

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BULGARIA

### *PHI 101a – Introduction to Philosophy*

Department of Philosophy and Psychology

Fall 2019

Professor: ...

Email: ..., phone: ...

Webpage: ...

Office hours: ...or by appointment. Room: ...

Time: MW 12.30-13.50 (13 weeks, starting September 4). Room: BAC 001

Pre-requisites: none

Gen. Ed.: Moral and Philosophical Reasoning

Credits: 3 (6 ECTS cr.)

“Life, as we all know, is a full-time job.”

(Thomas Nagel, *The Absurd*, 1971)

“Does anybody know what we are living for?”

(Queen, *The Show Must Go On*, 1991)

### **Course outline**

This course is an introduction to philosophy through the study and discussion of historical and contemporary writings. The course deals with the most significant theories of life and its meaning in the history of Western philosophy. The course focuses on the authors who, from antiquity to the present, have concentrated on the meaning of life and how to have a good life. Different approaches to the problem are taken into account, and both religious and non-religious proposals are considered and discussed.

### **General Education Status**

This course fulfills the requirement in Moral and Philosophical Reasoning.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon taking this course, students will be able to:

- Understand fundamental principles of philosophical and moral reasoning by regularly attending the course, reading the required readings, contributing to in-class discussion, and critically reflecting on the topics at issue. The understanding of philosophical and moral concepts, arguments, theories, and methods is crucial to the improvement of one’s organizational and critical skills.
- Apply philosophical principles in investigation to better understand complex contemporary and historical issues, particularly by contributing to in-class debates, writing essays on in-class exams, and doing independent research. This is a crucial skill in one’s life as a responsible and active member of the community.
- Appreciate the historical development of philosophical and moral thought, especially in relation to the subjects studied, and thus develop the ability to critically examine philosophical and moral issues. This ability will enable students to develop informed and well-grounded arguments in discussing important moral, social, and political issues.

- Write and speak in the area of philosophical and moral reasoning, particularly by working on written assignments and the presentation. Presenting one's point in a clear, well-organized, and convincing way is a fundamental skill in all careers, as well as in one's contributions to the civil community.

Philosophical theories like those studied in this course serve one of the main purposes of philosophy as an academic discipline: they help students to learn how to think in abstract and in general, and how to apply general principles to particular contexts.

### **Texts and Resources**

Required readings consist of essays and extracts from philosophical works relevant to the course topic. The professor will post the required readings in Canvas. Each student attending the course has to download and save copies of the required readings.

Online encyclopedia entries and articles are recommended as additional resources on topics covered in the course: the links to these resources are in the reading list below.

### **Office hours**

Students are encouraged to consult with the professor whenever needed. Students who wish to consult with the professor for no more than 15 minutes are welcome to visit the professor's office (room BAC 305) during regular office hours. Students who intend to talk with the professor for more than 15 minutes are invited to make an appointment with the professor, in person or via email, for a different time. This policy is aimed at enabling as many students as possible to consult with the professor during regular office hours.

### **Class Policies**

#### *Lectures and readings*

Please take note of the lectures, which are part of the study load. Part of each class is intended to consider, discuss or work with the texts used in the course. Students must always bring the texts in class in order to actively participate and, hence, not to negatively affect their grade on participation. Readings will help us examine philosophical works, their nature and goals, and how to utilize them in order to understand philosophical issues and to reconsider them in light of some recent developments of Western civilization.

#### *Exams*

In-class exams consist of open-answer (i.e. up to 1 handwritten page per answer) and short essay questions (i.e. up to 2 handwritten pages per essay). Grading criteria and point distribution, also indicated below and in the attached rubrics, will be included on the exams and further explained by the professor.

The final exam is not comprehensive: it covers the material studied after the second exam. Exams reflect the purpose of the course and, thus, aim at testing students' knowledge of the contents of the course and their ability to analyze the significance of specific philosophical issues. In writing the short essays, students have to comply with the relevant rubric attached to this syllabus. In answering to open-answer questions, students have to comply with the relevant rubric attached to this syllabus.

