

Office: 201 East College

Office hours: Tu W 3-5 and by appointment

Contact: [engelhaj@dickinson.edu](mailto:engelhaj@dickinson.edu); 717.254.8301

Class meetings: MWF 10:30-11:20 or MWF 12:30-1:20

Text: All readings will be posted or linked to on the course Moodle site.

On the course: This course introduces you to philosophy as we think of it today. We'll get a sense for some philosophical questions, some of the ways philosophers have tried to answer them, and some philosophical theories.

Learning goals: You'll get a clearer sense for what philosophy and philosophical methods are. You'll come to write more clearly and argue more rigorously. Most of all, I want you to get better at thinking philosophically. We're going to get there by practice and repetition. Most of what we read will be philosophy done well—take our readings as giving you not only information about some topic but also about how to think philosophically in a way that's productive. The readings are models of good philosophy. Talking to one another and writing will also help us get better at philosophy and more comfortable with it. As you'll see in the assignments, I want you to be talking every class; I'll be listening to hear that you can take up a philosophical position and clarify it, justify its commitments, argue against alternative positions, and acknowledge its shortcomings. As we go, I'll point out 'moves' and strategies common in philosophy; eventually, I'll want you to use those moves and strategies during class conversation. The point, again, is to get better and more comfortable thinking philosophically.

Graded work:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Class participation          | 15% |
| Logic Exam                   | 15% |
| Short summary paper (2-5pp.) | 15% |
| In-Class Panel Discussion    | 15% |
| Critical paper 1 (2-3pp)     | 15% |
| Critical paper 2 (3-6pp.)    | 25% |

Class participation: The deal is: I think you'll understand the problems, questions, readings, and arguments much better if you're forced to talk to me and to one another about them every time we meet. So this is how I'm forcing you. Plus, it's fun to talk about philosophy. And, you *do* philosophy partly by talking about it. So come to class prepared to listen and speak very carefully, to support us all in our attempts to understand, to be aware of talking too much or too little. Unless you meet with me and convince me that I should make an exception, you may not use laptops, iPads, or other internet-capable technology during class.

Class contributions will be graded on (a) one's understanding of the discussion topic and its import and (b) the cogency of the reasoning one offers. You won't get credit simply for attending and making noises with your mouth. If it's difficult for you to speak in class, let me know as soon as possible, and we'll arrange to meet during my office hours.

Short summary paper: Choose an argument from one of the assigned readings and summarize it. I'll expect you to (1) introduce the argument you're summarizing, putting it into context and saying a bit about why it's important and (2) defend each of the premises in the argument. An A paper will (i) present a valid argument, (ii) be written clearly and succinctly, and (iii) accurately represent the argument summarized, which means (a) including all the claims necessary to establish the argument's conclusion and (b) including in the argument only the claims necessary to establish the conclusion. Grades range from 0-100. Your summary may be on any reading from the course, but it must be submitted to me **before midnight on Monday March 21st.**

In-class panel discussion: throughout the semester, there will be six 'panel discussions' during class. You must sign up for at least one. In preparation for the discussion, you must research a position or theory relevant to the topic of the discussion; during the discussion, you must (i) present the theory to the class, (ii) articulate virtues of your theory, and (iii) raise challenges to other theories. You'll be graded on how accurately you present the theory, the cogency of your reasoning, and the insights you express during the discussion. The question listed below might not be the question that in fact organizes the discussion. We'll see what interests you.

Summary + Focused Commentary paper: this paper begins with a summary like the one in your summary paper. After the summary, you're to comment on the view summarized, either criticizing it or defending it. I'll grade these on the same grounds as the short summary. You may not use the summary from your previous paper. It's due by **midnight on Monday April 18<sup>th</sup>.**

Critical paper: these should be formatted like the short summary, except that the arguments given are your own. They'll be graded on the same grounds as the short summary except that a criterion of *originality* replaces *accuracy*. It is due **before midnight on the class exam day.** It may be written on any topic, but I recommend that you come to office hours and **discuss your topic and argument with me at least once** before submitting the paper for a grade. If you expect an 85 or higher, you should plan to bring a polished draft to office hours at least once before submitting for a grade. There is a model A paper on Moodle.

