

Introduction to Philosophy: Culture, Custom, Knowledge

TR 9-10:15

East College 405

Instructor: James B. Haile, III

Office: 404 EASTC

Office Hours: TR 11-2:30 and by appointment

Course Overview:

What is philosophy? What does it mean to do philosophy? Is philosophy culturally based, or is it a universal system of/for thinking? These are many of the questions we will be answering throughout the semester.

Course Texts:

Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

General Course Information

Student Conduct:

Attire: Please make sure that you are dressed appropriately for class—which means, no pajamas, or slippers. We must take the classroom space as a serious space for intellectual and personal development.

Behavior/Discussion: Theoretically, the topics in this course could provoke controversy. This is natural, as we all have varying experiences and perspectives on issues. Yet, regardless of own perspective, *all* students come to class with experiential knowledge that is valuable to class discussion. The classroom space is an environment of **mutual respect**. Thus, comments directed toward a person specifically or personally without reference to the text, theories, or current or previous lecture materials will not be tolerated. Only in an environment of mutual respect can everyone learn from everyone else's life experience.

Technology:

While this is not a technology free space, please be sure if you are using technology that it is for the purpose of the class discussion. If not, you will be asked not to use technology in class. Additionally, please make sure that your phone is silenced during class time; in case of emergency, please excuse yourself from the class.

Student Disabilities:

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities, according to equal access laws. I am available to discuss the implementation of those accommodations. Students requesting accommodations must first register with Disability Services to verify their eligibility. After documentation review, Marni Jones, Director of Learning Skills and Disability Services, will provide eligible students with accommodation letters for their professors. Students must obtain a new letter every semester and meet with each relevant professor prior to any accommodations being implemented. These meetings should occur as soon as possible in the semester, and at least five days before any testing accommodations. Disability Services is located in Biddle House. Address inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at 717-245-1734 or email disabilityservices@dickinson.edu. For more information, see the Disability Services website: www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices.

Policy on Make-Up Exams and Late Assignments:

All assignments will be due at the beginning of class. Professor will not accept assignments that are emailed or handed in late. If a student has an excused absence for a class in which an assignment it is up to that student to turn in the assignment the **next** class day. Students who should need or be caused to miss class should make arrangements with the professor **before** a missed an exam or assignment.

Plagiarism:

See *Plagiarism* [DOC] and *Information on Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Academic Integrity Tutorial* [PDF] for an introduction to plagiarism, or the act of taking someone else's words, work, or ideas and passing it or them off as your own as well as College policies on plagiarism (and on cheating.) Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Should you have concerns about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or the Normal M. Eberly Writing Center (http://itech.dickinson.edu/libwiki/index.php/Citing_Sources) before completing and turning in assignments.

Grading and Learning Outcomes

Course Grading Scale

A: 100-95	A-: 94-90	B+: 89-86
B: 85-83	B-: 82-80	C+: 79-76
C: 75-73	C-: 72-70	D+: 69-66
D: 65-63	D-: 62-60	F: 60 and below

A: Exceptionally high level of achievement

B: Substantial level of achievement

C: Satisfactory level of achievement

D: Minimal level of achievement required to receive course credit

F: Incomplete or unacceptable level of achievement

Learning Objectives: At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Have a working definition of 'philosophy'
- Be able to identify and analyze arguments
- Apply philosophical topics to contemporary society
- Write a two-page essay on a philosophical topic

Student Evaluations:

Attendance/Participation: 10%

- Attendance: Attendance will be taken in the first five minutes of class. If you arrive after that time, you will not be allowed to sign and will be considered absent. Attendance will also go around at the last five minutes of class. If you are not there to sign, you will be considered absent. There will be no coming and going, showing up late and leaving early, unless already arranged with the instructor.
- You will also be counted as absent if you continually disrupt the class, talking with your neighbor

Quizzes: 10 % There will be a weekly quiz given each Friday. The quiz will be the first 10 minutes of the class. If you are absent or late, you will not be able to make them up. Since there is no midterm examination for the course, the quizzes will be detailed and meant to ensure reading and retention

Papers: 30%

Midterm: 25%

Final Examination: 25%

Paper Assignments:

All written assignments in this course will be evaluated according to the following criteria

Exposition – Does the paper correctly and clearly answer the question(s) posed in the thesis statement?

Organization – Is the paper well organized? Does it build upon the main idea/thesis statement? Does it evince a logical argumentative structure?

Coherence – Do the main ideas and arguments of the paper relate to one another logically? Does the paper adequately explain main ideas and concepts? Does the paper avoid “going off on tangents” or including otherwise irrelevant information?