Only for very serious and documented reasons, and only after consulting the professor in

advance, students can be allowed to reschedule an exam. Those who do not take an exam, without consulting the professor in advance, will be given 0 points on the respective exam. Those who do not take an exam will be given 0 points on such exam.

### *Presentation*

Each student is required to deliver a presentation of up to 7 minutes on a philosophical topic of their choice not covered in class (e.g. a philosophical tradition, an author's theory or part of it, a philosophical or moral issue, etc.). In preparing and delivering their presentations, students have to comply with the rubric attached to this syllabus.

The professor will make a presentation schedule and distribute it to students in advance. If a student does not come to class on the day his/her presentation is scheduled, he/she will receive 0 points on the presentation. The professor will allow such student to deliver his/her presentation on another day only after being provided with adequate certification, attesting that the student had a health problem or another major reason to miss the class on the day of his/her presentation.

### *Participation and attendance*

Students are required to take an active part in the course at reading, oral, as well as written levels. Punctuality is requested.

The grade on participation is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Regular attendance.
- Attention paid during lectures.
- Informed participation in class debates: this means that students' contributions to class debates have to be consistent with the topic discussed in class and have to be based on an adequate analysis of the required readings.

Students are expected to regularly attend classes in order to better comprehend concepts, arguments and themes that will be covered in the exams.

Attendance is required and will be checked on a daily basis. Besides contributing to the grade on participation, attendance counts toward the assessment of the final grade in the following way:

- Up to 3 unexcused absences will be tolerated without academic penalty.
- Each unexcused absence after the 3<sup>rd</sup> will result in a reduction of one point from the total of 100 points for the course, up until the 6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence.
- **A maximum of 6 absences (including both unexcused and excused absences)** will be allowed without failure for the course. Students who will make more than 6 absences will receive F as their final grade, regardless of their performance on exams and other assignments.

Excused absences are those due to certified health reasons or any other documentable major reason (e.g. death of a person in the student's immediate family, participation in a scholarly event or in an important co-curricular activity, etc.). In any case, students will need to provide the professor with appropriate documentation. The professor will excuse an absence only on the basis of such documentation.

### *Ethical rules*

High ethical standards are expected from all students. The University policies regarding academic dishonesty (i.e. plagiarism, incorrect reporting of data, use of work in one course from another, and cheating) will be enforced, i.e. by assigning an "X" to those

responsible for dishonest conduct. Practices of academic dishonesty are described in the Undergraduate Catalog of the American University in Bulgaria.

Students are required to respect one another and the professor, in class as well as in other communications, discussions and considerations related to the course, including emails and other messages to the professor and conversations during the office hours. Intolerant, discriminatory, intimidating, scornful, denigrating and disrespectful behaviors towards other students or the professor are not acceptable. Students have the right to disagree with one another and the professor; but, in asserting their viewpoints or in trying to refute the others' ideas, they are required to behave respectfully.

Students who behave disrespectfully towards other students or the professor will be given an "F" as their final grade, independent of their academic performance.

Finally, students who misbehave in class (e.g. using the smartphone, chatting, laughing, sleeping, being blatantly inattentive, reading texts or notes different from those used in class, doing things that are not relevant to the class, being obnoxious to other students and the professor) will be downgraded by 5 points per each time they misbehave.

Students are encouraged to make use of the office hours and email to consult the professor on whatever topic is relevant to class, assignments, grading criteria, readings, and the like.

However, students must absolutely abstain from the following practices:

- Asking the professor to assign them some "extra work" that would allow them to earn some "extra points" and, therefore, improve their grade. All students must work on the assignments described in this syllabus, and those whose performance on such assignments does not satisfy them must consider themselves as responsible for this.
- Asking the professor to give them "make-up exams" that would allow them to earn a higher grade than earned on a regular exam. All students must work seriously in order to perform well on both the midterm and the final exams, and those whose performance on such exams does not satisfy them must consider themselves as responsible for this.
- Asking the professor to help them earn a higher grade than they deserve. All students will be graded based on the assignments described in this syllabus. For this reason, those who need good grades in order to retain their scholarships, as well as those who need a few more credits in order to graduate, must work seriously throughout the semester. Those whose poor performance prevents them from retaining a scholarship or graduating must consider themselves as responsible for this.

