

UWG PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

PHIL 2010

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3 hours)

Spring Semester 2012

Section: 02/CRN: 10770/Time: 2-3:20pm

Class Location: TLC, room 1200

Email: jchristi@westga.edu

Instructor: **Jesse G. Christiansen M.A.**

Office: Pafford, 304D

Office Hours: 3:30pm-5pm

and by appointment

My office telephone:

English/Philosophy telephone: (678) 839-4164

**All email communication must be conducted from your official UWG email account. Students are obligated to check their UWG email accounts on a regular basis and to ensure that their mailboxes do not become full.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to philosophy through the study of representative texts of major philosophers from Plato to the present. Topics addressed will include the existence of God, the problem of evil, knowledge, the mind-body problem, consciousness, personal identity, free will and determinism, and the nature of the external world. The student will develop an understanding of the aforementioned topics and relevant questions within the context of Western philosophy. Critical thinking and communication skills are emphasized.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the semester, each student will be able to:

- define and distinguish among the philosophical terms and concepts used in the course;
- describe the views of at least three major philosophers from the Western tradition;
- contrast the competing views of major philosophers on some of the philosophical issues explored in the course;
- explain and critically assess the philosophical issues and theories explored in the course; and
- discuss in both oral and written discourse the philosophical theories and issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students to better:

- discuss the general historical development of the discipline of philosophy;
- discuss three major historical figures of philosophy;
- ask philosophical questions and differentiate their types;
- incorporate a philosophical position in oral and written communications;
- critically outline and analyze philosophical issues; and
- exhibit critical thinking skills

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: Because of the size of the class, this is primarily a lecture course, although we will regularly take time for class discussions. Reading assignments will be made on a regular basis. In order to benefit fully from lectures, **it is a must** that you do the reading when it is assigned. Success in this course will require a commitment of your time and energy. I advise the following study regimen: Do the assigned reading and writing before coming to class. (This is the bare minimum!) As soon as possible after class and in the light of class discussion and lecture, re-read the selection, taking notes for review and study. This will go a long way toward preparing you for the examinations.

REQUIRED TEXT:

- *Fifty Readings Plus, An Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, Donald C. Abel.
- Online materials: there may be readings assigned from philosophical academic Web sites. The instructor will provide links to these Web sites.

EVALUATION:

Grading Percentages: Quizzes 15%, Exams 45%, Paper 30%, Attendance and Participation 10%.

Quizzes: beginning the second class, there will be a quiz given at the start of every class, except for review days and exam days. Quizzes will consist of two questions shown (on the board or via projection screen) relevant to the assigned readings for that day. Turning in a piece of paper with your name and answers on it guarantees you an automatic 4 points. Three points will be awarded for each correct answer, with a total possible quiz score of 10. At the end of the semester, the three lowest quiz scores will be dropped and their points added to your total quiz grade. **Taking a quiz and leaving early, without preapproval by instructor, will result in a quiz grade of zero. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.**

Exams: there will be two exams. Exams will be short essay questions designed to test your understanding of the philosophical concepts and arguments covered in the assigned readings and class lecture and will comprise 45% of your total grade.

Paper: you will be assigned one philosophy-styled paper, which will be due toward end of the semester. The paper will be a maximum of 4 pages (minimum 3 pages), double-spaced, and typed. In the paper you will summarize an argument by one of the philosophers we cover this semester and then disagree with a point in it, defending your disagreement. Your instructor will email more detailed guidelines for the paper to you, and will give a brief explanation of thesis statements in class which must be turned-in by students after semester mid-point (see course schedule below).

GRADING SCALE:

100 – 90.1% A 90.0 – 80.1% B 80.0 – 70.1% C 70.0 – 60.1% D 60.0 - 0% F

Attendance and Participation: philosophy courses in general are discussion and question driven. Regular, punctual attendance is strongly recommended. Remember that attendance and participation are worth 10% of your total grade. Excessive unexcused absences will reduce a student's attendance and participation grade. In cases where excessive unexcused absences impair a student's ability to do the required course work, he or she may need to consider withdrawal from the course and should meet with instructor to further discuss his or her situation.

ATTENDANCE, FOOD, CELLPHONES, ETC.

