

Syllabus

Collin College—PHIL 1301.WC1 (Online)
Fall 2009

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I. Course Description & Objectives

Course Description. Critical and reflective thinking as applied to basic problems of existence and to the meaning of human life. Selective philosophical problems are examined through the views of major philosophers. Includes ancient, medieval, and modern thought. (3 credit hours)

Course Learning Objectives. This course is designed to teach students how to: (1) Demonstrate, through written analysis, the ability to recognize principal problems of philosophy in a variety of historical philosophical works. (2) Demonstrate an ability to employ the vocabulary of philosophical discourse to ask key philosophical questions. (3) Demonstrate, through writing assignments and class discussions, the ability to think critically and analytically about philosophical issues and problems as presented in primary source material. (4) Demonstrate an understanding of various philosophies from a variety of different cultures and perspectives.

To help us achieve these ends, each student will:

1. Be immersed in the primary texts of influential philosophers in the Western tradition
2. Gain a basic understanding of the historical context in which each philosopher is working
3. Learn to identify and analyze philosophical arguments
4. Connect abstract philosophical ideas to things in our everyday lives
5. Define and provide examples of key philosophical terms
6. Learn to use the internet as a philosophical resource
7. Collaborate with other students in discussing issues and creating shared resources

This course will differ from many class-room based courses in one crucial respect: rather than being a lecture-centered experience, this course will be student-centered and self-directed. A great deal will depend on each student's willingness to think for themselves. Though our work will overlap in many ways (through discussion lists, emails, etc.), each student will be largely responsible for deciding for themselves what aspects and arguments of an assigned text deserve their attention and concentration.

II. Required Technical Skills & Reading Proficiency

Students must be able to demonstrate a minimal technological proficiency to effectively navigate the challenges of working and collaborating on-line. This means that, minimally, students are

expected to have easy access to a computer and printer, as well as a basic knowledge of the computer's operating system and software tools for word processing, e-mail, and internet browsing.

To be successful taking online courses, you should be able to answer “yes” to the following questions:

Can you create, save and find files on your computer?

Can you open, close and resize windows on your computer?

Can you click, double click and right click using a mouse?

Can you cut and paste using a mouse?

Do you know how to use spell check?

Do you know how to install software on your computer if you need to ?

Do you know how to send and receive email attachments?

Can you save, delete, reply to and forward email?

Can you access email and the World Wide Web at least five times a week?

Do you know the difference between an email address and a website URL?

Do you know how to access the Internet and go to a website URL?

If you are not comfortable or competent with the required technology, you should withdraw from this course.

In addition, students must be able to demonstrate college-level reading ability (and writing at the college level is also strongly urged) before they can register for this class. This may be done in several ways; e.g., taking and passing with a minimum standard score the TSI (Texas Success Initiative) exam, the Compass Test, by passing Developmental Reading III (READ 0310), or otherwise demonstrating such reading skills. If you are enrolled in Developmental Writing, it is strongly recommended you reconsider taking this course. Likewise, it is recommended that you have taken and passed or are concurrently enrolled in English 1301 or 1302. If you have any questions, please speak with your instructor.

III. Required Texts

Baird & Kaufmann, *From Plato to Derrida*, 5th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002). ISBN: 0130485616

IV. Course Requirements & Assignments

In order to meet the course objectives outlined above, a number of elements will be required of each student. Many of these elements are required on a weekly basis, others are required only once. A brief description of each is listed below.

As with any college course, in-class or on-line, students should expect to do 7-8 hours of focused work per week.

(Note: Detailed descriptions of each of these assignments, together with some examples, are available on the "Assignment Instructions" page.)