Argumentation – Does the paper provide adequate support, evidence, justification, etc. for its claims?

Clarity – Does the paper use a clear and consistent writing style? Does it avoid significant grammatical and mechanical errors?

WRITING DEADLINES & SUBMISSIONS

You are expected to submit assignments by the deadlines listed. All written work is due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. In order to be considered for a grade, all assignments are to be complete, of the minimum word count, and must conform to **MLA documentation and format (word-processed, 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spacing, with one inch margins)**. No papers will be accepted if they are handwritten. If an assignment does not meet the above requirements when it is submitted, it will receive zero points and may not be revised. Late assignments will only be accepted with the specific, prior agreement of the instructor, and then only in extreme cases. There is no grace period. No exceptions.

All papers should include page numbers (lower right hand corner). Please also include the following in the upper left hand corner of the first page or cover page:

Your Name

PHIL 101-02

Date

Professor Haile

A paper that meets some but not all of these criteria is a satisfactory ('C') paper. A paper that meets all of these criteria is a good ('B') paper. A paper that meets and exceeds these criteria is an excellent ('A') paper. (See below.)

Criteria:	Possible Grades:			
	A	B	C	D
Exposition	The paper answers the question(s) posed in the thesis statement correctly with superior efficiency and clarity.	The paper answers the question(s) posed in the thesis statement correctly and with adequate efficiency and clarity.	The paper incorrectly answers the question(s) posed in the thesis statement, or answers the question(s) correctly but not in a clear or effective way.	The paper fails to answer the question(s) posed in the thesis statement.
Organization	The paper exhibits a maximally clear and logical structure.	The paper exhibits an adequately clear and logical structure.	The paper exhibits fair organization with room for improvement.	The paper is extremely unorganized.
Coherence	The paper is maximally coherent.	The paper is adequately coherent	The paper is fairly coherent with some extraneous or irrelevant information.	The paper is mostly incoherent with a high amount of extraneous or irrelevant information.
Argumentation	The paper exhibits superior critical analysis, argumentative rigor, and logical acumen.	The paper exhibits good critical analysis, argumentative rigor, and logical acumen	The paper offers some degree of justification for its major claims, but the justification is weak or unsubstantiated	The paper offers little justification for its major claims.
Clarity	The paper is extremely well-written and contains no major spelling or grammatical errors	The paper is fairly well-written with some spelling and grammatical errors.	The paper is poorly written and contains several spelling and grammatical errors	The paper is virtually unreadable.

Course Calendar

Week One: January 19-23

T: Introduction to course

R: Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"

Week Two: January 26-30

T: Plato, "The Divided Line"

R: Plato, "Divided Line"

Week Three: February 2-6

T: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation I)

R: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation I)

Week Four: February 9-13

T: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation II)

R: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation II)

Week Five: February 16-20

T: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation III)

R: Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Meditation III)

Week Six: February 23-27

T: **Discussion of Plato/Descartes**

R: **paper #1 (Social vs. Individual knowledge)**

Week Seven: March 2-6

***paper one due Monday March 2nd**

T: **Midterm Review**

R: **Midterm Examination**

Week Eight: March 9-13 Spring Break

Week Nine: March 9-13

T: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Transition from common rational moral cognition to philosophical moral cognition"

R: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Transition from common rational moral cognition to philosophical moral cognition"

Week Ten: March 23-27

T: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Transition from common rational moral cognition to philosophical moral cognition"

R: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

Week Eleven: March 30-April 3

T: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

R: No Class

Week Twelve: April 6-10

T: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*

R: No class

Week Thirteen: April 13-17

*paper two due Thursday April 16th

T: **Discussion of Nietzsche/Kant paper (the relation of reason and morality)**

R: Nick J. Enfield, "The Theory of Cultural Logic: How Individuals Combine Social Intelligence with Semiotics to Create and Maintain Cultural Meaning"

Week Fourteen: April 20-24

T: Nick J. Enfield, "The Theory of Cultural Logic: How Individuals Combine Social Intelligence with Semiotics to Create and Maintain Cultural Meaning"

R: Nick J. Enfield, "The Theory of Cultural Logic: How Individuals Combine Social Intelligence with Semiotics to Create and Maintain Cultural Meaning"

Week Fifteen: April 27-30

*paper 3 due Thursday April 29th by 5 pm

T: **Discussion of Enfield paper (cultural knowledge)**

R: **Final Exam Review**

Final Examination: Monday May 4th 2 pm