Course Syllabus for PHL 1001-02 Introduction to Philosophy
Summer 2010 Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Instructor: Mark Walczynski
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Text


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 thousands of 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 reflective writing assignments. These assignments will consist of several 2 full page papers that will ask you to evaluate, apply, or reflect on a philosophical position taken by one of the authors assigned. Papers are due on the due date. No late papers will be accepted.

2) There will be mid-term and final exams.

3) In lieu of a final exam, you will have the option of presenting a 10-15 minute presentation in front of the class, or writing a 7-8 page research paper. See presentation and research paper document.

4) There will be several quizzes covering material in the textbook and during classroom lectures. However, pop quizzes may be given at any time at the discretion of the instructor.

5) 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. Your third absences will result in one grade lowering of your final grade. Four absences will result in withdrawal from the class. If
your fourth absence occurs after the final withdraw date you will receive an F for a grade. In addition, if you do not show up for class on time, you will be considered absent that day.

Grading

Quizzes and exams will receive a numerical point grade (3.51-4.0=A; 2.67-3.50=B; 2.66=C; below 1.67=D). Papers and presentations will be given a letter grade. Classroom participation points will be added to your final numeric value and letter grade. You will receive an F if you 1) engage in plagiarism or any other academic dishonesty, 2) exceed the allotted number of absences after the final withdraw date, 3) fail to participate in classroom discussions or exercises when repeatedly called upon, or 4) willfully 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

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 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 July 28, 2010************

Tentative Class Schedule

The class will be divided into four sections.

1) Weeks one through four: Section I, Introduction to the World of Philosophy
   a. What is Philosophy
   b. Critical Thinking
   c. In the Beginning: A Survey of philosophical understanding from prehistoric man through the medieval Scholastics

2) Weeks five through eight: Section II, Faith versus Reason
   a. “Five Ways” from Saint Anselm’s “Summa Theologica”
   b. “Why God Allows Evil” Richard Swinburne
c. “God and the Problem of Evil” B.C. Johnson
d. Midterm Exam

3) Weeks nine through eleven: Section III, Philosophy from the Scientific Revolution through the Enlightenment
   a. Scientific Revolution and its Effects on our Concept of God”
   b. “The 16th and 17th Century Philosophers: The Bridge Between Then and Now”
   c. “The Enlightenment”

4) Weeks twelve through sixteen: Section IV, Morality and Ethics: Contemporary Issues.
   a. “Morality and Ethics”
   b. “War”
   c. “Euthanasia”
   d. “Abortion”
   e. Final exam, research paper due, or class presentation