

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2010

PHIL 120 Introductions to Philosophy
MW1b (7:30 AM – 8:45 AM)
Classroom: Zinzendorf 103

Instructor: Dr. Bernie Cantens
Office: Zinzendorf 203
Phone/E-Mail: (610) 861-1589/ bcantens@moravian.edu
Web Page: <http://bernierphilosophy.com/>
Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00 PM
THURS. 9:00 AM -12:00 PM

Text

Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy, (7th edition) Editor, G. Lee Bowie, Meredith W. Michaels, and Robert C. Solomon (Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadsworth Publishers, 2007)

ISBN-10: 0495007110 | ISBN-13: 9780495007111 | 848 Pages

*** Make sure you bring the text to every class!**

Course Description

Tasks and subject matters of philosophy, including major theories of reality, knowledge, religion, morality, and social justice. Attention to several classic philosophical texts as primary source readings. (M3)

100-Level Course

This course is meant as a first course in philosophy. It introduces students to basic vocabulary. It is a general survey course, touching on various areas of philosophy (e.g., Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Ethics, Social Political Philosophy, etc.)

Relationship of Course to University Mission

A quality liberal arts education ought to include thinking and reflecting about ultimate questions such as the meaning of life, the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, what is right and wrong, and the nature of truth. Introduction to philosophy will presents students with the opportunity to engage in o rigorous analyses of these issues through the writings of prominent historical philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, and many others.

Course Goals

The objectives of this course are the following: 1) to study the origin and nature of philosophy and philosophical reflection; 2) to study the various branches of philosophy (ethics, epistemology, logic, metaphysics, etc.) and how these relate to everyday practical issues and concerns; 3) to study the methods and nature of philosophical inquiry; 4) to study the difference

between inductive and deductive reasoning; 5) to develop critical reading and writing skills; 6) to expose students to the central role philosophy plays in relation to the arts and sciences, and 7) to introduce students, through primary texts, to the thought of some of the most prominent philosophers in history.

Learning Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course: 1) to analyze and write clearly and intelligibly about ultimate questions; 2) to recognize the relevance and importance of ultimate questions for the prosperity of individuals and society; 3) to critically evaluate their own and others' answers to ultimate questions; 4) to identify and explain prominent themes in the history of philosophy; 5) to identify and explain ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological concepts, doctrines, and theories; 6) to identify the of the nature of philosophical inquiry and how it relates to inductive and deductive reasoning; 7) to recognize the central role of philosophy for a liberal arts education; 8) to explain and write clearly about the philosophical ideas of some of the most prominent philosophers in history.

Grading and Assignments

Reflection Papers (50 points)

Students will complete two philosophical reflection papers on a topic *directly* related to this course and that has been part of the reading assignments and class discussions.

The paper should be approximately 3-pages long double-spaced and 12-Times New Roman font.

The students will be graded according to four criteria: (1) whether the introduction has a clear and explicit thesis and organized developing statements; (2) whether the paper is well organized and demonstrates a logical flow of ideas; (3) whether there are well constructed and developed arguments and/or critical explanations of philosophical problems and solutions; and (4) whether the writing skills, such as word use, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation are correct.

Exams (50 Points)

There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. The exam will be composed of essays and short answers.

Exam 1: October 6, 2010

Exam 2: December 10, 2010

It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for the course.

Class Participation

Attendance will be taken every class period and students will be marked down for unexcused absences. Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or by attending out-of-class philosophy lectures and events. Unexcused absences included only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Extra Credit

Students will have the opportunity to earn a total of 3 extra points to the final grade by attending a minimum of 3 philosophy club meetings. The 3 extra points will bump you up one extra grade, for instance from a B to a B+ or from a B+ to an A- etc.

Chronological Order of Assignments and Exams

September 29	1 st Reflection Paper	(20 Points)
October 6	Exam 1	(20 points)

Fall Break 10/8-10/12

November 12	2 nd Reflection Paper	(30 points)
December 10	Final II	(30 points)

Topics:

1. INTRODUCTION

2. THE MEANING OF LIFE

Albert Camus: The Absurd

3. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Introduction

William Paley: Teleological Argument

David Hume: Why Does God Let People Suffer?

William James: The Will to Believe

MIDTERM

4. WHAT SHOULD I THINK ABOUT THE MORALITY OF ABORTION?

Ani Di Franco: Abortion and life

Florence Rice: "Abortion and life

Judith Jarvis Thompson: A defense of Abortion

Anthony Kenny: The Beginning of Individual Human Life

Lynne Rudder Baker: When Does a Person Begin?

Susanne Gibson: The Problem of Abortion: Essentially Contested Concepts and Moral Autonomy

Alice Walker: Right to Life? What can the White Man Say To The Black Woman?

5. THINKING AND KNOWING (EPISTEMOLOGY)

Plato: The Myth of the Cave

Rene Descartes: Meditations

John Locke: Where our Ideas Come From

6. LIVING A GOOD LIVE (ETHICS)

Plato: The Ring of Gyges

Aristotle: Happiness and the Good Life

John Stuart Mill Utilitarianism

7. WHAT DO I JUSTLY DESERVE?

Plato: Does Might Make Right?

