

Philosophy 270: Philosophy of Science

Basic Information

Spring 2010

Professor: Patrick Maher, e-mail patrick@maher1.net, office 219A Gregory Hall, office hours Monday 11–12 and Wednesday 3–4 or by appointment.

Description: This course is a selective survey of science and philosophy from ancient Greece to now. It covers the work of scientists such as Euclid, Copernicus, Newton, and Darwin as well as philosophers such as Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Popper, Kuhn, and contemporary authors. Issues that will be discussed include the justification for scientific theories and the nature of probability, causation, and laws of nature.

Web site: patrick.maher1.net/270. Has everything you need, including this document. If you forget the URL, just Google “Patrick Maher”.

Textbook: None. Everything you need is on the web site.

Quizzes: There will be nine true-false quizzes done on Compass. Each quiz will cover the previous four lectures. See the web site for dates and details.

Exams: There will be three 50-minute exams done in class. Each exam will consist of a selection of questions from the lecture notes for the previous twelve lectures. See the web site for dates and details.

Grading: The quizzes together count for 25% of the grade and each exam counts for 25% of the grade. Grades will be posted on Compass. The grading scale is:

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|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | F |
| 95–100 | 90–94 | 85–89 | 80–84 | 75–79 | 70–74 | 65–69 | 60–64 | 55–59 | 50–54 | 45–49 | 40–44 | 0–39 |

Class attendance: Isn’t required or graded but there is a correlation between attendance and grades. Some reasons to attend class: I often say more than I have put in the lecture notes, I explain what is wrong or missing from students’ answers to the questions, and you can ask about things you don’t understand.

Information from the class schedule: Classes are 2:00–2:50 MWF in 329 Gregory Hall. This course satisfies the general education requirement in historical and philosophical perspectives.