



A M B R O S E

PH 125 Introduction to Philosophy Fall 2009

Time: Wednesday & Friday 9:45 – 11:00

Location: Airhart Theatre

Instructor Information:

Kenneth M. Nickel (MAR, MSc, PhD ABD)

Associate Professor of Philosophy

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Course Description

The course introduces students to the broad survey of the Western philosophical tradition. Special attention will be given to enduring philosophical issues including, but not limited to, the nature of reality and knowledge, the existence of God, the mind/body problem, freewill and determinism, value theory and ethics.

Course Objectives

1. Students should learn the classical philosophical positions regarding the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.
2. Students should gain knowledge of the most prominent historical contributors to the Western philosophical tradition.
3. Students should develop an appreciation for the invaluable contribution that philosophy has made to other disciplines and fields such as science, politics, law, education, and theology.

Textbook & Other Required Readings

Stumpf, S. E., & Abel, D. C. (Eds.). (2002). *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction* (4th Edition). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- A small number of short readings will be provided electronically.

Course Requirements

- 1. Midterm Examination** 20%
 - October 30th
- 2. Research Paper** 30%
 - Due: December 9th @ 9:45 PM
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format guidelines, and late policy will be provided.
- 3. Final Exam** 50%
 - Date: Monday, December 14th 9:00 – 12:00 in Airhart.
 - Students must pass the final exam to ensure a passing grade in the course. A student who performs well during the term but fails the final exam may fail the course.
 - Students should refrain from scheduling flights or travel of any sort that will conflict with the Final Examination schedule. Final examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements.

Grading: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

| <u>Letter Grade</u> | <u>GPA</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| A+ | 4.0 | | 90-100 % |
| A | 4.0 | Exceptional | 85-89 % |
| A- | 3.7 | | 80-84 % |
| B+ | 3.3 | | 77-79 % |
| B | 3.0 | Exceeds Expectations | 73-76 % |
| B- | 2.7 | | 70-72 % |
| C+ | 2.3 | | 67-69 % |
| C | 2.0 | Meets Expectations | 63-66 % |
| C- | 1.7 | | 60-62 % |
| D+ | 1.3 | | 55-59 % |
| D | 1.0 | Minimal Pass | 50-54 % |
| F | 0.0 | Failure | 49 < % |

Important Dates

- Last day to enter a course without permission and to withdraw from course and receive tuition refund is September 18th.
- Last day to withdraw from courses or change to audit without academic penalty is November 13th.
- Last day to request revised time for a final examination is November 30th.

Important Notes

- **Students are responsible to check their Ambrose e-mail account regularly. E-mail may be used to notify students of cancelled classes or other important details relating to the course.**
- **Use of cell phones, recording devices, head phones, and all other non-essential technology is prohibited.**
- **Lap top computers, when not used exclusively for taking class notes, are often a distraction to classmates and even the individual user. Their use is discouraged.**
- **Lap tops used for purposes unrelated to taking lecture notes are prohibited. Violators will be asked to leave the class. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Deans Office.**
- **Students are expected to respect the learning environment of the classroom. Make every attempt to be on time. Keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum as they are distracting to both the instructor and fellow classmates. As well, they are often deleterious to a student's performance in the class.**
- *Ambrose is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.*
- *Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.*
- *Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension." Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."*
- *Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus for their records.*

PH 125 COURSE OUTLINE¹

Sept 9 Introduction

Epistemology

- From September 11th to October 1st we will examine questions like: 'what is knowledge?'; 'how is knowledge acquired?'; 'what is truth?' (**Part 1: pages 21-95**).

Sept 11 What is knowledge? Plato & Gettier*²

Sept 16 Descartes: Rationalism & Skepticism

Sept 18 Locke, Hume, and Empiricism

Sept 23 Kant & Critical Philosophy

Sept 25 James, Russell*, and Truth Theory

Sept 30 **Program Emphasis Day -- No Class**

Oct 1 Postmodernism and Feminist Epistemology

Metaphysics

- From October 7th to October 28th we will examine the nature of reality, focusing on materialism/physicalism, idealism, and dualism. Personal identity and immortality will also be examined (**Part 3 & Part 4: pages 169-278**).

Oct 7 What is reality? Locke*

Oct 9 What is reality? Berkeley and varieties of Idealism

Oct 14 What is human being? Dualism & Materialism

Oct 16 Philosophy of Science: O'Hare and Quantum Mechanics

Oct 21 Philosophy and Fashionable Nonsense: The Sokal Affair*

Oct 23 Community Day – No Classes

Oct 28

Oct 30 **Midterm Exam**

Nov 4 Do I have self identity? Hume, Reid, Dennett

¹ This course outline is provisional and may, at the discretion of the instructor, require revision over the course of the term. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the outline to accommodate, amongst other things, timely issues or pressing concerns.

² An asterisk (*) denotes that a reading supplement will be provided.

Nov 6 Am I immortal? Plato & Penelhum

Freewill & Determinism

- From November 13th to November 18th we will examine the enduring concern over human freedom (**Part 5: pages 281-336**).

Nov 11 Remembrance Day – No Class

Nov 13 St. Augustine, Kant, Sartre, Searle³

Nov 18 James, Taylor, Hospers, Skinner, Stace, & Hume

Philosophy of Religion

- From November 20th to November 27th we will examine questions regarding the existence of God, religious knowledge, and the problem of evil (**Part 2: pages 99-166**).

Nov 20 Existence of God

Nov 25 Knowledge of God

Nov 27 The Problem of Evil

Ethics and Moral Philosophy

- December 2st to December 9th we will examine issues in moral philosophy focusing on moral motivation, normative theories, virtue ethics, and existentialism (**Part 6: pages 339-445**).

Dec 2

Dec 4

Dec 9 Research Paper Due @ 9:45

³ This material is not covered in the text book.