Weekly Assignments

The goal of each weekly assignment is to help students to identify and analyze the philosophical arguments presented in a given philosophical text. The challenge will be to move beyond an initial reading to a more careful and patient analysis of the text. To this end, on a weekly basis students will be required to:

1. Complete a reading assignment
2. Take a brief multiple-choice quiz covering a given reading assignment's relevant historical context as presented in the textbook
3. Analyze an argument found in the reading assignment
4. Compare an idea from contemporary culture (a scene from a movie or television show, a song, a commercial, etc.) that illustrates the logic of the identified argument
5. Find and provide the web addresses for two on-line, philosophical resources that contribute to an understanding of the reading assignment and evaluate their usefulness for other students
6. Define an assigned philosophical term (these assignments will be made in a weekly discussion post)

Semester Assignments

In addition, several other assignments will help us to synthesize in more general terms the work done on a weekly basis. To this end, every student will be required to:

1. Prepare one annotated bibliography for a research paper
2. Write one 8-10 page research paper
3. Take one midterm exam
4. Take one final exam

Both the midterm and final exam will consist of (a) multiple choice questions based on historical background, general familiarity with reading assignments, and the definitions of key philosophical terms, and (b) the matching of unidentified texts with their authors.

Feedback for each assignment (including grades) will usually be made available to students within a week of the due date. Reading this feedback is important to improving your work.

V. Course Outline

Though students are relatively free to complete the above assignments at their own convenience, this course does have a weekly, modular structure. Each week will bring its own set of assignments that must be completed before the beginning of the new week.

Listed below is a general outline of the way in which the course work will be divided up throughout the semester. Paired with each reading selection are the six weekly assignments described above.

***Note: Detailed lists of assignments for each week can be found in the Blackboard course tools "Calendar."**

Week 1 (August 24): **Orientation**

Week 2 (August 31): Plato's *Euthyphro & Apology* (pp. 3-37)

Week 3 (September 7): Plato's *Crito & Phaedo* (pp. 38-58)

Week 4 (September 14): Plotinus' *Enneads* (pp. 250-258)

Week 5 (September 21): Augustine's *Confessions* and *City of God* (pp. 265-293)

Week 6 (September 28): Descartes *Meditations* (pp. 373-392)

Week 7 (October 5): Descartes *Meditations* (pp. 392-416)

Week 8 (October 12): **Midterm Exam**

Week 9 (October 19): Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 685-723)

Week 10 (October 26): Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 724-764)

Week 11 (November 2): **Annotated Bibliography**

Week 12 (November 9): Kierkegaard Selections (pp. 963-985)

Week 13 (November 16): **Research Paper**

Week 14 (November 23): Nietzsche Selections (pp. 1011-1038)

Week 15 (November 30): Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (pp. 1097-1100, 1109-1125)

Week 16 (December 7-11): **Final Exam**

VI. Grading Policies

Each assignment for the semester, whether weekly or general, is worth a designated number of points. Each student's grade for the semester will be determined simply by calculating the percentage of possible points earned.

90-100% = A (excellent and exceptional work)

80-89% = B (clear and substantial work)

70-79% = C (competent and acceptable work)

60-69% = D (problematic and inadequate work)

0-59% = F (unacceptable work)

Each assignment is worth the following number of points.

Weekly Assignments (1300 total pts.)

1. Multiple Choice Quizzes (20 pts. each x 10 quizzes = 200 total points)

2. Weekly Writing Assignments (100 pts. each x 11 assignments = 1100 points)

General Assignments (1000 total pts):

1. Annotated Bibliography (150 pts.)

2. Research Paper (350 pts.)

3. Midterm Exam (200 pts.)
4. Final Exam (300 pts.)

Taken together, the weekly and general assignments total **2300 possible points** for the semester. No extra credit will be offered.

Grades will be posted in the grade-book and individual feedback will be given on the "Assignments" page.

Each weekly quiz, the midterm exam, and the final exam will be open book, but time-limited. Each student must complete each quiz and exam on their own.

All assignments - other than quizzes and exams - must be turned in via the Blackboard Assignments page.

All late work will be automatically reduced by 20% of the total possible points for that assignment and must be turned in *before* the week of the final exam. Work that is not turned in by this time will simply receive a zero.

VII. General Policies

- **Religious Holy Days:** please refer to the current *Collin Student Handbook*.

