

HONORS PHILOSOPHY

Mr. Raisch, South 228
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Honors Philosophy, a semester course open to juniors and seniors, is an introduction to philosophical reflection and examination of some central questions of human existence. Throughout this course, students will consider:

1) epistemological questions concerning the possibility and nature of knowledge and truth; 2) metaphysical questions concerning the nature of ultimate reality, the mind-body problem, consciousness, freedom and determinism, personal identity, and the existence of God; and, 3) ethical questions concerning morality and the good life. Honors Philosophy is largely discussion-based and will place an emphasis on the careful reading of primary and secondary sources, critical and systematic thinking, and the verbal and written expression of ideas.

(Semester course – 1/2 credit)

In addition to class discussion, instructional methods and activities utilized throughout the course will include listening to and discussing philosophical lectures, short-term in-class simulations, multimedia presentations, direct instruction, student essay presentations (with a question and answer session), and the critical viewing of documentaries and “philosophical” films.

COURSE READINGS:

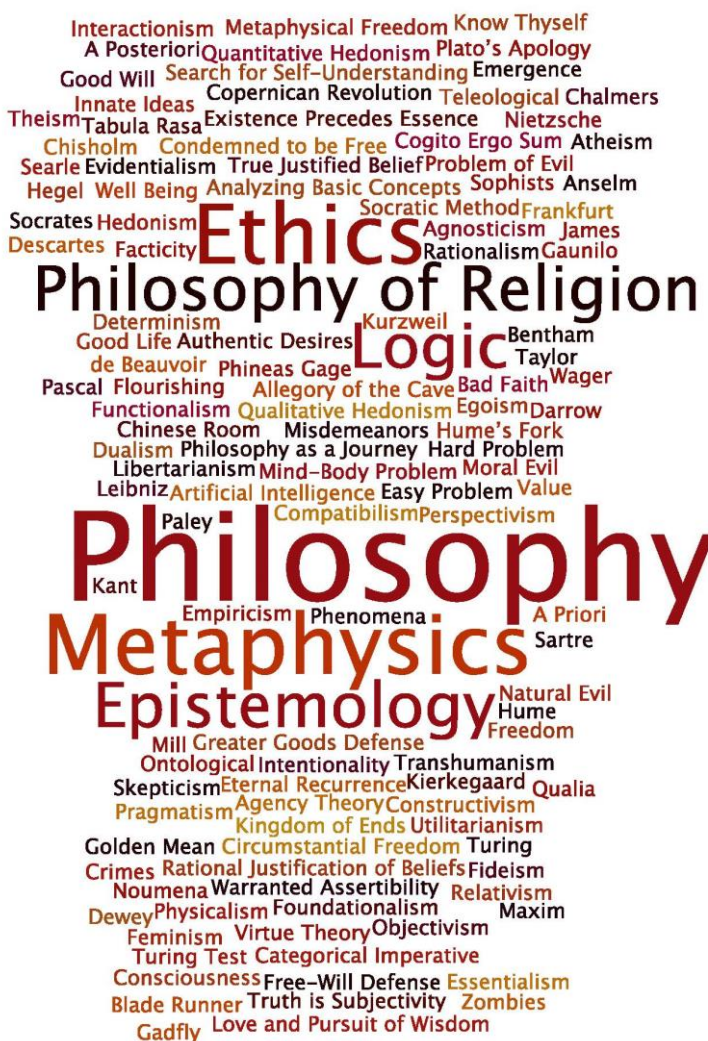
Most of our primary and secondary readings will be from William Lawhead’s *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach*. Please purchase a copy of this textbook as soon as you can. You will be expected to have a copy of the text during most class periods.

You should be able to find an acceptable used copy online for no more than \$25. When purchasing online, please make sure you are buying either the 3rd (ISBN = 9780072963557), 4th (ISBN = 9780073386577), or 5th (ISBN = 9780073535876) edition and that the quality is either “good,” “very good,” “like new,” or “new.” Additionally, if you purchase a book online, try to assure that it is relatively unmarked.

Additional readings will be posted on the class web site or distributed in class.

Evaluation and Grading Policies:

- Student evaluation and grading will be based on daily preparation, in-class contributions, quizzes, tests, and essays
- Barring an excused absence, all work must be submitted when it due
- Excused late work will follow the procedures of the CHS Handbook



DETAILED SYLLABUS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY**1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE JOURNEY****1.1 SOCRATES AND THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM***FROM PLATO, Apology**FROM PLATO, Republic***1.2 PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE***FROM PLATO, Republic*

Visual interpretations of The Allegory of the Cave:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69F7GhASOdM><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6LUptADIww>**1.3 ARGUMENT AND EVIDENCE: HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT TO BELIEVE?**

Reasoning Effectively: What to Do and What Not to Do

CHAPTER 2 – THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE**2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE****2.1 SKEPTICISM***FROM RENÉ DESCARTES, Meditations on First Philosophy***2.2 RATIONALISM***FROM PLATO, Phaedo**FROM RENÉ DESCARTES, Meditations on First Philosophy***2.3 EMPIRICISM***FROM JOHN LOCKE, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding**FROM GEORGE BERKELEY, A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge**FROM DAVID HUME, A Treatise of Human Nature***2.4 KANTIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Listen to and discuss Dr. Robert Kane's lecture on "Kant's Copernican Revolution"

