

## Philosophy 150

### Introduction to Philosophical Thought

Spring 2012  
 Office Hrs: 8:00-9:00 & 11:00-11:30 TTh  
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#### I. Required Texts

*Reflections on Philosophy: Introductory Essays*, edited by Leemon McHenry and Takashi Yagisawa, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Cognella/University Readers, 2010.

*Philosophy: The Classic Readings*, edited by Leemon McHenry, Cognella/University Readers, 2010.

#### II. Course Description

This course satisfies the “Philosophy and Religion” (C.3) section of the General Education Program. Courses in this section are designed to promote critical reflection on questions concerning the nature, meaning and value of human existence, the world in which we live, and our relations with one another. Students should understand the sources and limits of knowledge, and they should appreciate and be able to assess different world views and moral teachings that have played central roles in human culture.

More specifically, this course is designed as an introduction to philosophy but it is taught with the conviction that philosophy is an activity that one learns by actually doing it, rather than just by memorizing what the great historical figures have said about the problems and issues. The primary aims of the course are: (i) to expose students to the major areas of philosophical inquiry pertaining to knowledge, truth, reality and mind, (i.e., logic, metaphysics, epistemology, personal identity, and philosophy of mind), and (ii) to develop critical thinking skills by analysis and evaluation of philosophical arguments.

#### III. Course Requirements

1. Two Exams @ 30% each ..... 60%  
 Exams contain multiple choice questions, short answers and essay questions. Study questions for review will be given to students prior to the exams.
2. Quizzes ..... 30%

There will be approximately 6 quizzes. The lowest grade will be dropped.

- Participation/Attendance/Punctuality . . . . .10%  
Attendance and punctuality will be noted at each class session. Participation will be judged on the basis of your willingness to take an active role in the course, e.g., response to questions, group dynamics, and overall class performance.

#### IV. Grading Standards:

<b>Final %</b>	92	90-91.9	88-89.9	82-87.9	80-81.9	78-79.9	72-77.9	70-71.9	68-69.9	62-67.9	60-61.9	59
<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>F</b>

#### V. Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability, please identify yourself to me and to the University so that we can reasonably accommodate your learning and the preparation and evaluation of the work that you must do for this course. Please contact the Center on Disabilities, Student Services Building, Room 110, 818.677.2684 (fax: 818.677.4932; email: [sdr@csun.edu](mailto:sdr@csun.edu)). For more information, visit the COD's website at the following address: <http://www.csun.edu/cod>.

#### VI. Class Etiquette and Policies

There are no shortcuts to learning philosophy. The subject demands that students learn in the old-fashioned manner of time-consuming and disciplined study. This means you must spend time reading the classic texts of philosophy (and secondary sources), devote your attention to lectures and involve yourself in critical discussion of the material covered.

Violations to the course policies, especially when they result in a disruption to the class, will result in penalties to the student's participation grade.

- Attendance is necessary to do well in the course. If you must miss class for any reason, you are responsible for making up any work missed. Find out before coming to class what you missed and make sure you are prepared for the session. Excessive absence will significantly lower your grade and normally results in failure.
- Attendance alone is not sufficient for passing the class. Prepare for each class carefully and take an active role in discussions. As a general rule, you should spend two hours preparing for each hour spent in class.
- Punctuality is a requirement, not an option. You are expected to be seated and ready for class at

the time that class begins. Once the class session begins and you arrive late, you will be considered late and points will be deducted from your participation grade.

4. Leaving class without prior permission from the instructor will not be permitted, especially after quizzes given at the beginning of the class period. Walking in and out of class on your own schedule is a disturbance to others.

5. There will be no make-ups for exams or quizzes missed due to unexcused absences. If an absence is excused, prior notification is required. Do not assume that a make-up will be given if you miss class. Make-ups are rare and given only in extreme circumstances. Documentation such as a doctor's note or police report will be required. Do not schedule anything that conflicts with the exams. You are required to sit the exams during the scheduled time.

6. Eating in class is not permitted.

7. Cell phones, pagers and any other electronic devices should be turned off prior to class sessions. This includes text messaging. "Off" means "off," not vibrate. Laptop computers are an exception if used for class notes.

8. Excessive talking in class is disruptive to other students and the instructor. You are permitted to sit anywhere in the class that you wish unless your behavior becomes a disturbance. If you cannot resist talking to your classmates in class, you will be assigned a seat apart from one another. All questions related to the course material during class should be directed to the instructor.

9. There are no extra credit assignments in lieu of failing exams or quizzes.

10. The last day to withdraw by permission of the instructor is *Friday, February 10*. After that date, withdrawals are not permitted.

11. The instructor is committed to upholding the university's policy regarding academic dishonesty. See the university catalogue, Appendix C, Academic Dishonesty.

## **VII. Tentative Course Outline**

### **1. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

What philosophy is, and what it is not.

The Philosophy of Socrates

Absolutism vs. Relativism

Required Reading:

Chapter One of *Reflections on Philosophy*

Leemon McHenry

Selections from *Philosophy: The Classic Readings*

Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"

Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Theaetetus*

## 2. LOGIC

Analysis and Evaluation of Philosophical Arguments:  
Deduction and Induction

Required Reading:

Chapter Two of *Reflections on Philosophy*  
Takashi Yagisawa

## 3. METAPHYSICS

Ontology, Plato and Aristotle, A Modified Platonism, Logical Positivism and Pragmatism.

Required Reading:

Chapter Three of *Reflections on Philosophy*  
Leemon McHenry

Selection from *Philosophy: The Classic Readings*

Plato, "The Divided Line and Allegory of the Cave" in *The Republic*

Aristotle, "On Substance" from *Categories*

## **EXAM I (Mid-term, tentatively week 8, 15 March.)**

## 4. EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowing That, Reliable Evidence, Scepticism

Required Reading:

Chapter Five of *Reflections on Philosophy*  
Frederick Adams

Selections from *Philosophy: The Classic Readings*

Plato, *Theaetetus*.

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditations I and II.

## 5. PERSONAL IDENTITY

Body, Psychological Continuity, Brain and Soul Theories

Required Reading:

Chapter Eleven of *Reflections on Philosophy*  
Gary Fuller

Selections from *Philosophy: The Classic Readings*

John Locke, "Personal Identity," *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

David Hume, "Of Personal Identity," *A Treatise of Human Nature*

6. PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Mind-Body Dualism, Idealism, Materialism

Required Reading:

Chapter Twelve of *Reflections on Philosophy*

John Heil

Selections from *Philosophy: The Classic Readings*

René Descartes *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation VI.

"Correspondence with Princess Elisabeth"

"Passions of the Soul"

**EXAM II (Last week of semester, tentatively 10 May.)**