Thomas Hobbes: Justice and the Social Contract

Learning Methods

Multimedia This course will combine traditional classroom lecturing with multimedia presentations. Every lecture will be supplemented with power point presentations and internet information. All course materials, such as syllabus, review questions, term paper information, etc., are posted on my website: <http://berniephilosophy.com> . This will give the students direct access to most of the materials for this class at their convenience.

Class Dynamic Class participation is expected of all students enrolled in this course. Questions and class discussions are encouraged as an effective vehicle to motivate students' interest in the subject matter. *If there are few questions and little discussion taking place in the classroom, the professor reserves the right to choose individual students to answer questions or give their view and the arguments on a particular issue.* Therefore, careful daily reading of the text and handouts is essential for success in this course.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students **must** bring their text and journals to every class! Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence up to a possible 5 points. Students can make up lost points in unexcused absences by actively participating in class discussions or attending out-of-class philosophy lectures and events. Unexcused absences include only the following: (1) sickness with a doctors' note, (2) death in the family, or (3) some other extraordinary event.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

See Student Handbook pp. 32 – 38.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Student Behavior:

See Student Handbook pp. 38 – 40. **Cell phones must be turned off during class!**

Course Requirements

Reading of assignments before class is essential to succeed in this course. Students are expected to be ready for class and to write intelligibly in their journals every class period. This means that he or she should read the assigned chapters before the professor introduces it. Class participation, note taking, and discussion are highly encouraged. The study of philosophy does not only consist of memorization; students must also read analytically and reflect critically on the texts and reading assignments. When studying difficult material, it is often necessary to read it several times before a proper understanding is achieved. Do not be disappointed if you do not understand a philosophical reading assignment on your first try.

Grading/Measures of evaluations:

Exam I:	20%
Exam II:	30%

1st Reflection Paper: 20%
 2nd Reflection Paper: 30%

A=100-94; A- =93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B- = 83-80; C+=79-77; C = 76-70; D=69-60;
 F=<59

PROGRAM AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 30	INTRODUCTION What is Philosophy (Handout)
Sept. 1	Some Logic (Handout)
TOPIC 1	RELIGION AND THE MEANING OF LIFE
Sept. 6	No School
Sept. 8	Albert Camus: "The Absurd" p. 45.
Sept. 13	How do I know whether God exists? Introduction
Sept. 15	William Paley: "Teleological Argument" p. 60
Sept. 20	David Hume: "Why Does God Let People Suffer?" p. 63 Introduction
Sept. 22	David Hume: "Why Does God Let People Suffer?" p. 63
Sept. 27	William James: "The Will to Belief" p. 74
Sept. 29	Review 1st Reflection Paper Due
Oct. 4	Midterm

TOPIC 2	WHAT SHOULD I THINK ABOUT THE MORALITY OF ABORTION?
Oct. 6	Ani Di Franco: "Abortion and life" p. 402 Florence Rice: "Abortion and life" p. 402 Judith Jarvis Thompson: A defense of Abortion p. 404
Oct. 11	Recess
Oct. 13	Anthony Kenny: The Beginning of Individual Human Life p. 415 Lynne Rudder Baker: When Does a Person Begin? P. 421
Oct. 18	Susanne Gibson: The Problem of Abortion: Essentially Contested Concepts and Moral Autonomy p. 429
Oct. 20	Alice Walker: Right to Life? What can the White Man Say To The Black Woman? P. 435
TOPIC 3	THINKING AND KNOWING
Oct. 25	What Can I know? Plato: "The Myth of the Cave" p. 264
Oct. 27	Plato: "The Myth of the Cave" Descartes: "Meditations I and II" p. 266
Nov. 1	Descartes: "Meditations I and II" p. 266
Nov. 3	John Locke: "Where Our Ideas Come From" p. 275.
TOPIC 4	LIVING A GOOD LIFE
Nov. 8	Why shouldn't I be selfish? Plato: "The Ring of Gyges" p. 507

Nov. 10	What is the right thing for me to do? Aristotle: "Happiness and the Good Life" p. 584
Nov. 15	What is the right thing for me to do? Aristotle: "Happiness and the Good Life" pp. 524-531. 2nd Reflection paper Due
Nov. 17	John Stuart Mill "Utilitarianism" p. 598.
Nov. 22	John Stuart Mill "Utilitarianism"
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 25	Thanksgiving Day
TOPIC 5	JUSTICE AND RESPONSIBILITY
Nov. 29	What do I justly deserve? Plato "Does Might Make Right" p. 681
Dec. 1	Thomas Hobbes "Justice and the Social Contract" p. 684
Dec. 6	Thomas Hobbes "Justice and the Social Contract"
Dec. 8	REVIEW Last Day of Class
Dec. 10	FINAL EXAM: December 10, 2010 (Friday, 8:30 AM)

PLEASE, as a courtesy to the other students in the class, turn off all phones upon entering class!