- **Netiquette:** (1) Standards of courtesy and respect must be maintained at all times in our online "classroom." Join in to the discussion, but remember that this is still a "classroom" setting and that respect and consideration are crucial for any intellectual discussion. (2) Discussion areas are the place for intelligent and respectful airing of ideas. Name-calling and personal attacks are not permitted. (3) Any violation of the standards of appropriate behavior online will be reported to the Dean of Students and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken by the college.

- **ADA Statement:** It is the policy of Collin County Community College to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the ACCESS office, SCC-G200 or 972.881.5898 (V/TTD: 972.881.5950) in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

- **Scholastic Dishonesty:** The College District may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work material that is not one's own. Scholastic dishonesty may involve, but is not limited to, one or more of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, use of annotated texts or teacher's editions, and/or falsifying academic records. **Plagiarism** is the use of an author's words or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation. **Cheating** is the willful giving or

receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, copying computer or Internet files, using someone else's work for assignments as if it were one's own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course. **Collusion** is intentionally or unintentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, failing to secure academic work; providing a paper or project to another student; providing an inappropriate level of assistance; communicating answers to a classmate about an examination or any other course assignment; removing tests or answer sheets from a test site; and allowing a classmate to copy answers. Students found guilty of scholastic dishonesty will receive an authorized disciplinary penalty from the Dean of Students Office, and they may also receive an academic penalty in the course where the scholastic dishonesty took place. The professor will determine the appropriate academic penalty.

- **Grading:** Additional clarification about any grade may be requested. However, grades will be reevaluated *only* within a week of when the assignment is returned and only with a *written* explanation of why, in the student's view, the assignment received the grade in question and why that grade merits reevaluation.

- **Withdrawals:** Students are free to withdraw from this course as their circumstances may demand. However, as a matter of courtesy, students should first consult the professor before doing so. Additionally, students who enroll as an entering freshman or a first-time college student in undergraduate courses at any Texas public community college, technical institute, health sciences institution, or any public university offering undergraduate courses must comply with the legislation of TEC51.907. TEC51.907 states that students who enroll for the first time during the fall 2007 semester or any subsequent semester are subject to the course drop limit of six course drops. This includes any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution. Collin College will not begin to count dropped courses until the fall 2008 semester. NOTE: You will not be allowed to withdraw from classes at Collin if your official transcripts (required for admission) are not on file. Drops after the term census date are considered withdrawals and appear as a "W" on the transcript. Students cannot withdraw on CougarWeb. Courses taken Fall 2002 and later can be repeated only once to replace the grade. As stated in the Collin catalog (p.26) "a course in which a grade (including W) has been received can be repeated only one time to replace the grade."

- **Privacy:** Federal privacy laws (FERPA) exclude my discussing your participation in this course with anyone other than yourself (even a parent or guardian) without written permission. Information about grades cannot be given over the phone or by email (except through your official cougarmail or WebCT email account).

- **Repeat Policy:** A student may repeat this course *once* after receiving a grade of W.

- **Email Response Time:** Typically, emails will be responded to within two weekdays. If no response has been received after this length of time, your original email may not have been received.

- **Links to External Sites:** This course includes distance learning components which may contain links to Web Sites operated and maintained by other public or private entities. While Collin

College instructors provide link information to these sites, the College assumes no responsibility for the privacy practices or the content of such Web sites. It is recommended that users consider the individual privacy policy statements of each web site they visit.

- **Copyright:** Materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection.

- **Computer Technical Requirements:** Students enrolled in this class must have reliable computer and internet access. Recommended specifications for video-streaming are as follows:
Recommended Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows 2000, or Windows Millennium Edition Pentium or AMD Athlon K6 266 MHz processor or faster 64 MB RAM 56-Kbps modem 24-bit true color video card.

- **Emergency Contact:** The Office of Academic Affairs, Room B-203 (CPC), 214.491.6270

- **Revisions:** All elements of this course and syllabus are subject to change (made available in writing) as circumstances may demand.

Contact Collin College Blackboard phone support toll-free by calling 1-866-350-5119

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