



MORAVIAN COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY COURSE SYLLABUS Moravian College Fall 2015

PHI 120A: Introduction to Philosophy
Classtime: MW 2:35 PM-3:45 PM (8/31/2015 -12/18/2015)
Room: Comenius 305
Instructor: Dr. Leon Niemoczynski ("Dr. Leon")
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Office Hours: MW 10:30-11:30am and 1-2pm / T 10-11am

Course Description

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

Course Objectives

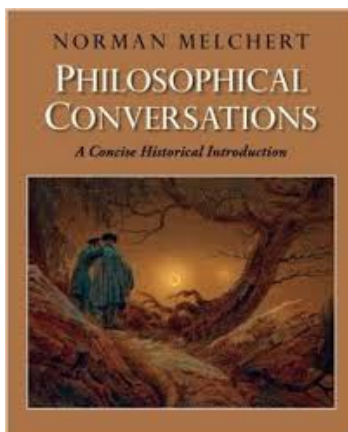
The objectives of this course are the following: 1) to study the origin and nature of philosophy and philosophical reflection; 2) to analyze philosophical theories within the various branches of philosophy, such as aesthetics, epistemology, and metaphysics; 3) to examine the methods and nature of philosophical inquiry; 4) to study the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning; 5) to develop critical reading and writing skills; 6) to explore the central role of the discipline of philosophy in relation to the arts and sciences, and 7) to introduce students to some of the most prominent philosophers in history through primary texts.

Course Objectives

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course: 1) to think and write intelligibly about ultimate questions; 2) to understand and explain of the relevance and importance of ultimate questions for the prosperity of individuals and society; 3) to critically evaluate and assess their own and others' answers to ultimate questions; 4) to write intelligibly about prominent themes in the history of philosophy; 5) to demonstrate through their writing a basic understanding of ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological concepts, doctrines, and theories; 6) to exhibit through the completion of writing assignments and exams a basic understanding of the nature of philosophical inquiry and how it relates to argumentation; 7) to write clearly about the thoughts of some of the most prominent philosophers in history.

Required Text

Norman Melchert, *Philosophical Conversations: A Concise Historical Introduction*, 5th edition. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0195328462.



Grading and Evaluation

1. 10% - Class Projects (Homework Assignments, Class work)
2. 10% - Final Group Project & Presentation
3. 20% - Weekly Quizzes
4. 60% - Three Essay Exams

1. Class Projects (10%): This portion of your grade measures your preparedness for class, as well as your participation in class either as an individual or in groups. "Participation" means your full engagement during class including: questions for credit, group work for credit, or other forms of review within the class that count for credit. All take home Homework Assignments must be typed in order to receive credit. Class Activity averages into 10 percent of your final grade.

2. Group Presentations (10%): Students will do a final Group Presentation. A rubric will be provided with specific instructions, however as a preliminary word: all students must participate and have a speaking role, the presentation must last 15 minutes, all items must be turned in for full credit, and all students must be present on the day of presentations.

3. Quiz Grade (20%): Students are expected to study class notes and do assigned readings on daily basis. There are no make-up quizzes: missed quizzes count against you only if you have no documented excuse for the day that you missed (see attendance policy). You are only allowed to miss one quiz with a documented excuse on your first absence only. Please note: If you miss class and know that there will be a quiz when you return, you are responsible to get notes from a classmate and prepare yourself for the quiz before your return to class.

4. Exams (60%): Exams correspond roughly to each third of the course. Exams are hand-written essay exams. Students receive three possible test questions about one week before the exam. On the date of the exam, two of those three questions will be chosen at random. Students answer those two test questions, with the entire class period allowed for response. At a minimum, essay responses should be about 1.5 pages each (making for roughly 3 pages of hand-written response total for the exam). The more detailed the response the better.

Grade Scale

96-99 = A / 95 = A / 90-94 = A-; 86-89 = B+ / 85 = B / 80-84 = B-; 76-79 = C+ / 75 = C / 70-74 = C-; 66-69 = D+ / 65 = D / 64-60 = D-; 60 and below = F

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data presented as one's own work. When a student submits for credit work that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. By placing his/her name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments. Please note that plagiarism covers unpublished as well as published sources. These statements apply to students who consult Wikipedia, or other online sources, and then recite information found there as if it were their own. Reciting work that is not your own without proper citation will result in a reduced grade (including "F" or zero) for the assignment. More information about the Academic Integrity Policy may be found on pages 32-38 of the Student Handbook.

Attendance Policy

Because this class meets only twice per week **two and only two** absences are permitted (technically a "week" of school). Each absence after the second absence will result in one letter grade depreciation per absence unless valid documentation is provided for the reason of the absence. Arriving late does count as an absence, as does persistent use of smartphone (see below). Please arrive to class promptly in order to avoid being marked absent.

Late Work

1. Quizzes: Due to the fact that this course only meets twice per week, unfortunately there are no make up quizzes. Please note: If you miss class and know that there will be a quiz when you return, *you are responsible to get the notes from a classmate and prepare yourself for the quiz before your return to class.* You are only

allowed to miss one quiz with a documented excuse on your first absence only. After your initial absence any further absences will result in 0's in the gradebook for missed quizzes.

2. **Missed Exams:** Students have one week to make up an exam. If a student misses an exam it is their responsibility to contact the Instructor in order to arrange a make-up exam. Please be prepared to adjust your schedule accordingly to take the make-up if you miss an exam.

Classroom Procedure

1. Text messaging or any form of cell phone use (including internetting on "smart phones") is strictly forbidden. If the Instructor finds using smartphones during class to be a problem, the Instructor reserves the right to mark you absent for that class due to smartphone use. Please put all phones and technology away during class.

2. Because of persistent and wide-spread abuse of laptops in classrooms, student will NOT be allowed to use laptops in class. Laptop use for note-taking will require documentation as a special need at which point the screen must be visible to the Instructor at all times. (According to research even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. See the study, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard" by Mueller [Princeton University] and Oppenheimer [UCLA]: *Psychological Science*, Vol. 25 No. 6 (2014):1159-1168.)

3. Regarding class participation, you are expected to be prepared each class (most importantly the Class Symposia). All students are expected to fully contribute to, and participate in, their respective Group Presentations. .

4. Please refrain from private discussion or other disruptive behavior during lecture. Disruptive students are given an immediate verbal warning, if a chronic problem ("three strikes" rule) the student is asked to leave the class.

5. You are expected to have as much fun as possible. ☺

Students Requiring Special Services and Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Schedule for Fall Term (15 weeks)

Unit One: Metaphysics (Reality)

Week of 8/31: Presocratics; Socrates

Week of 9/7: Socrates; Plato (No class Labor Day)

Week of 9/14: Plato, Review for Test Unit One

Unit Two: Epistemology (Truth & Knowledge)

Week of 9/21: **Test Unit One** + Aristotle

Week of 9/28: Aristotle; Aquinas

Week of 10/5: Aquinas; Descartes

Week of 10/12: Descartes; Hume

Week of 10/19: Hume; Review for Test Unit Two

Week of 10/26: **Test Unit Two** Review for Test Unit Two + Bentham/Mill/Moore on Utilitarianism

Unit Three: Ethics and Morality (Right & Wrong)

Week of 11/2: Bentham/Mill/Moore on Utilitarianism; Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality

Week of 11/9: Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality

Week of 11/16: Start Presentations

Week of 11/23: Thanksgiving Break; Presentations continued

Week of 11/30: Review for Test Unit Three + Extra buffer class

12/7 Final Exam Week