Phil 11001: Introduction to Philosophy MW 7:00-8:15
Ryan J. Comeau
Fall 2013

Office: Bowman 320
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Office Hours: MW 6:00-7:00, and by appointment.

Required Texts and Readings:

Western philosophy: An Anthology, 2nd ed., Edited by John Cottingham, ISBN: 9781405124782.

Dao De Jing, Laozi, tr. by Moss Roberts, ISBN: 9780520242210.

Course Description: What is philosophy? What is knowledge? What is the nature of things? What is truth? How do we know that we are not just dreaming? What is reality? Do we have free will? Is there a God? This course will explore both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions by examining some of the most influential thinkers responses to such questions. Through our studies students will learn not only the positions held by these philosophers, but also develop their own reactions to the views.

Diversity Element: This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core and/or diversity requirement. Throughout the semester we will discuss the similarities and differences between Western and non-Western accounts of philosophical thought.

Grading: Grades are calculated according to the following scale:

>93 = A | 90-92 = A- | 88-89 = B+ | 83-88 = B | 80-82 = B- |
78-79 = C+ | 73-77 = C | 70-72 = C- | 68-69 = D+ | 60-67 = D | ≤ 59 = F

Grading breakdown:

Class participation/attendance (20%): Students are expected to attend and be prepared for every class. Understanding of the material relies heavily on class dialogue. So, it is in the students best interest to have done the assigned reading and be prepared with questions or comments.

Two midterm exams (30%): I will assign two midterm exams throughout the semester. The exams will most likely be a series of short answer questions based on the material that we have covered up till that point in the semester.

Paper (30%): Students are required to write a 4-6 page paper on a topic which I must approve. Students must turn in a paper in order to pass the class. A detailed explanation of the paper requirements will be handed out at a later date.

Final exam (20%): The final exam will be cumulative and will take place on our assigned final exam date.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend every class unless you have an emergency. If you know about a date that you will need to be absent let me know. Without advance or same day notification, written documentation in conformance with University policy is needed to receive an excused absence. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences before absences will negatively affect their participation grade.

Electronics: The use of electronics in class is prohibited. I find them to be a distraction, not only to me, but more importantly to other students.

Academic Honesty: Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that subvert the goals of the institution and the rights of fellow students. Students caught cheating will receive and "F" for the course, and are subject to additional sanctions.

Student Accessibility: If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility through Student Accessibility Services, located in the DeWeese Center. For more information or to register, call 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas

Grievance Policy: The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the *University Policy Register*. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the Departmental Chairperson.

Intro to Philosophy – KSU

August 26th – Introduction
August 28th – Bertrand Russell "The Value of Philosophy"
http://skepdic.com/russell.html

Epistemology
September 2nd- Gettier "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" WP 60-63
September 4th- Aristotle: Demonstrative Knowledge and its Starting-points WP 18-21.
September 9th- Sellars "Does Empirical Knowledge have a Foundation?" WP 54-60
September 11th- Descartes: New Foundations for Knowledge WP 21-25
September 16th- G.E. Moore "A Defense of Common Sense" WP 48-54

Metaphysics
September 18h- Plato "The Allegory of the Cave" WP 69-75
September 23th- Parfit "The Puzzle of Reality?" WP 132-137
September 25th- Berkley: Nothing Outside the Mind WP 97-102 **Midterm 1 Due**
September 30th- Carnap "The Elimination of Metaphysics WP 121-126

Religion
October 2nd- Anselm: The Existence of God WP 345-347
October 7th- Aquinas: Five Proofs for the Existence of God WP 348-356
October 9th – Pascal: Pascal's Wager WP 356-359
October 14th- Proof Against God: Handout

October 16th- Dao De Jing: stanza 1-34
October 21st- Dao De Jing: stanza 35-54 **Paper Proposal Due**
October 23rd- Dao De Jing: stanza 55-81

Mind and Body
October 28th- Plato: Phaedo WP 203-209
October 30th- Descartes: Meditations WP 221-227
November 4th- Putnam: "Psychological Predicates" WP 256-252
November 6th- Nagel: "What is it like to be a bat?" WP 263-268

Free will and Determinism
November 11th- Veteran's Day
November 13th- Augustine: *The City of God* WP 307-312 **Midterm 2 Due**
November 18th- Laplace: Philosophical Essay on Probability WP 318-320
November 20th- Strawson: Freedom and Resentment WP 326-332
November 25th- Frankfurt: Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility WP 332-339
November 27h-THANKSGIVING BREAK
December 2nd-Popper: Conjectures and Refutations WP 453-459 **Paper Due**
December 4th- Kuhn: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions WP 475-481