

Syllabus

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will survey a range of topics of interest to philosophers and prepare the student for further work in several areas of philosophy. We will examine some perennial philosophical questions and their treatments by both classical thinkers and more contemporary philosophers. Topics to be discussed include the nature of reality, the veridicality of experience, space and time, personal identity, the nature of mind, and moral judgments.

Successful study of philosophy requires both quiet study and active engagement. I expect students in this course to read serious philosophy and to participate in class discussions. This course is designated as writing-intensive, which means that you will complete four writing assignments and have some opportunity to re-write in response to comments. Students will write four papers and a final exam. Additionally, each student will prepare an in-class presentation.

Texts:

Kolak, Daniel and Raymond Martin. *Wisdom Without Answers: A Brief Introduction to Philosophy*, fifth edition. Wadsworth, 2002.
Additional articles posted on the course website
My lecture notes, posted on the course website after classes.

On-Line Resources

The website for this course is:

http://www.thatmarcusfamily.org/philosophy/Course_Websites/Intro_S11/Course_Home.html

The course website includes an html syllabus, readings, lecture notes, assignments, other handouts, and links to good philosophy websites.

Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates

1. All the readings (or other preparatory assignments) listed below.
2. In-class participation (10%)
3. Four papers (60% total)
 - Paper 1 (600-800 words) due February 9 (10%)
 - Paper 2 (800-1000 words) due February 23 (10%)
 - Paper 3 (1250-2100 words)
 - due to peer reviewers March 30
 - due to me, with revisions, April 6 (20%)
 - Paper 4 (1000-1800 words) due May 4 (20%)
4. One ten-to-fifteen minute in-class presentation (10%)
5. Final exam (20%)

The given weights are rough, and subject to adjustment.

Readings and Classes: There are three kinds of readings (or movies) in this course:

1. Expository chapters from the Kolak and Martin text;
2. Illustrative readings or movies; and
3. Philosophical texts.

The nature of class discussion will vary depending on the assigned reading (or movie). Some classes, will be discussions. Some classes will be exegetical lectures.

Our class is a cooperative endeavor, and I expect you to attend every class. There is no immediate penalty for missing class. But, our class will be small, and any absence will be noted. You should discuss any missed classes with me, preferably in advance.

Papers: All papers will engage one or more of the philosophical texts, but may invoke any of the expository work from Kolak and Martin or the illustrative readings, as well. The first two papers will be short exegeses, critical analysis of a philosophical text. The third paper will be a standard, rhetorical essay, defending a thesis. The third paper will be distributed to peer reviewers who will comment on the essay. You will hand in your original essay, your peer comments, and a final, revised draft. The fourth paper will be a second, rhetorical essay.

Standards for academic writing vary by discipline. Philosophical writing should be clear and focused and attentive to every detail. Do not be misled by the brevity of some of our assignments. Expect to revise your papers several times before submitting them. We may discuss some of your work in class. Any student work I present to the class will be anonymized.

Many Hamilton students take advantage of the excellent tutors at the writing center, located in KJ 152. I do not require that you use the writing center, but I may make a strong suggestion that you do so after the first paper. You may approach them with early drafts of a paper, or even earlier in the writing process. You must make appointments, which you can do easily at their website:
<http://www.hamilton.edu/writing>

You are always welcome to ask for my help on a paper, **in advance of the due date**. I do not have strict guidelines about how much time you must give me before the due date, but you must not expect me to provide comments in less than two full days.

Presentations: Your presentation will be an exegetical discussion of one of the philosophy readings. A more specific assignment will be distributed in class. We will sign up for presentations early in the term.

The Oral Communication Center, in KJ 222, can help you prepare an effective presentation. If you wish, you can practice your presentation, and have it recorded and analyzed. If you wish to do use the OCC, you should make an appointment early. See their website:
<http://www.hamilton.edu/OralCommunication>

Final Exam: For each assigned philosophical text, I will prepare reading guides, which are lists of questions corresponding to the reading. You can use the reading guides to help you determine your comprehension of the assignments. The final exam will be based directly on the reading guides.

In addition to peer tutoring, both the Writing Center and the Oral Communications Center have an astoundingly wonderful set of resources to help you write and speak more effectively. Many of these resources are available on their respective websites.

The Hamilton College Honor Code will be enforced.

Schedule

Note: The readings listed in each row are to be completed before class.

Class	Date	Topic	Readings to do Before Class
1	January 19	What is Philosophy?	--
2	January 21	Reality	K&M 7: Reality Wells, "The Country of the Blind"
3	January 26	Plato's Cave	Plato, from <i>Republic</i> Descartes, from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>
4	January 28	Experience	K&M 8: Experience Watch <i>Inception</i>
5	February 2	The Primary/Secondary Distinction	Locke, "On the Primary/Secondary Distinction" Berkeley, from the <i>Principles</i>
6	February 4	Commonsense Realism	Moore, "Proof of an External World" Wittgenstein, from <i>On Certainty</i>
7	February 9 Paper 1 due	Space and Time	K&M 1: Where K&M 2: When
8	February 11	Absolute and Relational Space	Newton, from <i>Principia</i> Leibniz, from <i>Letters to Clarke</i>
9	February 16	The A-Theory	Zimmerman, "The Privileged Present: Defending an "A-Theory" of Time"
10	February 18	The B-Theory	Smart, "The Tenseless Theory of Time"
11	February 23 Paper 2 due	Personal Identity	K&M 3: Who Kafka, "Metamorphosis"
12	February 25	The Soul	Plato, from <i>Phaedo</i>
13	March 2	Memory Theory	Locke, "The Prince and the Cobbler" Reid, "Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity"
14	March 4	Irreducibility and Essentialism	Reid, "Of Identity" Kripke, from <i>Naming and Necessity</i>
15	March 9	The Bundle Theory	Hume, "The Self" Parfit, "Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons"

16	March 11	A Case Study	Dennett, "Where Am I?"
17	March 30 Paper 3 due to peer reviewers	The Mind	K&M 9: Consciousness Watch <i>Blade Runner</i>
18	April 1 Peer reviews due to authors	Dualism	Descartes, "On the Nature of Mind" Arnauld and Descartes, On the Mind
19	April 6 Final draft of Paper 3 due	Behaviorism	Skinner, from <i>Science and Human Behavior</i> Hempel, "The Logical Analysis of Psychology"
20	April 8	Materialism	Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind"
21	April 13	Functionalism	Fodor, "The Mind-Body Problem"
22	April 15	Epiphenomenalism	Locke, "On the Inverted Spectrum" Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia"
23	April 20	Ethics	K&M 13: Ethics, Plato, "What is Right Conduct?"
24	April 22	The Ring of Gyges	Plato, "Why Should I Be Moral"
25	April 27	Consequentialism	Mill, from <i>Utilitarianism</i> Nozick, "The Experience Machine"
26	April 29	Deontology	Kant, from <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals</i>
27	May 4 Paper 4 due	Abortion and Personhood	Noonan, "Abortion is Morally Wrong" Warren, "The Personhood Argument in Favor of Abortion"

May 6: Class and Charter Day (no class)

Final Exams

Section 01: Tuesday, May 10, 9am-noon

Section 02: Wednesday, May 11, 7pm-10pm.

Office Hours

My office hours for the Spring 2011, term are 10:30am - noon, Monday through Friday. My office is in room 201 of 210 College Hill Road, which is at the northwest corner of CHR and Griffin Road.