Course Syllabus for PHL 1001-02 Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2009  MWF 7:00-7:50

Instructor: Mark Walczynski
e-mail: mwalczyn@ivcc.edu

Text

Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau: Reason and Responsibility

Course description
An introduction to the major types of philosophical thought and the central problems of philosophy (e.g., human nature, political philosophy, the nature of morality, philosophy of religion) as presented through classical and contemporary reading selections.

Course Objectives
This is an introductory course to Western philosophy. The object of this course is to not only introduce the student to philosophical problems that philosophers have wrestled with for over two-thousand hundred years, but to engage in discussion of these issues. We will explore different sides of important philosophical matters and will in the process, learn how to think critically.

Course Requirements
Your final grade will be based on four criteria.

1) There will be several writing assignments. These assignments will consist of several 2-3 page papers that will ask you to evaluate, apply, or reflect on a philosophical position taken by one of the authors listed in one of the five sections in the textbook. Late papers will be penalized one grade for each class period past the due date.

2) The second writing assignment will consist of a 6-8 page paper about a noted philosopher or philosophe from the textbook or other philosopher that have made a substantial contribution to philosophy. Or, you may also write a paper on a philosophical subject or other matter concerning philosophy. The last two, however, must have instructor approval. This paper will be due one week before the end of the semester.

3) There will be several quizzes/exams covering material in the textbook and during classroom lectures. Students will be notified of upcoming exams. However, pop quizzes may be given at any time at the discretion of the instructor.

4) Classroom participation and discussion of the subject matter will constitute a major portion of your grade. You will not just read philosophy in this class. You will wrestle with ideas too. If you do not participate in classroom discussions, your grade will suffer.
Attendance is mandatory if you are going to pass this class. More than five absences will result in one grade knocked off one’s final grade. More than ten absences will result in withdrawal from the class. If you do not show up for class on time, you will receive an absent for that day.

Anyone who has not attended since the first week or has less than half of the assigned coursework completed by the time I need to do the midterm verification form will be withdrawn from the course. If you need to withdraw for any other reason, please see me. Keep in mind that withdrawing from a course can affect any financial aid you are receiving.

**Grading**
All assignments will receive a numerical point grade (3.51-4.0=A; 2.67-3.50=B; 2.66=C; below 1.67=D). I will give you an F for a final grade if you do not meet the course requirements. You will receive an F if you 1) engage in plagiarism or any other academic dishonesty, 2) if you fail to turn in all of your work, 3) exceed the allotted number of absences, 4) fail to participate in classroom discussions or exercises, or 5) willfully and repeatedly violate any provisions listed in the Miscellaneous section.

**Extra Credit**
I will allow for extra credit points. These are at the discretion of the instructor and will be discussed as the class curriculum unfolds.

**Miscellaneous**
Unless previously approved by the instructor, there will be **NO** cell phone usage in class, period! There will be **NO** texting nor will recording devices of ANY kind be allowed in class. Unless there is a disability issue that has been verified by the instructor, **NO** computers of any kind will be allowed in class. In addition, unnecessary and repeated disruptions to class will result in the student being asked to leave the class. If this occurs, the student will be counted as absent from class that day. We will hopefully have a great learning experience and if you apply yourself, there is no reason why you cannot pass this class.

I will miss several classes this semester. These classes will not count against your attendance record. Assignments will be given in lieu of classroom attendance.

I maintain the right to spend more time on particular portions of the class and less time on others, even if it conflicts with the syllabus.

***********The last day to withdraw from class is November 6, 2009***********

Course Outline
I. Week 1: Introduction to philosophy, philosophical thought, and critical thinking—why philosophy is important and a background of Western philosophy.

II. Weeks 2-6: Reason and Religious Belief. Discussions on the existence and nature of God, the problem of evil, and reason and faith.

III. Weeks 7-10: Human Knowledge and its Grounds and Limits. Discussions on skepticism, our knowledge of the external world, and method of science. **Midterm paper/exam/or quiz.**


VI. Weeks 16-18: Morality and its Critics. Discussions on changes to morality, proposed standards of right conduct, and ethical problems. **Final paper/exam/or quiz.**