



PH 125 – 1

Introduction to Philosophy

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisite:
None

Semester: Fall, 2015
Days: W & F @ 11:15 AM
Room: Airhart
Lab – day: None
Lab–Room: None

Instructor: Dr. Ken Nickel (PhD)
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Office: L2103
Office Drop in or by appointment hours:

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.

Further Course Information:

Important course information, including lecture notes, weekly summaries, and discussion forums are found at:

<https://moodle.ambrose.edu/my/>

Expected Learning Outcomes:

It is the aim of the course that students acquire the following skills:

1. Students should learn and understand the classical and enduring philosophical issues related to metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.
2. Students should gain knowledge of the most prominent and significant contributors to the Western philosophical

Important Dates:

First day of classes: Sept 9
Registration revision period: Sept 20
Last day to request revised examination: Oct 26
Last day to withdraw from course: Nov 12
Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: Nov 23
Last day of classes: Dec 14

Final Exam: Sat, Dec 19
Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Room: Airhart

tradition.

3. Students should develop an appreciation for the invaluable contribution that philosophy has made to other disciplines and fields such as natural science, social science, politics, law, education, and theology.

Outline: This outline is provisional and subject to change.

SEP 9 Introduction

"The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." – Alfred North Whitehead

SEP 11 Historical Origins: "In the beginning ... we were bored!"

SEP 16 Plato's *Apology* (**Reading 1**: pages 5-24)
Plato's *Crito* (**Reading 41**: pages 425-435)

SEP 18 Plato's *Euthyphro* (**Reading 11**: 108-123)

Epistemology: What is knowledge? How is it acquired? What can be known? What can I know? What is "Truth"?

SEP 23 Plato's *Republic* (**Reading 13**: pages 133-143) :
'The Cave' and 'The Divided Line'

SEP 25 Edmund Gettier: Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?
Rationalism: Descartes (**Reading 14**: pages 144-154) & Spinoza (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza/>)

SEP 30 No Class

OCT 2 Empiricism: Locke & Hume (**Readings 15 & 16**: pages 155-174)

OCT 7

OCT 9 Constructivism: Kant (**Reading 17**: pages 175-187)

OCT 14 Truth Theory (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/>)

OCT 16 Feminist Epistemology: Jaggar (**Reading 18**: pages 188-198)

OCT 21 Midterm Exam

Metaphysics: What is reality? Of what does a human being consist? What is the relationship between physics and metaphysics? What kinds of things can survive change? What kinds of things can endure through time?

OCT 23 Materialism vs Idealism: Locke (**Reading 15**: p 161-164),
George Berkeley (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/berkeley/>)
G.W.F. Hegel (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>)
Richard Rorty (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rorty/>)
Linguistic Idealism (SEP <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/supplement2.html>)

OCT 28

OCT 30 The Mind-Body Problem: Cartesian Dualism vs. Physicalism (**Readings 19-21**: pages 201-228)

NOV 4 Thomas Nagel: What is it like to be a bat?
The Christian Debate: Plantinga's *Against Materialism* & van Inwagen's *Metaphysics*

The Problem of Self Identity: "What does it mean to have self-identity?"

NOV 6 Minds, Bodies, and Souls: Plato, Locke, Hume, and Dennett
(**Readings 22-25**: pages 229-265)

NOV 11 REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS

The Problem of Freewill: "Am I free to make choices? Are there real options open to me? Is my future up to me?"

NOV 13 Indeterminism, Determinism, Compatibilism, and Weakness of Will
(**Readings 26-29**: pages 269-303)

NOV 18

Philosophy of Religion: "What can I reasonably believe about God?" Metaphysical, Epistemological, and Moral Considerations

NOV 20 (Summary of **Readings 3-12**: pages 31-129)
Ontological, Cosmological Arguments; The Problem of Evil; The Rationality of Belief

NOV 25

NOV 27

DEC 2

Ethics: What is the good life? What is morality about? What should motivate us to be moral?

DEC 4 (Summary of **Readings 32-38** : pages 328-396)
The Right and the Good: Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, & Mill
Virtue Ethics, Deontology, and Utilitarianism

DEC 9 Creating Meaningful Lives: Sartre, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Christian Existentialism.

DEC 11

Requirements:

1. **Attendance and Participation** 10%
 - Please make every effort to be seated and prepared for class **by 11:15**. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of most, if not all, classes. Students are expected to attend each class session with **an engaged frame of mind**. Students should be prepared to contribute **thoughtful** conversation to the topics under discussion. **Absence from class typically results in a deduction of 1 mark.** Class participation is

assessed on the balance. Students whose attendance is perfect but who are otherwise unengaged with class material and discussion should anticipate a *B-* for this portion of their grade.

- Students *may* enhance their participation grade by contributing commentary and analysis to **online discussion forums found on Moodle**.
- **Students physically in class but otherwise engaged in non-class activities are simply in the same room and may be assessed as absent.** This can negatively effect participation evaluation as well. Students who regularly arrive late, leave in the middle, or depart early may be marked as absent.
- **Students absent from 12 or more classes automatically receive a failing grade for the course.**

2. **Précis (short writing assignment)** 10%

- Due Friday, October 9, @ 11:15 AM
- A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the Instructor to “**Turnitin**” for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
- Students must submit a précis to be eligible to write the final exam.

3. **Midterm Examination** 15%

- Wednesday, October 21

4. **Research Paper** 25%

- Due: Monday, December 14, @ 4:00 PM
- A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle. Papers will be submitted by the instructor to “**Turnitin**” for originality assessment. Personal privacy is protected.
- Students who have not submitted research papers prior to the Final Exam will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.

5. **Final Exam** 40%

- Date: Saturday, December 19 @ 9:00 AM 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.

Submission of Assignments:

See Moodle.

Grade Summary:

| Letter Grade | GPA | Description | Percentage |
|--------------|-----|----------------------|------------|
| A+ | 4.0 | | 96-100 % |
| A | 4.0 | Exceptional | 91-95 % |
| A- | 3.7 | | 86-90 % |
| B+ | 3.3 | | 82-85 % |
| B | 3.0 | Exceeds Expectations | 75-81 % |
| B- | 2.7 | | 72-74 % |
| C+ | 2.3 | | 68-71 % |
| C | 2.0 | Meets Expectations | 63-67 % |
| C- | 1.7 | | 60-62 % |
| D+ | 1.3 | | 56-59 % |
| D | 1.0 | Minimal Pass | 50-55 % |
| F | 0.0 | Failure | ≤ 49 % |

Please note that final grades will be available on student registration system. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

Textbooks:

Required:

Abel, Donald C. (Ed.). (2012). *Fifty Readings in Philosophy* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Recommended:

Vaughn, Lewis, and Jillian Scott McIntosh. *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Online Resource:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are responsible to check the Moodle course site and their Ambrose e-mail accounts regularly. Moodle will remind students of upcoming topics and readings. 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**. **Text messaging** during class is prohibited.

Phones must be put away during class.

Lap top computers, I-pads, tablets, etc., are prohibited from general use during class. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis for students with relevant disabilities and needs. Students wanting to use lap tops in class must discuss this with the instructor personally. Lap tops used for purposes unrelated to taking lecture notes are prohibited.

The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. 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.

Extensions

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**” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar 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 and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.