Special notes:

- Students may use laptops or tablets in class exclusively for purposes relevant to the course – i.e. to take notes and to use electronic copies of readings. Students who will be caught using the laptop or tablet for purposes irrelevant to the course will not only be downgraded by 5 points, but will also be asked to leave the classroom immediately.
- **The use of smartphones in class, for any reason whatsoever, is strictly forbidden.** Students who will use the smartphone in class will not only be downgraded by 5 points, but will also be asked to leave the classroom immediately.

## Guest lectures

A guest lecture on seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke by Prof. Giuliana Di Biase (University of Chieti and Pescara, Italy) will take place on **Monday, September 16, at h. 19.30**, in the Andrey Delchev Auditorium (BAC). Attendance is not mandatory, but is recommended. The students attending this lecture will receive **one bonus point**, which will contribute toward their overall grade on the course.

Another guest lecture on emotional psychology by Dr. David Ryback (America for Bulgaria Foundation) will take place on **Wednesday, November 6, at class time (h. 12.30)**, in the Andrey Delchev Auditorium (BAC). This lecture is part of the course. Attendance is mandatory.

## Grade distribution

- **First exam: 20%** of the final grade (two open-answer questions, 25% each + one short essay, 50% of the grade on this exam)
- **Second exam: 25%** of the final grade (two open-answer questions, 25% each + one short essay, 50% of the grade on this exam)
- **Final exam: 30%** of the final grade (three open-answer questions, 20% each + one short essay, 40% of the grade on this exam)
- **Student presentation: 15%** of the final grade
- **Participation: 10%** of the final grade
- **Total: 100 (+1 bonus point)**

## Grading scale

The following grading scale is used in grading both specific assignments and the final grade:

A	93 – 100
A–	90 – 92.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B–	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	73 – 76.99
C–	70 – 72.99
D+	66 – 69.99
D	60 – 65.99
F	0 – 59.99

## Course organization and reading list

### *Introduction*

W Sep. 4: Introduction to the course, its topic and organization (no reading required).

### *Part 1: How to have a happy and good life?*

M Sep. 9: Plato, The Allegory of the Cave (from The Republic, IV c. BCE).  
Recommended resource: Richard Kraut, Plato,

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato/#PluCenDoc>

- W Sep. 11: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (IV c. BCE), excerpts on virtue.  
Recommended resource: Richard Kraut, Aristotle's Ethics,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/>
- M Sep. 16: **h. 19.30**, BAC Andrey Delchev Auditorium: **guest lecture** on John Locke by Prof. Giuliana Di Biase (University of Chieti and Pescara, Italy). Attendance is not mandatory, but is recommended. The students attending this lecture will receive one bonus point, which will contribute toward their overall grade on the course.
- W Sep. 18: Epicurus, Letter to Menoecus and Principal Doctrines (IV-III c. BCE).  
Recommended resource: David Konstan, Epicurus,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epicurus/>
- M Sep. 23: Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles (1258-1264), excerpts.  
Recommended resources:  
Ralph McInerney, Saint Thomas Aquinas,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/>  
Summa Contra Gentiles,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summa\\_contra\\_Gentiles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summa_contra_Gentiles)
- W Sep. 25: Review for the first exam
- M Sep. 30: First exam**

***Part 2: Does God exist? And is God necessary to our life?***

- W Oct. 2: Anselm of Canterbury, Proslogion (1078), excerpts.  
Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica (1265-1274), excerpts.  
Recommended resources:  
Graham Oppy, Ontological Arguments,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments/>  
Del Ratzsch, Theological Arguments for God's Existence,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/teleological-arguments/>
- M Oct. 7: Immanuel Kant, Refutation of the Proofs of God's Existence (from Critique of Pure Reason, 1781).  
Recommended resource: Philip Rossi, Kant's Philosophy of Religion,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-religion/>
- W Oct. 9: Immanuel Kant, The Categorical Imperative (from Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, 1785).  
Onora O'Neill, A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics (1985), excerpts.  
Recommended resource: Robert Johnson, Kant's Moral Philosophy,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/>
- M Oct. 14: Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Sufferings of the World (from Parerga and Paralipomena, 1851), excerpts.