*FROM IMMANUEL KANT, Critique of Pure Reason***2.5 EPISTEMOLOGICAL RELATIVISM***FROM FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, Beyond Good and Evil***2.6 RETHINKING THE WESTERN TRADITION: PRAGMATISM***FROM WILLIAM JAMES, Pragmatism's Conception of Truth***2.7 RETHINKING THE WESTERN TRADITION: FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY***FROM ANN GARRY AND MARILYN PEARSALL, Women, Knowledge, and Reality***2.8 APPLYING EPISTEMOLOGY: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE?****CHAPTER 3 – THE SEARCH FOR ULTIMATE REALITY**View *Groundhog Day* and Discuss "What Nietzsche Could Teach You: Eternal Return and Groundhog Day"**3.0 OVERVIEW OF METAPHYSICS****3.1 OVERVIEW: THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM***FROM HUGH ELLIOT, Tantalus***3.2 DUALISM***FROM RENÉ DESCARTES, Discourse on the Method**FROM RENÉ DESCARTES, Meditations on First Philosophy***3.3 PHYSICALISM***FROM JEFFREY OLEN, Persons and Their World***3.4 FUNCTIONALISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE***FROM JERRY FODOR, The Mind-Body Problem**FROM MARVIN MINSKY, Why People Think Computers Can't*View and discuss the documentary *Transcendent Man*David Chalmers and John Searle interviews from Closer to Truth (www.closetotruth.com)View and discuss the film *Blade Runner***3.5 OVERVIEW: FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM****3.6 HARD DETERMINISM***FROM B. F. SKINNER, Walden Two**FROM SAMUEL BUTLER, Erewhon**FROM CLARENCE DARROW, The Leopold and Loeb Trial***3.7 LIBERTARIANISM***FROM RICHARD TAYLOR, Metaphysics*

FROM JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, *Being and Nothingness*

3.8 COMPATIBILISM

FROM WALTER T. STACE, *Religion and the Modern Mind*

Listen to and discuss Dr. Shaun Nichols' lecture on "Contemporary Compatibilism"

CHAPTER 4 – THE SEARCH FOR GOD

4.0 OVERVIEW OF PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

FROM PETER KREEFT, *Does God Exist?*

4.1 THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

Closer to Truth (www.closetotruth.com) interviews: Alan Guth, Colin McGinn, Hubert Dreyfus, Michio Kaku, William Lane Craig

FROM THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*

FROM RICHARD TAYLOR, *Metaphysics*

4.2 THE DESIGN ARGUMENT FOR GOD

FROM WILLIAM PALEY, *Natural Theology*

FROM DAVID HUME, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

4.3 THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD

FROM ST. ANSELM, *Proslogium*

Closer to Truth (www.closetotruth.com) interviews: Michael Shermer, Timothy O'Connor, Alvin Plantinga

4.4 PRAGMATIC AND SUBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF 350

FROM BLAISE PASCAL, *Thoughts*

FROM WILLIAM JAMES, *The Will to Believe*

FROM SØREN KIERKEGAARD, *Selections*

4.5 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL: ATHEISTIC AND THEISTIC RESPONSES

FROM ALBERT CAMUS, *The Plague*

FROM JOHN HICK, *Evil and the God of Love*

FROM C. S. LEWIS, *The Problem of Pain*

4.6 APPLYING PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: HOW DOES RELIGION RELATE TO SCIENCE?

CHAPTER 5 – THE SEARCH FOR ETHICAL VALUES

Participate in "The Ethics Lab"

View and discuss the film *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

5.0 OVERVIEW OF ETHICS

FROM PLATO, *Republic*

5.1 ETHICAL RELATIVISM VERSUS OBJECTIVISM

FROM HERODOTUS, *The Histories*

FROM RUTH BENEDICT, *Anthropology and the Abnormal*

FROM JAMES RACHELS, *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism*

5.2 ETHICAL EGOISM

FROM W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *Of Human Bondage*

FROM AYN RAND, *The Virtue of Selfishness*

5.3 UTILITARIANISM

FROM JEREMY BENTHAM, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*

FROM JOHN STUART MILL, *Utilitarianism*

FROM ALASTAIR NORCROSS, *Comparing Harms: Headaches and Human Lives*

5.4 KANTIAN ETHICS

FROM IMMANUEL KANT, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*

5.5 VIRTUE ETHICS

FROM ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*

FROM CONFUCIUS, *The Analects*

FROM JANET SMITH, *Moral Character and Abortion*

5.6 RETHINKING THE WESTERN TRADITION: FEMINIST ETHICS

MARILYN FRIEDMAN, *Liberating Care*

"EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS"

STEVEN PINKER, "The Moral Instinct"

View and discuss "Born Good: Babies Help Unlock the Origins of Morality"

View and discuss the short video dramatization of "This is Water" – a speech by David Foster Wallace
Obituary Project