- **You are permitted to miss two class meetings (one week worth of class) with no effect on your grade. Beginning with your third unexcused absence, you will lose points from your final attendance and participation grade for every class meeting you miss.** This policy applies to the first week of class, even for days on which you have not yet registered for the class. I will make exceptions for absences necessitated by UWG-sponsored events or by other circumstances that were absolutely outside your control. However, I will make these exceptions **only if ALL of your absences can be accounted for in one of these ways** (e.g., if you miss seven classes and you have documented, acceptable reasons for missing only six classes, then your seventh absence will still count against you, no matter the reason for that absence, even if it is for a UWG-sponsored event). Documentation will be required in all cases in which I make an exception to this absence policy. **Do not squander the two absences you are allowed: they are to be saved for when you *must* be absent, not to be burned through when you simply don't feel like coming to class.**
- Each student is responsible for everything which happens in class and is responsible for making specific arrangements with the instructor for the work missed, including that missed during illness or university-sponsored activities. Any student who is unable to continue attendance in class should either drop the course, withdraw from the University, or make appropriate arrangements with the instructor; any student who must be absent for more than three successive days is required to notify the Student Development Center, Parker Hall, telephone 678-839-6428. It is also recommended that the student notify the instructor or department.
- **Students who miss 8 or more class meetings (four weeks, or one month, worth of classes) will receive a grade of "F."** In this case the reason for your absences is irrelevant, even if many of your absences are necessitated by participation in UWG-sponsored events. If participating in UWG-sponsored events will require that you miss one month's worth of class meetings, you should drop this class immediately, before the end of the drop-add session. If you are unable to attend class for a month due to medical reasons, a family emergency, or any other reason, you should withdraw from class; if the withdrawal date has passed, you should apply for a hardship withdrawal from all of your classes.

- An early departure or late arrival may be counted as an absence, depending on the circumstances. I will decide in each case whether an early departure or a late arrival counts as an absence. If you know before class that you will not be able to stay for the entire class session, please inform me of this before class and sit as close to the door as possible, so as to be minimally distracting when you leave.
- **Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others.** Such behavior includes – but is not limited to – arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or surfing the web, using personal audio or visual devices, leaving the classroom while class is in session (e.g., to visit the restroom) is both disrespectful and distracting (do not leave the room during class unless it is absolutely essential that you do so). Constantly talking while an instructor or other student is talking is also considered rude and disruptive behavior and could result in student class dismissal and/or other disciplinary action. **Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance policy above.**
- Do not study **material from other classes** while this class is in session. While you are in this class, I expect your attention to be focused on it rather than on your other courses. Do not **eat** while class is in session (drinks are OK). **You must keep all cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices off during class; this implies that you may not send text messages during class.** You may use a laptop computer to take notes during class, but I reserve the right to change this policy during the semester if your laptop use becomes distracting to me or to other students, or if you abuse this privilege by looking at material during class that has nothing to do with class.
- If you know that you will need to miss class on a day on which a test is scheduled (for example, due to a UWG sponsored event), you must let me know about your absence as far in advance as possible so that we can schedule another day and time for you to take the test (or a make-up test). If you miss a test without receiving my explicit permission beforehand and making arrangements for a make-up test, you will be permitted to take a make-up test only if one of the following conditions applies: (a) Your absence was due to illness or injury serious enough to require professional medical care and which prevented you from contacting me before the test; or (b) Your absence was due to other extenuating circumstances beyond your control. I will determine on a case-by-case basis what constitutes "extenuating circumstances beyond your control." You may be required to provide documentation pertaining to your absence before you are allowed to take a make-up test. **Make-up tests will usually be different than the original test that you missed.**
- **QUIZZES MAY NOT BE MADE UP IN THIS COURSE.**
- **Extra-credit work will not be given under any circumstances. Work completed for other courses will not be accepted in this course.**
- *****Late papers will be deduced one letter grade for each calendar day they are late.*****
- **From the UWG Undergraduate Catalog:** "Class attendance policies are determined by each instructor for his or her own classes, subject to the following principles: class attendance policies shall be stated clearly during the drop-add period; each student is responsible for everything which happens in class and is responsible for making specific arrangements with the instructor for the work missed, including that missed during illness or university-sponsored activities; students absent from class while officially representing the University should not be penalized in the calculation of final grades; students may be dropped from the class by the instructor for violation of the instructor's attendance policy with a grade of W up to the midpoint of the semester or with the grade of WF following the midpoint of the semester; any student who is unable to continue attendance in class should either drop the course, withdraw from the University, or make appropriate arrangements with the instructor; any student who must be absent for more than three successive days is required to notify the Student Development Center, Parker Hall, telephone 678-839-6428. It is also recommended that the student notify the instructor or department. Faculty members have the authority to drop students who do not contact them or attend the first two class meetings for classes which meet daily (or the first class meeting for classes which meet less frequently). Faculty do not, however, automatically drop students who miss these first classes. Students who do not intend to remain in a course must drop the course before the end of the official drop/add period. Failure to drop a course during the drop/add period may result in grades of F in courses not attended."
- **Academic Honor.** "At West Georgia, the student is expected to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and excellence. Not only does academic honesty preserve the integrity of both the student and the institution, but it is also essential in gaining a true education. The West Georgia student, therefore, pledges not to lie, cheat or steal in the pursuit of his or her studies and is encouraged to report those who do." **Students who commit plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without attribution of credit) will receive an "F" for the entire course and may be reported to the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for additional action.**