Recommended resource: Robert Wicks, Arthur Schopenhauer,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/>

W Oct. 16: Leo Tolstoy, *A Confession* (1882), excerpts.  
Recommended resources:  
Leo Tolstoy, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo\\_Tolstoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy)  
Richard Amesbury, Fideism,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fideism/>

M Oct. 21: Review for the second exam

**W Oct. 23: Second exam**

**Fall break**

***Part 3: Is human existence meaningful?***

M Nov. 4: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), excerpts.  
Recommended resources:  
Thomas Flynn, Jean-Paul Sartre, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sartre/>  
Steven Crowell, Existentialism,  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>

W Nov. 6: BAC Auditorium: **guest lecture** on emotional psychology by Dr. David Ryback (America for Bulgaria Foundation) (this lecture is part of the course: attendance is mandatory)

M Nov. 11: Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), excerpts.  
Recommended resource: *The Myth of Sisyphus*,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myth\\_of\\_Sisyphus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myth_of_Sisyphus)

W Nov. 13: Richard Taylor, *The Meaning of Life* (1970).  
Recommended resource: *The Meaning of Life* (synopsis),  
<http://spruce.flint.umich.edu/~simoncu/115/taylor.pdf>

M Nov. 18: Student presentations

W Nov. 20: Student presentations

M Nov. 25: Student presentations

W Nov. 27: Student presentations

M Dec. 2: Thomas Nagel, *The Absurd* (1971).  
Recommended resource: *The Absurd* (synopsis),  
<http://spruce.flint.umich.edu/~simoncu/115/nagel.pdf>

W Dec. 4: Joel Feinberg, *Absurd Self-Fulfillment* (1980).

M Dec. 9: Review for the final exam

**Final Exam: according to AUBG final exam schedule.**

This syllabus is subject to modification. The professor will communicate with students on any changes.

**Appendix: Rubrics**

The appended rubrics give students instructions on how to work on the assignments for this course, and thus inform students of the professor's expectations. The professor will comply with the criteria stated in each rubric, when assessing each component of the grade on the respective assignment.

**RUBRIC FOR OPEN-ANSWER QUESTIONS (as part of an exam)**

<b>A/A-</b>	<b>Excellent / almost excellent:</b> <b>CONTENTS:</b> The contents of the answer are relevant to the required topic: all the fundamental aspects of the required subject are adequately addressed and clearly explained. <b>AND</b> <b>ORGANIZATION AND STYLE:</b> The answer is written in a stylistically correct, logical and unified way, using proper transitions to indicate the connections between its different parts. (A very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings.)
<b>B+/B/B-</b>	<b>Good:</b> <b>CONTENTS:</b> The contents of the answer are relevant to the required topic, but one or two fundamental elements of the required subject are not addressed properly or clearly enough. <b>OR</b> <b>ORGANIZATION AND STYLE:</b> The answer is written in a unified way, but a few passages are written incorrectly or a few transitions are inappropriate and, therefore, the answer lacks a logical development, although the answer as a whole makes sense. (Variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)
<b>C+/C/C-</b>	<b>Sufficient:</b> <b>CONTENTS:</b> The contents of the answer are relevant to the required topic, but one or two fundamental elements of the required subject are not addressed properly or clearly enough. <b>AND</b> <b>ORGANIZATION AND STYLE:</b> The answer is written in a unified way, but a few passages are written incorrectly or a few transitions are inappropriate and, therefore, the answer lacks a logical development, although the answer as a whole makes sense.

