

- COURSE SYLLABUS -

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATION & CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

22556-PHI 153-006

-SPRING 2012-

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Office Hours: 2:00pm-4:00pm Mondays
and by personal appointment.

Location of class: Boynton (BO) # 210.
Time of class: Monday evening
6:30pm-9:15pm
23 January 2012 – 7 May 2012
sumphutos@gmail.com
Office location: BO # 206

“Philosophy begins in wonder.
And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a concern with the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, this course focuses on issues concerning philosophical theories of knowledge and reality, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. Possible topics: the nature of philosophy, the problem of skepticism and knowledge, mind and personal identity, and the nature and existence of God. Emphasis is on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking.

II. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

A. Problem Learning Outcomes:

- This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

B. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

- Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues.
- Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
- Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
- Ability to formulate, express, and support opinions on the philosophical issues covered in this course.

- Knowledge of cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

C. Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will acquire factual knowledge concerning critical thinking, epistemology, self-identity, and ethics.
- Students will gain familiarity with certain philosophical questions and historically prominent conceptual schemes, as well as an understanding of the progression of ideas within philosophical disciplines of epistemology, philosophy of the person, and philosophy of religion.
- Students will come to recognize the importance of basic philosophical issues and distinctions in their own lives, and to analyze and evaluate the choices they make in regard to these issues.

III. GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:

A. Course Policies and Requirements:

- 33.3% Mid-Term Exam
- 33.3% Final Exam
- 33.3% Cumulative Quiz Score

B. Attendance is expected. A complete attendance report may be filed with the student's dean and the registrar with the final course grade. *In fact, more than one absence, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*

C. All students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a *cogent documented* excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.

D. Any missed quiz without a *cogent documented* excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.

E. Because of the nature of pop quizzes over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your *best* interest to attend class and proactively engage material, especially since quizzes count 33.3% towards your final grade.

F. Required Book:

Brooke Noel Moore & Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 8th edition (New York: McGraw Hill), 2010.

1. This book will stimulate our thoughts regarding *ultimate questions* like:

- a. Where did we come from? (*origin*)
- b. What are we? Who are we? (*identity*)
- c. Why are we here? (*meaning*)
- d. How should we then live? (*morality*)
- e. What's gone wrong with the world? (*evil*)
- f. What can be done to fix the problems of the world? (*hope*)

5. **Quiz & Exam Information:**

- I will assign 11 pop quizzes over assigned reading and lecture material.
- Each quiz will be given at the beginning of class. Punctuality to class is imperative. No one who arrives more than 15 minutes late will be able to take the quiz for that session.
- If you take all 11 quizzes, then I will drop your lowest score. Only 10 quizzes will be counted toward quiz cumulative grade.
- Any missed quiz or exam without a *cogent documented* excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.
- You do not need scan-tron forms or blue books for the 11 pop quizzes. I will distribute writing material.
- The quizzes may include essay, true/false, multiple-choice, or short answer. Make sure you have a writing utensil each class period. Be prepared!
- Each exam may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short discussion, and/or essay. You need scan-tron (882E) and blue books for mid-term exam. Please bring writing utensil, scan-tron, and blue book. I will not be in a position to keep additional bluebooks, writing utensils, and 882E scan-tron. For Final exam, all you need is 882 E scan-tron and number 2 pencil.
- Each exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings as dictated on course schedule or as directed by professor.
- I may add additional required readings as deemed appropriate. I will inform you if the additional material will be added to quizzes or exams when I distribute the material in class.
- Take good notes. Recordings are not allowed.
- Any student *who has* to miss the mid-semester exam must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to re-take the exam

within two class days. If you miss the final exam, contact me to take the exam immediately; otherwise, you receive no credit for the exam (00).

IV. GENERAL RULES:

- No use of cell-phones, text-messaging, games, I-Pods (or equivalent), social utilities, or internet in class. No use of any technological device (unless ADA) that may be a distraction to the learning process. Laptops used exclusively for class-notes are acceptable. Please silence cell-phones before class. If you use the computer for other purposes than taking notes, then you will be asked to leave class.
- No smoking or use of tobacco will be permitted in the classroom.
- All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.
- Lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.
- No reading of newspapers, magazine, kindle books, and other materials for other classes.
- Respect your classmates and professor.
- If you have to step out to the restroom be sure to do so quietly.
- Do not bring attention to yourself.
- Attendance is expected. *In fact, more than one absent, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*
- I will be taking attendance at beginning of class. It is imperative that you be present and on-time.
- If you are late to class you must inform me at end of class or you will be counted as absent.
- If you are more than fifteen minutes late to my class, then you will be counted as absent.
- If you are gone more than 15 minutes from class, then you will be counted as absent.
- For every three times you are tardy to class (under 15 minutes), your excessive tardiness will be counted as one absence.

V. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

- Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?
- Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: “*What do I see?*” The more observations you make, the better your interpretation of the author’s position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, “*What does it mean?*”
- After you outline the author’s position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, “*What is the issue?*” Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?
- You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.
- Consider forming study groups to prepare for quizzes and exams.
- Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.
- Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a “morning person”, then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).
- Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).
- Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:

Read Thoughtfully
Read Repeatedly
Read Patiently
Read Selectively
Read Imaginatively
Read Purposefully
Read Acquisitively
Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler’s informative work, *How to Read a Book*.

- 10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:
1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.
 2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.
 3. Be undivided! Do not separate one area of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.
 4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!
 5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depressed from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.
 6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.
 7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy-for if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.
 8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.
 9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.

10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you. Go forth and seize each and every day with a passion for excellence!

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

| Class meeting | Topic | I will be introducing you to some important ideas from the following books and authors: | Reading Assignment TBA |
|-----------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| 23 January | Introduction to Course: What is a worldview? What is Philosophy? Development of Critical Thinking Skills; How to study philosophy | <i>Presocratic Philosophy</i> | |
| 30 January | Metaphysics & Epistemology: Ancient (Plato; Aristotle), Medieval (Plotinus; St. Augustine; St. Aquinas) | <i>Plato’s Republic</i> | |
| 6 February | Metaphysics & Epistemology continued: Berkeley; Leibniz; Spinoza; Locke; Hume; Kant; Reid | <i>Plato’s Republic</i> Descartes’ <i>Meditations</i> | |

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| 13 February | Continental Philosophy: Critical Theory; Structuralism; Postmodernism; Post- Structuralism; American Pragmatism: Experience as the starting point; Analytic Fallacy (problem of reductionism) | Descartes' <i>Meditations</i> | |
| 20 February | Mid-Term Exam | BE ON TIME TO CLASS! | Bring 882 E scantron, number 2 pencil, and blue book for essay portion. |
| 27 February October | Virtue Ethics: Socrates; Plato; Aristotle | Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> | |
| 5 March | Deontological Ethics: (St. Aquinas; Immanuel Kant); David Hume's Ethics; Sir William David Ross' Ethics | Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> | |
| 19 March | Consequential Ethics; Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill); Egoism; Relativism; Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice (Carol Gilligan) | <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> | |
| 26 March | Social and Political Philosophy | Gandhi's <i>Selected Political Writings</i> | |
| 2 April | Social and Political Philosophy | Gandhi's <i>Selected Political Writings</i> | |

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| <p style="text-align: center;">9 April</p> | <p>Philosophy of Religion Existence of God: Arguments; Evidences; Existential; Religious Experience</p> <p>Problem of Miracles (Hume);</p> <p>The Problem of evil (Finite God; Author of evil; Natural evil; Gratuitous Evil);</p> <p>Why Isn't God's existence more obvious?</p> | <p>Pascal's <i>Pensees</i></p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">16 April</p> | <p>Philosophy of Religion continued:</p> | <p>Pascal's <i>Pensees</i></p> <p><i>Watch video debate on Watch debate: Paul Kurtz vs. William Lane Craig regarding the topic: Is Goodness without God good enough?</i></p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">23 April</p> | <p>Existentialism (Theistic; Secular; Nihilism)</p> <p>Introduction to Aesthetics: Historical Survey: From Plato to Kuspit</p> | <p>Simone de Beauvoir's <i>Ethics of Ambiguity</i></p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">30 April</p> | <p>Aesthetics continued: Objective/subjective beauty; aesthetic value; aesthetic experience</p> | <p>John Dewey's <i>Art as Experience</i></p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">7 May 2012</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">FINAL EXAMINATION</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">6:45pm-9:15pm BE ON TIME!</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Need Scantron 882 E and number 2 pencil</p> |

VII. OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:

- A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor's discretion.**

B. I'm here for you. It is best to contact me by e.mail at sumphutos@gmail.com to make an office appointment. You are welcome to call me on cell phone by 10:00pm (central) or contact me by facebook.

C. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic honesty in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp,

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another person in another in act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive an F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student's permanent file. If you feel the instructor's determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeal process described in full at [www.http:/ www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp).

D. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

E. Students with Disabilities:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-

1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

EXTRA NOTES:

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”
~ Dr. Seuss