Disability Pledge

I pledge to do my best to work with the University to provide all students with equal access to my classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc.

If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make these known to me, either yourself or through Disability Services in 272 Parker Hall. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. This is not only my personal commitment: it is your right, and it is the law! For more information, please contact Disability Services at the State University of West Georgia.

COURSE SCHEDULE: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (PHIL 2010)

THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE IS **TENTATIVE** AND MAY CHANGE AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES. THIS INCLUDES TEST DATES, WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Week of 1/09:

Mon: Introduction to Course
Wed: *Euthyphro*, Plato, pages 4-20.

Week of 1/16:

Mon: NO CLASS *** Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday ****
Wed: Finish Plato, begin *Proslogion and Exchange with Gaunilo*, Anselm, pages 31-36.

Week of 1/23:

Mon: Finish Anselm
Wed: *Treatise on God*, Thomas Aquinas, pages 37-45.

Week of 1/30:

Mon: *Natural Theology*, William Paley, pages 46-53.
Wed: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, David Hume, part II, pages 54-60 and part IX, pages 61-63.

Week of 2/6:

Mon: Finish Hume, Begin *Evil and Omnipotence*, J.L. Mackie, pages 89-101.
Wed: Finish Mackie

Week of 2/13

Mon: *Pensees (Faith and Reason)*, Blaise Pascal, pages 115-121.
Wed: Review for Mid-Term

Week of 2/20:

Mon: **Mid-Term Exam**
Wed: Video and Discussion

Week of 2/27:

Mon: *Meditations of First Philosophy*, Rene Descartes, www.earlymoderntexts.com, Meditation ONE.
Wed: Meditation TWO.
*****Friday, March 2nd: Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W."*****

Week of 3/5:

Mon: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, David Hume, pages 187-198.
Wed: Instructor Medical Absence

Week of 3/12:

Mon: Finish Hume, start Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, pages 198-209 (stop before the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements).

*****Thesis statements for class paper due.*****

Wed: Finish Kant, Start *What is it Like to be a Bat?* Thomas Nagel, pages 251-262.

Week of 03/19:

Mon: SPRING BREAK ***** NO CLASSES

Wed: SPRING BREAK ***** NO CLASSES

Week of 3/26:

Mon: Finish Nagel, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, Pali Cannon, 278-286 (stop at discourse 146).

Wed: *The Origins of Selves*, Daniel C. Dennett, pages 300-313.

Week of 4/2:

Mon: Introduction to Free Will and Determinism, pages 315-317.

Of The System of Man's Free Agency, Thiry and d'Holbach, pages 318-325.

Wed: Finish Thiry and d'Holback, begin *The Dilemma of Determinism*, William James, pages 336-346/*****Paper Due*****

Week of 4/9:

Mon: *The Problem of Morals*, W.T. Stace, pages 359-367.

Wed: Free Will and Determinism Class Debate

Week of 4/16:

Mon: Catch-Up

Wed: Final Exam Review

*****FINAL EXAM: Monday, April 23rd, 2pm-4:30pm*****