Late papers: Papers submitted any time after midnight on the due date are late. At each midnight, I'll reduce the grade on the assignment by 5 points. So, if you submit your work at 11:55pm two days after the due date, you'll lose 10 points. If you submit it 10 minutes later, you'll lose 15 points. Use these rules to make rational decisions. For instance, if you think you can improve your paper by 10 points by taking an extra day to write it, it makes sense for you to

take that day and hand the paper in late. What I want is for you to write good papers whether they're late or not. However, unless there are special circumstances, **no assignments will be accepted after midnight on the class exam day.**

### Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to Disability Services in Biddle House. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of Disability Services is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. Disability Services proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer at [717-254-8107](tel:717-254-8107) or [proctoring@dickinson.edu](mailto:proctoring@dickinson.edu). Address general inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at [717-245-1734](tel:717-245-1734) or e-mail [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu).

### Academic Violations of the Community standards

In the course, we will follow Dickinson policy for defining, investigating, and responding to academic violations of the Dickinson Community Standards. Find information about the Community Standards here:

[http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean\\_of\\_students/867/community\\_standards](http://www.dickinson.edu/info/20273/dean_of_students/867/community_standards)

### Tentative schedule

#### INTRODUCTION

**M 1.25** Introductions, What is philosophy?

**W 1.27** Plato, *The Defense of Socrates*

#### LOGIC

**F 1.29** Arguments and nonarguments: *Introduction to Logic*, Chapter 1

**M 2.1** Soundness and validity: *Introduction to Logic*, Chapter 2, §§2.1-2.5

**W 2.3** Fallacies: *Introduction to Logic*, Chapter 3, §2.6

**F 2.5** Proof/argument workshop

**M 2.8** Fallacies on parade

**W 2.10** Review for logic exam

**F 2.12** Logic Exam

#### PERSONS & IDENTITY

**M 2.15** Sider, *Personal Identity* pp. 7-15

**W 2.17** Sider, *Personal Identity* pp. 15-21

**F 2.19** Greg Egan, "Learning to be Me"

**M 2.22** Ian Hacking, "Making Up People"

**W 2.24** Anthony Appiah, "But Would That Still Be Me?"

F 2.26 Charles Mills, "But What Are You Really? The Metaphysics of Race"

M 2.29 Iris Marion Young, "Throwing Like a Girl"

W 3.2 Patrick Califia, "Manliness"

F 3.4 Dean Spade, "Mutilating Gender"

M 3.7 **Panel Discussion:** what is a person fundamentally?

W 3.9 **Panel Discussion:** what is an identity?

F 3.11 **Summary Paper workshop** "Writing Philosophy Papers"

3.14 – 3.18 No class: Spring Break

## KNOWLEDGE

3.21 Rene Descartes, *Meditations I* **summary paper due**

3.23 Rene Descartes, *Meditations II*

3.25 Charles Mills, "White Ignorance"

3.28 Miranda Fricker, "Testimonial Injustice"

3.30 Miranda Fricker, "Hermeneutical Injustice"

4.1 Jose Medina, "Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction"

4.4 Jose Medina, "Resistance as Epistemic Vice and Epistemic Virtue"

4.6 **Panel Discussion:** what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge?

4.8 **Panel Discussion:** what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for epistemic justice?

4.11 **Critical paper workshop**

## POWER

4.13 Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"

4.15 Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"

4.18 Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail **Summary/commentary papers due**

4.20 Robbie Williams, excerpts from *Negroes with Guns*

4.22 bell hooks, "Killing Rage: Militant Resistance"

4.25 Malcolm X, Ballot or the Bullet <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9BVENesn6Y>

4.27 Stokely Carmichael, "Towards Black Liberation"

4.29 Emma Goldman, "Anarchism, What It Really Stands For"

5.2 **Panel Discussion:** How is oppression to be resisted?

5.4 **Panel Discussion:** How can we have a just state?

5.6 Anything left to discuss; lingering questions/open discussion