS Word) After you've completed writing it you can just copy it and paste it into the Biographies forum. If you can attach a photo of yourself to your biography, that would be great. (In fact, maybe what we’ll do here is just give 739 extra credit points to every person who puts a photo in their biography sometime in the first week or two of the course.) The photos help make our classroom community a bit more personable, and the more personable the better in these online environments. You’ll need to post this biography as soon as possible, but at least by Wednesday evening at 6pm. You’ll see my biography already posted in there.
3. The basic unit of time for this course will be the week. Weeks will begin on each Thursday morning and end at 6pm on each Wednesday evening. So much of what is due for a given week will be due to be completed by Wednesday evening at 6pm. Like posting your biography this week, for example, and learning the Blackboard software. In some weeks, however, including week one, some of the week’s assignments will be due in midweek. Details about these due dates will appear in each week’s posted assignment message.
4. For some assignments you will need to have access to Microsoft Word or some other word processing program that is fully compatible with MS Word.
5. Your first classroom activity will be to read Plato's story of "The Cave," write out answers to some study questions about it, and then discuss it with others in our classroom. I mention it here now only in case someone is interested in getting a head start by reading Plato's short one or two page story of the cave in Book VII of The Republic (Plato’s Republic can be found on the web by doing a search, or it could be borrowed from any library; the story of the Cave can be found in the first 2-3 pages of Book VII of The Republic). More on this later.
6. Other things that would be good to do this week before class starts are:
   1. Look over the Introduction to Philosophy homepage.
   2. Look over the Course Requirements.
   3. Look over the Class Schedule.
   4. Check out the various messages in the Syllabus folder in our classroom
7. If you’d like to get a head-start on the main reading assignment for the first week, you could start reading Plato’s Dialogtitled The Euthyphro, which (as you will see from the class schedule) is part of your required reading for the first week.
8. I wish you the best of luck with all this.

You might want to steel yourself a bit for the challenges you’ll probably face during this first week or so of getting geared up for this course. Learning the ins and outs of new software packages and new computer procedures can be a real pain, but persistence does pay off. Please ask for all the help you need from the eduprise and WAOL people (see item 2 above)

I’m hoping that after you’ve gotten past all the start-up issues (books, requirements, new software, etc) and we get into the meat of the course, that you’ll find it engaging, engrossing, and directly relevant to your own lived experience, though perhaps also rather challenging. The course is definitely a heavy reading course (you’ll be reading books as well as a great deal of online materials, some from me and some from fellow students). It’s also a heavy writing course (study questions, online classroom discussions, research projects, etc), partly because the only way any of us can communicate with each other is via writing. You can expect that the course will require quite a lot of your time.

All best wishes to you.

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