

Introduction to Philosophy Fall 2007

Course Policies

Course: PHI 2010 Section 2837
Times: M W F - 2nd period (8:30 – 9:20)
Location: TUR 1315

Instructor: Eugenio E. Zaldivar
Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall, tba
Email: via WebCT
Office hours: tba

Course description

Philosophy is the attempt to answer fundamental questions about ourselves and the world which do not seem to be answerable merely by mathematical or scientific investigation. This course will introduce students to (1) the methodology of philosophy and (2) some traditional questions in Western philosophy. Specifically we will focus on problems about the identity of persons over time, the problem of evil, the nature of knowledge, and ethical behavior. The course will emphasize clear and careful thought, discussion and writing about these issues, and it will help students to develop the skills of producing and critically evaluating arguments.

Required Texts: Readings will be available on reserve or as .pdf files (open with Adobe Acrobat Reader) on the course website, WebCT, for you to print out. If any document I provide is password protected, I will give you the password required to open these documents in class.

Assignments

Papers: Four short essays (1000 words).

Summaries: To be developed on the basis of Hope May's "How to Read Philosophy." These **summaries** are expected to be about a one page (300 words) summary and evaluation of what we read, and **will be collected for evaluation at unannounced random intervals** (i.e., you should always bring them to class ready to hand in.) **The summaries will begin with Descartes's *Meditations*.**

Participation Much of the learning we do will take place in class, through lectures, and discussion. Therefore, attendance and participation in all classes is obligatory. You must come to class and you must participate. If you have a habit of working all night and sleeping all day, or if you believe that it's nobler or cooler to skip classes than to attend them, do not take this course! **There will be a sign-in sheet available at the start of**

every class.

If you cannot make it to a class meeting, courtesy requires that you give *prior* notification to tell me what is going on (email is fine). There are a few acceptable excuses (if properly documented), such as illness or family emergencies. Hangovers, disorganization, poor time management, and oversleeping are not acceptable reasons to miss a class meeting. Missing classes will harm your grade both directly and indirectly. You are expected to participate vigorously in class discussions. When I lecture, I expect you to listen, ask questions, raise problems, answer questions, etc. When another student asks a question or raises a problem, you should listen, think carefully about what she or he said, and engage in the ensuing conversation.

Finally, check your email at least once per day. Updates and changes will go out either via WebCT's e-mail system or WebCT's announcements system.

Submission of Your Essays

You will be expected to post properly formatted copies of your essays to their designated folders in the WebCT page for this class. The digital copy should be submitted before you come to class. You will also be expected to hand in hard copy at the beginning of the class period on the appropriate due date.

Basic Course Policies

- **I expect students to be respectful and courteous to each other and to me**, which includes arriving early, bringing the right materials (readings, handouts, notebooks, reading journals, etc.), not packing up until class is dismissed, **turning off your cell phone**, being attentive, taking notes, waiting your turn to speak, etc. I reserve the right to remove from my classroom students who do not meet this fundamental requirement. **(I will ask you to leave if your phone rings.)**
- No late papers are accepted unless the student has an acceptable reason for missing class on the due date. No “stories” please; if you have appropriate documentation (e.g., a doctor’s note), provide me with a copy. In this case it is your responsibility to contact me to determine the new due date. Failure to do so in a timely manner (determined by me) may cause your paper to be rejected as late.
- Daily attendance is a requirement of this course. I am not in a position to repeat lectures or the contents of our class discussion. If you miss a class, you should try to get notes from a colleague, and see me for questions as necessary. However, you may miss up to three classes without penalty unless you are absent on a day that an essay is due. **Every absence over the allowed three will reduce your overall grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. If you miss more than eight periods during the term, you will automatically fail the entire course.**

- I will take roll at the beginning of every class. Of course, you should come to class on time. If you do arrive late, please come in as quietly as possible. After class, you must make sure that I change my attendance record to reflect that you attended after all. **If you are more than 10 minutes late, it will count as an absence for the entire class session.** This is an early class, but that is no excuse for consistent tardiness. If tardiness becomes a problem, I reserve the right to penalize you for it. (Of course, before I begin penalizing tardiness, I will let you know about it.)
- I expect students to take responsibility for their own education. That includes, among other things, doing more than what is merely required by the course, doing whatever you need to do to master the material and develop the skills I aim to teach you, keeping up with the work, checking to see whether you need help, and if you do, getting it as soon as possible. It is easier for me to help those who are putting in the effort to learn (e.g., those who don't miss class, keep up with reading and summaries, take notes, ask questions when lost or confused, and come for help before deadlines loom). **It is unethical for students to tell me they "need such-and-such a grade in this class," and students may be penalized for doing so.** You should have academic goals, and I will help you do your best, but please keep grade goals yourself.
- Students requesting special classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. **Of course, I will make every effort to accommodate any such needs.**
- University of Florida policies for academic honesty can be found at the following websites. **Read them.**

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.php>

Grading:

Essays 20% each.

Summaries 10%

Participation 10%

Consideration will be given for significant improvement in writing, clarity of thought, and argumentation over the span of the course.