

PHILOSOPHY 1: Introduction to Philosophy, Section 2890

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Spring 2009, T/Th 11:15-12:35, MC10
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Course Description: An introduction to western philosophy that will emphasize metaphysics (theories of reality), epistemology (theories of knowledge), and contemporary critiques of these. We will begin by dealing with questions that tend to provoke wonder and puzzlement at the world we take for granted and that challenge our basic and unexamined assumptions. We will look at the human process of self-formation and self-overcoming (Bildung) in which all wisdom emerges. We will cover a number of important figures in the history of western philosophy to see how the dialogue of philosophy has developed (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Russell, Frege, Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Davidson, etc.). We will spend some time with some of the cutting edge currents in contemporary philosophy to see what has become of the traditional philosophical issues after the "linguistic turn." This course offers the student an opportunity to examine and transform his or her awareness of him or herself and the world. Our beliefs and our world views that guide our actions are rooted in Western philosophical, religious, and cultural traditions. This course can improve your ability to think more clearly, critically, and with more perspective about your beliefs and the cultural, conceptual, linguistic tradition from which they emerged.

What is Philosophy? Philosophy cannot be simply defined but it involves the activity of very carefully and rigorously questioning our most basic assumptions, habits, and beliefs in order to either better understand things for its own sake, or in order to live a better life. In this sense, philosophy can be seen either as the pursuit of truth for its own sake or the pursuit of importance that makes a difference in human life. For most philosophers it was both. Philosophy literally means love (philos) of wisdom (sophia). It is reflection on the value and importance of our engagements in life. It is the activity of thinking very carefully and critically about such fundamental issues as self, society, reality, truth, meaning, value, reason, and philosophy itself. It is a passion for wisdom that engenders humility by revealing our ignorance. As Socrates tells us, the beginning of wisdom is the recognition of one's own ignorance. Wisdom is not knowledge, but as the word wisdom indicates, "seeing," in the metaphorical sense of seeing into things.

Philosophy is typically divided into these areas: 1) Metaphysics (theories of reality), 2) Epistemology (theories of knowledge and truth), 3) Axiology (theories of value, including moral philosophy or ethics, and aesthetics) 4) Logic (study of the properties of consistent inference). Philosophy can also be divided according to topics, such as, philosophy of... art, science, language, law, politics, etc. All labeling is for convenience and no label is precise or fully adequate. Any philosophical question in some way presupposes or implies many others.

Grading: The course will not presuppose any background other than college level ability to read and write. Reading will be presupposed for each class. Attendance will be required for a grade. An incomplete (I) will only be given with good attendance. Possible scantron quizzes. Writing: Three take home essay exams. A total of 7-10 essays. Of these, 4-6 will be graded, including your best work. Papers turned in ON TIME will be returned with a grade and comments normally within 2 weeks. Late papers may be turned in any time prior to the end of the semester, but will not be returned. At the beginning of the course you will indicate **IN WRITING** whether you wish to have the option to rewrite your papers one time each (only for papers turned in on time). If you select this option, your grades will be A, B, or Rewrite. However, your rewrites will not be graded until the end of the semester so you will not know your grade. If you wish to know exactly where you stand in the course at any given time, **DO NOT** select the rewrite option. Once you have made your selection, you cannot change it.

Note: A) If you drop the class, do so officially or you could receive an F. **Drop Deadlines: 3/8 w/o W, 4/12 w/W, 5/17 w/approval**
B) You are subject to exclusion if you miss more than 4 hours. Following an absence, find out what you missed.
C) Late arrival or early departure: sit near the door. After arriving, do not leave and re-enter class except for emergencies.
D) **Beepers/cell phones** should be turned off **before** entering class.
E) Please see me first for help or complaints.

Course Texts/Reading:

Primary Readings:

1. Kolak, D., *Wisdom Without Answers*, 5th ed., Wadsworth, 2002. (Bookstore)
2. Melchert, N., *The Great Conversation*, 5th ed., Oxford, 2007. (Bookstore)
3. <http://classics.mit.edu>, <http://plato.stanford.edu> and other websites for readings
4. Pickard, D., *The Eros Of Wisdom*: see www.deanpickard.com

Date	Topic	Reading
2/17, 2/19	Philosophy, Bildung/Education	Kolak, xi-22, Pickard, <i>The Eros of Wisdom</i>
2/24, 2/26	Puzzles of Reality, knowledge, Consciousness	Kolak, Chap 5, 7, 8, 9
3/3, 3/5	Cosmos, Death, Meaning, Values	Kolak, Chap 10, (11), 12, (13), 14
<u>FIRST ESSAY EXAM DUE 3/10</u>		
3/10, 3/12	Early Theories: PreSocratics	Melchert, Ch 1-2
3/17, 3/19	Sophists, Socrates	Melchert, Ch 3-5
3/24, 3/26	Plato	Melchert, Ch 6
3/31	Cesar Chavez Day: No class	
4/2, 4/7	Aristotle	Melchert, Ch 7
<u>SECOND ESSAY EXAM DUE 4/9 or 4/20</u>		
4/9	Post Aristotelian Philosophy	Melchert, Ch. 8-12
4/13-19	Spring Break	
4/21, 4/23	Rationalism/Empiricism	Melchert, Ch 13-15
4/28, 4/30, 5/5, 5/7	Hume & Kant	Melchert, 15, 16
<u>THIRD ESSAY EXAM DUE 5/12</u>		
5/12, 5/14	Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx	Melchert, 17-18
5/19, 5/21	Nietzsche & Contemporary Philosophy	Melchert, Ch. 20
5/26 5/28	Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Gadamer	Melchert, Ch. 23, 24
<u>FINAL ESSAY EXAM DUE in person 6/16</u>		
6/16	Final Exam Meeting 12-3PM: Mandatory	

This outline is subject to revision. Carefully follow announcements in class or online of any changes.