	(Variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)
<b>D+/D</b>	<p><b>Poor:</b>  <b>CONTENTS:</b> The contents of the essay are relevant to the required topic, but so incompletely or unclearly explained that the required subject as a whole is addressed improperly.  <b>AND/OR</b>  <b>ORGANIZATION AND STYLE:</b> The essay is not written correctly and/or in a unified and logical way, and it is therefore difficult to understand the meaning of the essay.  (Variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</p>
<b>F</b>	<p><b>Failed:</b>  The essay is irrelevant to the required topic (e.g. it deals, completely or mostly, with a different topic).  <b>OR</b>  The essay addresses the required topic in a very vague, imprecise, disorganized or significantly incomplete way.  <b>OR</b>  No answer at all is provided (i.e. “blank sheet”).</p>

**RUBRIC FOR SHORT ESSAYS (as part of an exam)**

<b>Contents, 50%</b>	<p>The contents of the essay need to be relevant to the topic at issue: all the fundamental aspects of the required subject must be addressed adequately and thoroughly.</p> <p>Theories and facts have to be explained clearly and smoothly, in accordance with the required subject.</p> <p>You have to provide a critical analysis of the topic at issue. This means that you have to reflect and comment critically on the subject you examine, and you have to give your evaluation of the theories, facts and interpretations taken into account.</p> <p><b>Details of grading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/A-: excellent / almost excellent, in line with the criteria stated in this rubric (a very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings)</li> <li>• B+/B/B-: good, mostly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, but presenting few or minor mistakes, inconsistencies or omissions (variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• C+/C/C-: sufficient, fairly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, presenting many or significant mistakes,</li> </ul>
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	<p>inconsistencies or omissions (variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D+/D: poor, not in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, and presenting many significant mistakes, inconsistencies or omissions (variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• F: the essay is irrelevant to the topic at issue (e.g. it deals, completely or mostly, with a different topic), or covers the topic at issue in a very vague, imprecise or significantly incomplete way, or no answer at all is provided (i.e. “blank sheet”).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organization and style, 50%</b></p>	<p>The essay has to be written in a unified way, ordering the paragraphs properly.</p> <p>Your introduction has to be original, not too wide, not too short, and ought to lead smoothly to the thesis, which must be clearly stated.</p> <p>You have to employ appropriate transitions from one paragraph to the next, and there must be a logical sequencing of paragraphs.</p> <p>Your conclusion has to provide either a summary of your analysis, highlighting its main points, or offer a deeper insight into the issue you have discussed.</p> <p>The style you employ has to be clear, straightforward, but also inspired and reflective of the enthusiasm you are expected to have put into your writing.</p> <p>Your language should be free of grammar and syntax errors, and your word choice should be well thought out and precise. You should avoid long and complex sentences.</p> <p><b>Details of grading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/A-: excellent / almost excellent, in line with the criteria stated in this rubric (a very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings)</li> <li>• B+/B/B-: good, mostly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, but presenting a few disorganized, inconsistent, incorrectly written, unclear or incomplete parts (variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• C+/C/C-: sufficient, fairly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, presenting various disorganized, inconsistent, incorrectly written, unclear or incomplete parts (variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• D+/D: poor, not in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, and presenting many significantly disorganized, inconsistent,</li> </ul>

	<p>incorrectly written, unclear or incomplete parts (variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F: the essay is irrelevant to the topic at issue (e.g. it deals, completely or mostly, with a different topic), or covers the topic at issue in a very disorganized, inconsistent, unclear or incomplete way, or no answer at all is provided (i.e. “blank sheet”).</li> </ul>
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## RUBRIC FOR IN-CLASS STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

