Fall 2017

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 100—5

Class Time: 2:00pm—3:15pm

Monday, Wednesday

CCC 303

**Instructor:**

Charles Joshua Horn, Ph.D.

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Office Location: CCC 418

Office Phone: (715) 346-2849

Office Hours: MW, 1:00pm—2:00pm

**Course Description:**

One of the typical misconceptions of philosophy is that it is often understood merely as the study of old books that have no bearing or practical beneficial consequences for those who study it. While philosophy does sometimes involve the study of old books, the thought that philosophy cannot benefit us is simply false. Studying philosophy correctly can cultivate skills that can be used in a wide variety of settings—both academic and otherwise.

Philosophy is sometimes understood as a discipline that deals with “the big questions”, those which have no easy answers and which empirical study might not be able to answer. Our focus in this class will be on some of these big questions:

1. Does God exist? Is there a way that we could *prove* this one way or the other?
2. How do we explain the existence of suffering in the world?
3. What is the nature of consciousness?
4. What kinds of things can be conscious? Humans? Animals? Plants? Computers?
5. What does it mean to be a “good” person?
6. What is the nature of justice?

**Text:**

Rental:

1. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*

Oxford University Press

ISBN: 978-0-19-020023-7

**Course Goals:**

By carefully examining historical and contemporary philosophical literature related to the nature of reality, knowledge, and ethics, students will gain a better understanding of themselves and their role in the world. By the end of the semester, students will have a better understanding of what it means to be a responsible and self-reflective global citizen.

**Expectations:**

Students are expected to attend every class and remain for the entire time. Do not come late or leave early. Students must complete the necessary readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion and participation. Students will treat other students with respect. This means, turning off all electrical equipment, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Students must also address their peers in a respectful tone. It is important to note that the nature of this class will inevitably result in disagreements among colleagues; however, it is essential to maintain respect toward one another despite disagreement.

Additionally, this course will utilize the Desire2Learn online system to facilitate certain aspects of the class. It is required that you check in with D2L regularly to find class updates, submit work, check grades, etc.

**Grading Criteria:**

Final grades will be calculated based upon the following. Late work will never be accepted unless an extension has been granted by Dr. Horn prior to the due date. Extensions will only be granted in extreme circumstances.

* 1. Three In-Class Exams: 60% Total (20% Each)
     1. Exams will be multiple-choice and cover the material for the given unit.
  2. Two Essays: 20% Total (10% Each)
     1. Each essay will be one single-spaced page and will address each film that we watch in the course. An additional prompt will be given out in class with a detailed rubric.
  3. Ten Quizzes 20% Total (2% Each)
     1. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of random classes and will be on the reading material for the day. It is not possible to make up quizzes, as they are meant to assess attendance and reading comprehension.

\*Grading will be anonymous when possible and will follow this scale:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A Range**  **(90—100%)** | **B Range**  **(80—89%)** | **C Range**  **(70—79%)** | **D Range**  **(64—69%)** | **F Range**  **(0—63%)** |
|  | B+ (87—89) | C+ (77—79) | D+ (67—69) | F (<63) |
| A (94—100) | B (84—86) | C (74—76) | D (64—66) |  |
| A- (90—93) | B- (80—83) | C- (70—73) |  |  |

**Academic Integrity:**

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

**Disability Information:**

Students with disabilities should register with the ADA coordinator on campus and let me know at the beginning of the semester. I would be happy to accommodate you in any way that I can. Just let me know. More information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

**Course Schedule:**

September 6 Syllabus/Course Introduction

What is Philosophy?

**Unit I: God and Evil**

September 11 St. Anselm, “The Ontological Argument” 40

September 13 St. Thomas Aquinas, “The Existence of God” 42

September 18 William Paley, “Natural Theology” 45

September 20 David Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion” 54

September 25 David Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion” 54

September 27 Gottfried Leibniz, “God, Evil, and the Best of All Possible Worlds” 89

October 2 Film: Life of Pi

October 4 Film: Life of Pi

October 9 Exam I

**Unit II: Minds, Bodies, and Persons**

October 11 Rene Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy (1 and 2)” 157

October 16 David Hume, “Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding” 211

October 18 A.M. Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” 295

October 23 John R. Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs” 308

October 25 Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know” 291

October 30 Daniel Dennett, “Where am I?” 378

November 1 Film: Ex Machina

November 6 Film: Ex Machina

November 8 Exam II

**Unit III: Ethics and Society**

November 13 Herodotus, “Morality as Custom” D2L

Louis Pojman, “Who’s To Judge?” D2L

November 15 Robert Mortimer, “Morality is Based on God’s Commands” D2L

John Arthur, “Why Morality Does Not Depend on God’s Commands” D2L

November 20 Jeremy Bentham, “The Principle of Utility” 480

John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” 483

November 22 Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals” 527

November 27 Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals” 527

November 29 Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics” 568

December 4 Nietzsche, “Excerpts from Beyond Good and Evil” D2L

December 6 Exam III

December 11 Academic and Career Services

December 13 Course Evaluations, About the Department/Major/Minor

By the way, if you find that this class speaks to you and are interested in adding Philosophy as a major or minor, then please come and talk to me in my office. Studying philosophy is one *excellent* way to prepare for graduate school or law school and, when paired with another major or minor, has a tendency to significantly increase performance in other classes too.