PHILOSOPHY 10H: Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)

Spring 2010

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W 11-1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an honors section of introduction to Western philosophy. We will examine several areas of philosophy (epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics) through a close reading and discussion of several complete classic texts of the Western tradition. We will also consider the relevance that the ideas from these texts have (and do have) for us today. One means of doing this will be to read and discuss some contemporary commentary and critique of the ideas in these texts. Expect to be actively engaged in the reading and discussion of philosophy throughout the semester.

The honors course offers an enriched experienced for accelerated students by means of limited class size, seminar format, student generated and led discussions and projects, the application of higher level thinking and writing skills – analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize, analyze, and evaluate fundamental questions within the Western philosophical tradition.

- Examine, formulate, and compose philosophical questions that address fundamental problems in the tradition and in everyday life.

- Identify, restate, and explain philosophers’ answers to fundamental questions, along with their supporting arguments.
Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate these arguments within the context of the texts and traditions that inform them.

Plan, organize, and write an original an argumentative essay of 4-6 pages that takes a position on a philosophical question or problem.

Apply philosophical thinking to other facets of life and/or fields of study.

Demonstrate the ability to think creatively, independently, and critically.

TEXTS: Plato’s Crito at [http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html)  
The Republic (Penguin Classics) by Plato, Desmond Lee, and Melissa Lane  
Meditations, Objections, and Replies (Hackett) by Rene Descartes, Roger Ariew, and Donald A. Cress  
On Liberty (Penguin) John Stuart Mill

In addition to these texts there will be required readings from a variety of sources on reserve in the library, available on the internet, and distributed in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
The following are course requirements. Note that all assignments must be completed in order to satisfactorily complete the course (receive a grade of C or better). However this does not mean that the mere completion of the assignments ensures that you will receive a C. The quality of your work will determine that.

Short Papers- There will be three short papers, roughly 3-4 pages each. 20 points each, 60 points total.

In class work including quizzes, in class writing, group assignments – 20 points.

Blog – The class will have a blog that everyone where everyone will be required to do some writing. This will include a minimum of 2 postings for the semester – 20 points.

Discussion questions – There will be discussion questions due on the reading every week. 10 points.

Tests - There will be two tests (midterm and final). These tests will have questions that must be answered within an essay, one to two pages in length (blue book pages). 50 points each, 100 points total. **Midterm is on March 28; Final Exam is Tuesday, June 8 at 8 AM (please note the early start time).**
**Culmination paper** – This paper will build on some theme that you have found particularly compelling during the course. The topic will be chosen by the middle of the semester and it will ideally be based on one of your short papers. It will be approximately 10 pages long – 40 points.

**GRADING**
There are a possible 250 points possible in this course.

A - 225 and above (90%)
B - 200 and above (80%)
C - 175 and above (70%)
D - 150 and above (60%)
F - below 150

**OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES**

*Make-up exams and other late work:*
- Late work will be graded down 1/2 grade for each day that it is late (an A becomes an A-, an A- becomes a B+ etc.)
- There will be no make-up quizzes or exams except in the case of emergencies. If such an emergency arises you are to let me know as soon as possible that you will be unable to take the regular exam.
- A zero will be assigned if the work is not complete by the agreed upon time.
  No credit will be given for work that is more than two weeks late.

*Absences and class participation:*
- Your attendance and active participation at all classes is expected and your grade will suffer if you have excessive absences or do not participate. This is not because you will lose points directly, it is because you will not be able to do the assignments or fully understand the work without being in class.

*Cheating:*
- An automatic "F" will be given for cheating. Repeated offenses will be dealt with in accordance with the policies stated in the student handbook. Cheating is a violation of the norms of academic work. When you cheat you step outside of the boundaries of what is acceptable if we are to have integrity and honesty in intellectual pursuits. You are in effect signaling a lack of desire to participate in the activities that mark your pursuit as an academic one. So what you do simply does not count as academic work when you cheat and so will be treated accordingly.
Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is the unattributed use of someone else's work. One of the most common forms of plagiarism occurs when you cut and paste pieces of information that you find on the web. This is unacceptable if you do not attribute the source and even if you attribute the source it is unacceptable if this is the primary way in which you have written your work. Quoted material should be used to illustrate a point, provide evidence for a position, provide a passage that is subsequently explicates, or for similar purposes. It should not be used as a substitution for your own writing.

One way to avoid inadvertent plagiarism is to be very careful when you are doing research. When you make notes from web sources by cutting and pasting make sure that you put those copied notes in quotation marks (to remind yourself that they are not your words but someone else's) and list the source in proper citation form (either MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style) so that you can sort the source if you use the material. *If you forget to do this at the time that you are taking the notes you may later think that these words are your own when they are not.*

Plagiarism also occurs when you use a friend's work or a purchased paper. I will ask you to submit your papers to me online through Turnitin.com and so they will all be run through an automatic plagiarism check. Plagiarized work will be treated as a form of cheating and you will be warned in the first instance and given an F for the assignment. Repeated instances will result in more severe disciplinary action. If you are not sure whether or not you may be plagiarizing check with the instructor. The following websites are also useful in clarifying what plagiarism is and how you can avoid it.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

Students with disabilities:

- If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I urge you to contact the staff in Disabled Student Services: 372-7070 on the Norco Campus; 222-8060 on the City Campus; 571-6138 on the Moreno Valley Campus. DSP&S will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation are confidential.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Reading (all assignments are tentative and subject to change in response to class needs):</th>
<th>Assignments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>What is philosophy? (Hand-out) Crito - online at <a href="http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html">http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html</a></td>
<td>Bring in a philosophical question from the Crito with an explanation of what it is that you think makes the question philosophical.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No class on Feb. 18th!</td>
<td>A little logic Begin the Republic – Book I</td>
<td>First Writing Assignment due Feb. 25</td>
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<td>March 2,4</td>
<td>Book II</td>
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<td>March 9, 11</td>
<td>Republic – Book III, IV</td>
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<td>March 16, 18</td>
<td>Republic – Book V Article on women in the Republic</td>
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<td>March 23, 25</td>
<td>Republic Book VI and VII Finish the Republic</td>
<td>Second Writing Assignment due March 25</td>
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<td>March 30, April 1</td>
<td>Midterm March 28 March 30th Transition to Descartes – Skepticism</td>
<td>Midterm March 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>April 6, 8</td>
<td>Descartes’ Meditations I, II</td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td><strong>APRIL 12-16</strong></td>
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<td>April 20, 22</td>
<td>Descartes Meditation III and IV</td>
<td>Third Writing Assignment due April 22.</td>
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<td>April 27, 29</td>
<td>Descartes Meditation V</td>
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<td>May 4, 6</td>
<td>Mill, On Liberty</td>
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<td>May 11, 13</td>
<td>Mill, On Liberty</td>
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<td>May 18, 20</td>
<td>Mill, On Liberty</td>
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<td>May 25, 27</td>
<td>Contemporary Philosophy</td>
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<td>June 1</td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
<td>Cumulative paper due</td>
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<td>June 8</td>
<td>Final Exam 8-10:30 AM</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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