<b>Contents, 30%</b>	<p>The way you treat your topic should be thorough and original. This is not so much about the idea or the subject itself, but about the way you approach the subject at issue.</p> <p>You have to do serious research on the subject you have chosen. The scholarly resources you use must be reliable, and should be reported in a short bibliography at the end of your presentation.</p> <p>All the fundamental aspects of the topic at issue must be addressed adequately and thoroughly. Theories and facts have to be explained clearly and smoothly, in accordance with the required subject.</p> <p>You have to provide a critical analysis of the topic at issue. This means that you have to reflect and comment critically on the subject you examine, and you have to give your evaluation of the theories, facts and interpretations taken into account.</p> <p>In a few words, your presentation cannot be merely descriptive, but must present an original thesis.</p> <p><b>Details of grading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/A-: excellent / almost excellent, in line with the criteria stated in this rubric (a very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings)</li> <li>• B+/B/B-: good, mostly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, but presenting few or minor mistakes, inconsistencies or omissions (variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• C+/C/C-: sufficient, fairly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, presenting many or significant mistakes, inconsistencies or omissions (variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• D+/D: poor, not in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, and presenting many significant mistakes, inconsistencies or omissions (variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• F: the essay is irrelevant to the topic at issue (e.g. it deals, completely or mostly, with a different topic), or covers the</li> </ul>
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	<p>topic at issue in a very vague, imprecise or significantly incomplete way, or no answer at all is provided (i.e. “blank sheet”).</p>
<p><b>Organization, 30%</b></p>	<p>Your introduction has to be original, neither too wide, nor too short. In your introduction, you should creatively get the attention and interest of the audience and clearly reveal your topic. If you deal with an author in particular, do not supply biographical information about the author as a means of introducing your topic to the audience, unless such information is crucial to our understanding of your point. As regards the biography of an author, it is enough to mention the era when, and the place(s) where, he/she lived. The best way to begin is to create in your audience the need to learn more about your topic.</p> <p>Each paragraph should be clearly linked to the overall topic and to the paragraph before it. You have to employ appropriate transitions from one paragraph to the next, and construct a logical sequencing of paragraphs.</p> <p>All the arguments supporting your thesis must be developed logically and systematically.</p> <p>Your conclusion has to provide either a summary of your analysis, highlighting its main points, or offer a deeper insight into the issue you have discussed.</p> <p><b>Details of grading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/A-: excellent / almost excellent, in line with the criteria stated in this rubric (a very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings)</li> <li>• B+/B/B-: good, mostly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, but presenting a few disorganized, inconsistent or incomplete parts (variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• C+/C/C-: sufficient, fairly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, presenting various disorganized, inconsistent or incomplete parts (variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• D+/D: poor, not in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, and presenting many significantly disorganized, inconsistent or incomplete parts (variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)</li> <li>• F: the essay is irrelevant to the topic at issue (e.g. it deals, completely or mostly, with a different topic), or covers the topic at issue in a very disorganized, inconsistent or incomplete way, or no answer at all is provided (i.e. “blank sheet”).</li> </ul>

**Language and style, 40%**

The style you employ has to be clear, straightforward, inspired and reflective of the enthusiasm you are expected to have put into your writing.

Your language should be free of grammar and syntax errors, and your word choice should be well thought out and precise. You should avoid long and complex sentences and unnecessary pauses.

You have to speak to your audience. So, when delivering your presentation, look at your fellow students and talk to them (not to the floor or the ceiling).

Please remember that the way a presentation is delivered can significantly affect its overall quality. So, try to avoid unnecessary pauses, hesitations and uncertainties when speaking to an audience. More importantly, keep in mind that the audience must get interested in, and properly understand, what you say.

Briefly, be self-confident, be friendly to the audience and, above all, be yourself!

**Details of grading:**

- A/A-: excellent / almost excellent, in line with the criteria stated in this rubric (a very few minor shortcomings may be present: variations between A and A- depend on the type and number of such shortcomings)
- B+/B/B-: good, good, mostly in line with the criteria stated in this rubric, but presenting few or minor grammar or syntax errors, unnecessary pauses or uncertainties (variations between B+, B and B- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)
- C+/C/C-: sufficient: the presentation can still be understood by the audience, but the language and style employed present many grammar or syntax errors, unnecessary pauses or uncertainties (variations between C+, C and C- depend on the type and number of shortcomings)
- D+/D: poor: the presentation is characterized by grammar or syntax errors, unnecessary pauses or uncertainties, and the audience can appreciate its meaning only by making significant efforts (variations between D+ and D depend on the type and number of shortcomings)
- F: the presentation is delivered in such a bad way, with so many grammar or syntax errors, unnecessary pauses or uncertainties, that it is fully or mostly incomprehensible to the audience

**Please note:** this component of the grade (i.e. language and style) is considered only if a grade better than F on both contents and organization is earned. Otherwise, F is given on this component of the grade as well.