PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

The purpose of the course is to initiate disciplined questioning and structured reflection through an introduction into the nature and purposes of philosophy. Although this is a general historical survey on the nature and tasks of philosophy, philosophers in three periods in the history of philosophy will be a greater focus of attention. It is hoped that students can become familiar with the changing views on the nature of reason itself in the history of philosophy’s study of humanity. The goal is to enable student recognition of the issues and questions that have been always addressed by philosophers. Thus the readings and discussion topics are designed for the student’s own “discovery of reason” and thinking, rather than the means for positing incontestable answers to the ultimate questions that mark the human condition. What these questions are will be clarified in this introduction into the discipline that is philosophy.

A note on the materials that will be used in this course. There are four required books and an extensive course pack of readings. It is not possible to cover all this material in class; probably only a third of the readings will actually be used in class. The larger body of readings are provided both as reference material for students, and as information for the student who is self-motivated to learn on his or her own beyond the minimum that can actually be covered in the actual class sessions.

Textbooks Required:


Course Pack of Readings: can be purchased at Wordsmiths, corner of Main and Willow Avenues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attentive presence, therefore regular attendance, punctuality (being on time), and commitment to the full hour and 15 minutes (not leaving early), of each class is very important. The subject matter of this course calls for a discussion intensive format, and hence your participation is essential to the success in reaching the goals of the class for all. Hence, both points will factor
greatly in the evaluation of the participation component of your final grade. (25% of grade)
2. Preparation for class by a careful reading of assigned pages. Quite often this will mean you
bring short answers to class of questions provided to guide your readings. It also assumes that
you will bring the reading assignments or pertinent text with you to class. Also, each
student will be expected to intelligibly take part in a “fish bowl” discussion of these questions
about these readings once during the semester.
3. Completion of philosophy paper and class presentation of this paper: You will receive
instructions on this presentation on a separate sheet as well as an explanatory sheet on the
philosophy paper. The paper is due November 10th, 2015; the student presentations will be on
one of the two scheduled days—November 19 or 24, 2015. (25% of grade)
4. A short mid-term test (October 15th, 2015). The format will be fill in the blanks, matching,
true and false, and an essay section. The first part of the class of the mid-term exam will include
some time for review of the exam. There will also be a review sheet to guide your preparation for
the mid-term. The mid-term will be averaged with your quiz grades and question sheets for 25%
of your grade.
5. The final exam. (Week of December 14th, 2015) There will be a review sheet distributed to
guide your study for this exam and we have an entire period to answer your
questions—remember the final counts as 25% of your grade.

SYLLABUS:
The syllabus will guide you as to each session’s topic so you can come prepared for class. It will
also list all assignments and dates they are due. Keep the syllabus in a convenient place and
check it often so that you are not caught unawares of an assignment that is due.

COURSE METHOD:
This course will proceed by using a variety of instructional methods, power point lectures,
discussion/question and answer sessions, film presentations, and student led discussions. In
order for you to have a successful experience, it is important for you to come to class prepared by
reading the texts assigned for that day, by following along and participating in class discussions,
and by taking good notes—remember in the long run a teacher will test in a most basic sense on
what a teacher teaches in class.

COURSE GRADING: 25% class participation: includes attendance, the “fish bowl”, and your
participation in class conversations; 25% on the Ethics paper, 25% mid-term and questions
sheets and quizzes, 25% final exam.

ATTENDANCE: Un-excused absences, tardiness, or early departure will factored into the 25%
class participation average. It is impossible to gain a higher grade for this course with a poor
attendance record. In fact, if you have 6 un-excused absences (or 20% of class days), you will
fail the participation part of this course. I will require a prior notice for an excused absence
and/or official note. Your classmates and I need you to be actively present. It is university policy
that you should attend each and every class. In sum, the attendance grade will reflect three
considerations: your presence in class, your presence in class on time, your presence in class that
is not disruptive—cell phone interruptions are included. Attuned attendance in class is a key
to doing well on exams and quizzes.

CONSULTATION: Office hours are as scheduled above and by appointment. I would be happy to meet with you for a brief consultation before or after class. I will recommend that you meet at least once with me to discuss your progress in this class or any other questions you may have. You can also call me at home for an appointment or reach me with your questions by e-mail. I'll check my e-mail faithfully 24 hours before class.

NEED HELP? There are many avenues for academic help at Kent State University. Kent State University recognizes its responsibilities for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can succeed. Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations and should have equal access to course content. This is University policy, 3342-3-01.3. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, please call 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas. Please keep in mind, you must first verify your eligibility, and that accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register with Student Disability Services at your earliest convenience.

Finally, as your Instructor, I am available to help you with your academic work and would be quite happy to do so, so please feel free to set up an appointment with me when needed.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the University Policy Register.

Academic Appeals: The general principle that applies to the following procedures is that an appeal is directed to the administrative level immediately above the unit from which the appeal emanates. Appeals are limited to the following reasons:
  a. The decision is arbitrary and/or unreasonable.
  b. The decision resulted from a procedural error.
  c. The decision is not in accordance with the facts presented.
  d. New information is available which may suggest a modification of the decision.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT: The official registration deadline for this course is September 6, 2015. The last official date to withdraw from class without a W on your record is September 13, 2015; and to withdraw with a W on your record is November 8th, 2015. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes, and they will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule using Student Tools in FlashFast prior to the deadlines indicated.

PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCES, LATENESS, MISSED WORK: An Absence may be excused at your Instructor’s discretion upon receipt of documentation. But an un-excused absence will affect your final grade as attendance is figured into that grade. Too many absences may result in an “F” for the course if they add up to a fourth of the semester. This is university
policy. Your instructor will accept late work @ a penalty of 10% for you, however not more than two weeks late. There is no guarantee that those papers will be return to you before exams as your instructor will be busy on other papers to be corrected. But it is better to get credit for your work rather than a zero! The last date to hand in extra credit essays is November 24th, 2015, — No exceptions! There will be no opportunity to make up missed quizzes, but you should know that your instructor does drop the low score in averaging the quizzes. Finally, if there is a need to make up an exam, there is an opportunity for a take home exam—it is much harder as it is all essay, thus it is harder to get a good grade on the take home make up exams.

WRITTEN WORK:
Be careful and show pride in the papers you turn in as to neatness, correct grammar and spelling, appropriate academic language, and clarity of writing. Your written part of your project (2 - 3 pages) must be typed, double spaced, and adequately identified as to topic and author (you!). Please proofread and make corrections neatly—that is not my job. I reserve the right to return papers which have not been adequately proofread before I grade them.

EXTRA CREDIT: You may earn up to 20 points in extra credit by reading and writing a short summary of one or two pages on two of the course pack readings not discussed in class. This credit can be applied to your mid-term, final or term paper according to how you would like to use it. You may also direct your instructor to apply the credit where best serves your grade.

DIVERSITY ELEMENT: This course will include philosophical works written from secular, religious, and non-Western perspectives, also it will be representing diverse historical periods, a diversity of types of philosophy, and finally relevant philosophical issues effecting minority viewpoints, including contemporary ones.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A statement by Mary Ann Haley: University policy 3342-3-02.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided by this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you any questions, please read the policy: http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/chap3/3-01.8cfm or ask.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT:
Notice of my copyright and property rights: Any intellectual property displayed or distributed to students during this course (including but not limited to Power Points, notes, quizzes, examinations) by the instructor remains the intellectual property of the instructor. This means that the student may not distribute, publish or provide such intellectual property to an other person or entity for any reason, commercial or otherwise, without written permission of the instructor.
CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

DATE TOPICS

Part I: Greek Classic Philosophy

Note: Reading assignments are provided for each the class, but should be read before class begins to facilitate class discussions—they will be in italics!

September

01 Explanation of the syllabus: information on assignments, and general introduction to this course. *An assignment will be given on CP# 1, 2, 3.*

03 No Class—professor will be at a professional conference. *At home assignment due next class ((9/8/15)).

08 What is philosophy? Textbook, Chapter 1, pp. 1 -21; CP# 4.

10 The Greek philosophers’ “discovery of reason”. CP# 5, 6, 7.


17 CP# 8 briefly. Fish Bowl 1.

22 What is Justice? Three dialogues from Plato: *The Apology, Crito, Phaedo*

24 Continued intro of these dialogues briefly. Fish Bowl 2.

29 What is human nature? Beauty and love? Plato’s *Phaedrus, Symposium.*

October

1 Continued into of these dialogues briefly. Fish Bowl 3.

Part II: A Focus on Discursive Reason

and

The Philosophical Search for Certain Truth

6 Medieval philosophers: distinguishing faith and reason; truth seeks understanding: St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas. What is metaphysics? Can God’s existence by proved—the medieval answers. CP. # 11. 12. 13. —review questions for the mid-term will be handed out.

8 Continued briefly. Fish Bowl 4.

13 Rene Descartes and certain knowledge (and briefly, ‘Hume’s challenge’). Read CP# 14, 15. (Time will be taken to answer any review questions).

15 Mid-term Exam (Students may leave when they have completed this exam). Please take a copy of questions on CP#
A focus on Immanuel Kant—a professor introduction to his philosophy.

Continued briefly, and a discussion of "The Beautiful and the Sublime", CP# 18.

Discussion of the text, “What is the Enlightenment? Fish Bowl 5.

Class discussion on CP# 19, “Philosophical Education and Intellectual Labor—these discussion questions are due—will be collected.

November

3 Analytical philosophy defined, a focus on critical thinking. Text book Chapters 3, 4, 5. CP.# 20, 21.

5 A focus on types of arguments, identifying the logical fallacies.

Part III: Leaving the Modern Era
(Late 19th/20th Century Philosophy)


12 A focused reading of James” The Stream of Thought”, CP# 25. Also very helpful will be James’s introduction to Henri Bergson, CP# 26.

17 The specific philosophies ‘of’ Bergson’s moral philosophy & philosophy of Religion.

Student presentations on static morality.

19 Student presentations—dynamic morality.

24 Continental examples con’t: Existentialism and phenomenology, CP# 27, 28.


December

1 Student presentations on Static Religion

3 Student presentations on Dynamic Religion


10 A brief look at political philosophy: Cornel West, Race Matters compared to MLK, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”. CP# 30, 31. Time will be provided also to answer questions on the final exam review sheet.

15 Final Exam @ 12:45 in this room.

This calendar of topics is provided to students in good faith; it is of course subject to revision if this becomes necessary.