INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (HONORS): COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall, 2015
Phil. 11001-17020-001
MW 3:45-5:00
315 Bowman

Dr. Frank Ryan
Office: 320-E Bowman
Hours: MW 2:00-3:45; F 3:15-4:45
(and by appointment)
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Phone: 330-672-0274

Course Design: Does our existence have a purpose or meaning? Should we find an answer, could we be certain of its truth? And how might such knowledge affect our lives and those of others in our community? This course invites exploration into fundamental questions that have fascinated thoughtful humans for millennia. Using a continuum approach that ranges from objectivism to relativism, we’ll see how philosophy offers answers to basic questions of metaphysics (what is real?) and epistemology (what is knowledge?) that lead to a variety of moral and social consequences. Honors students will be additionally challenged with in-class exercises and a paper assignment. We’ll also supplement the Western tradition with perspectives from other cultures. Critically evaluating these options can help launch a lifelong quest for self-empowerment.


Grading: Grades are calculated according to the standard scale:

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\begin{align*}
\geq 93 &= A; \\
90-92 &= A-; \\
88-89 &= B+; \\
83-87 &= B; \\
80-82 &= B-; \\
78-79 &= C+; \\
73-77 &= C; \\
70-72 &= C-; \\
68-69 &= D+; \\
60-67 &= D; \\
\leq 59 &= F
\end{align*}
\]

32% is awarded for worksheet/presentation in four classroom discussion activities (8 points each). The evaluation of presenters will be equally divided between the worksheet and verbal presentation; otherwise, the worksheet is the full value of the assignment. All students must make at least one presentation.
during the semester.
18% is determined by your verbal responses to Unit Study Questions. If you are unable to participate in a session, full credit may be earned by submitting complete written answers to the questions to your instructor before the next class period. 20% is determined by an objective midterm exam. 25% is determined by a cumulative final exam, similar to the midterm, but a bit longer. 5% is an attendance grade determined by the number of unexcused absences on the following scale: A = 0-1, B = 2, C = 3-4, D = 5-6, F = 7+. Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. Your graduate student instructor is responsible for recording your attendance grade, and should be contacted on matters of attendance.

Note: Students who present more than once in the in-class coask questions and contribute regularly to class discussions will have 1-2 added to their overall grade.

Attendance Policy: Your instructor is generally happy to excuse absences when informed in advance or on the same day—an email post is ideal. Without advance or same day notification, written documentation in conformance with University policy must be presented in order to receive an excused absence.

Expectations and Class Etiquette: Because the study of philosophy is most beneficial when personal insights supplement a conceptual understanding of the views, regular attendance and active involvement in class discussions are important. Please avoid tardiness, which may disrupt the continuity of lectures and discussions. Electronic media may be used for note-taking only— if used for any other purpose during class you will be asked to leave. Ask questions in class or consult your instructor about any concepts or arguments you do not fully understand.

Cultural Diversity Element: The Western tradition is augmented by multicultural elements featuring Buddhist, Daoist, and African perspectives.

Kent Core Course: This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core requirement. The Kent Core as a whole is intended to broaden intellectual perspectives, foster ethical and humanitarian values, and prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers.

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.

Registration Requirement: University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students not officially registered should not attend class and 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 Flashline) prior to the published university deadline.

Withdrawal Deadline: Please check the official Academic Calendar for the course withdrawal deadline.

Student Accessibility Policy: University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please
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Note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

Cheating and Plagiarism: University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel_datapageid_1976529=2037779

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Author</th>
<th>Reading/Class Exercises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Syllabus Review &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>C: Classics of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Philosophical Continuum</td>
<td>W: World Philosophy</td>
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<td>9/2</td>
<td>Rationalism &amp; Empiricism</td>
<td>BL: Item in Blackboard Learn</td>
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<td>9/7</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday—No Class</td>
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I. METAPHYSICS

1. Objectivism
   9/9 Socrates: A Seeker of Wisdom; Intro to Plato C: 22-24; 36-50
   9/14 Plato: The Theory and Hierarchy of Forms C: 167-177
   Intro to Aristotle

2. Naturalism
   9/16 Aristotle: Form and Matter
   W: 446-447; C: 229-235
   Class Exercise: Civil Disobedience—Should Socrates Have Escaped?

3. Social and Individual Relativism
   9/21 Buddhism & Daoism
   W: 16-19; 420-423; 320-328
   Civil Disobedience Worksheet Due

9/23 Metaphysics Study Questions

II. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

1. Objectivism
   9/28 Augustine: Confessions & The City of God C: 424-430
   Abstract and Paper Instructions

   9/30 Augustine: The City of God

2. Naturalism
   10/5 God’s Existence: Anselm vs. Guanilo, Aquinas vs. Kant, Paley vs. Hume
   C: 444-447; 796-801

3. Social & Individual Relativism
   10/7 Eternal Recurrence & Modern Cosmology

10/12 Philosophy of Religion Study Questions

10/12 Class Exercise: What is God?
What is God Worksheet Due
10/14 Midterm Exam

III. EPISTEMOLOGY
1. Objectivism
   10/19 Descartes: Knowledge as Certainty
   10/21 Moore & Russell: Defeating Skepticism
   C: 487-491
   Class Exercise: What is Knowledge?

2. Naturalism
   10/26 Hume: Empiricism and Skepticism
   C: 718-719; BL 187-193

   11/28 Kant: What is Objectivity?
   11/2 Hegel and Peirce: Knowing as Problem-Solving
   11/4 Dewey: Experimental Pragmatism
   11/9 Nietzsche: The Will to Power
   11/11 Veterans Day Observance/No Class
   11/16 Epistemology Study Questions
   C: 815-816; 836-841 (1st paragraph)
   C: 1073-1077
   BL: 159-167
   C: 1044-1050

3. Social and Individual Relativism
   11/18 Nietzsche: The Will to Power
   11/23 Kant: Categorical & Practical Imperatives
   11/25-29 Thanksgiving Holiday/No Class
   Class Exercise: The Attic Dilemma
   C: 872-876
   C: 876-886; 888-895

IV. ETHICS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY
1. Objectivism
   11/18 Kant: The Good Will
   11/23 Kant: Categorical & Practical Imperatives
   11/25-29 Thanksgiving Holiday/No Class
   Class Exercise: The Attic Dilemma
   C: 872-876
   C: 876-886; 888-895

2. Naturalism
   11/30 Aristotle: The Construction of Good
   Dewey: The Crisis of Modernity
   W: 88-97
   Attic Dilemma Worksheet Due

3. Social and Individual Relativism
   12/2 Bentham and Mill: Utilitarianism
   12/7 Gilligan, Rawls & Nozick: Fairness or Freedom?
   12/9 Ethics and Social Philosophy Study Questions
   W: 174-184
   C: 1268-1270

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 15, 7:45-10:00 AM