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Philosophy 100 – Problems of Philosophy

Spring Course 2010

Monday – Wednesday – Friday 11-11.50

Course Description:

This course offers an introductory tour through some of the greatest topics in philosophy. We will spend two weeks each on *Logic and Knowledge*, *Mind and Body*, *Personal Identity*, *Free Will*, *Normative Ethics*, *Applied and Meta-ethics*, and *the Meaning of Life*. The readings are chosen to give students an illuminating first sense of what the debates are about, but also to be enjoyable and stimulating. For each class I will prepare a short overview lecture followed by open discussion.

This is a writing-intensive course. Each student will write one short (6-10 pp) and one long paper (12-15 pp). I will distribute a sample of topics for the short and the long paper, though students may choose a topic on their own in consultation with me. For each paper, we will go through three stages. First, the student will turn in a detailed outline of what he/she is planning to achieve in the paper. Second, after critical review, the student will turn in a first draft of her paper. Third, based on my comments, the student will substantially revise that draft and turn in a final version of the paper. Each stage will contribute equally to the total grade of the paper. I will rigidly enforce the set deadlines for each of those stages. I will closely and personally monitor each student's writing progress. We will have three sessions dedicated to outlining standards and techniques for writing philosophy papers. The short paper counts for 30% of the grade, the long paper will count for 60%, and class participation for 10%.

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center. (www.dss.rice.edu)

Reading:

John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Fischer, Introduction to Philosophy, Oxford 2007.

This book comprises an excellent selection of philosophical classics. It's also a fun edition.

General Course Mechanics:

Office Hours. There will be multiple forms of office hours. I offer *regular office* hours every day at lunch time (12-1) if students request them at least one hour in advance; students may notify me by email (please send me an empty email with the subject "request office hour DAY", or after class. I will be available after class as well. I also offer *E-office hours* to guide students while working on their papers. During E-office hours I will be available for instant email/chat questions. Additional office hours can be arranged by appointment.

Owl-Space. I will regularly post material on Owlspace, as well as use the chat function to answer questions at chat office hours.

Syllabus

First Topic – Logic and Knowledge

- 01/11 Overview – The Quest for Knowledge
01/13 Basic Logic: Handout
01/15 Basic Epistemology: Handout

01/18 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY (HOLIDAY - NO SCHEDULED CLASSES)
01/20 Plato, Thaetetus
01/22 Gettier, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?

Second Topic – Mind and Body

- 01/25 Descartes' Meditations (sections), Ryle, Descartes' Myth
01/27 Armstrong, The Nature of Mind, Lewis, Mad Pain and Martian Pain
01/29 Dennett, Intentional Systems, Churchland, Eliminative Materialism

02/01 Nagel, What is it like to be a Bat
02/03 Jackson, What Marry didn't know
02/05 Lewis, Knowing What It's Like

Third Topic – Personal Identity

- 02/08 The Paradox of Identity Perry, A Dialogue on Personal Identity
02/10 Dennett, Where am I?
02/12 How to write a philosophy paper I Outline first paper due

02/15 Parfit, Personal Identity Outline returned
02/17 Williams, The Self and the Future
02/19 Personal Identity and Death

Fourth Topic – Free Will

- 02/22 Chisholm, Human Freedom, Inwagen, Freedom of the Will
02/24 Hume, Of Liberty, Some Spinoza and Hobbes
02/26 Taylor, Freedom and Determinism First draft first paper due

03/01 SPRING BREAK
03/03 SPRING BREAK

03/05	SPRING BREAK	
03/08	Frankfurt, <u>Alternate Possibilities</u>	First paper first draft returned
03/10	Frankfurt, <u>Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person</u>	
03/12	Watson, Comments on Frankfurt	
<i>Fifth Topic – Normative Ethics</i>		
03/15	Mill, <u>Utilitarianism</u> ,	First paper final version due
03/17	Singer, <u>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</u>	
03/19	Williams, <u>Utilitarianism and Integrity</u>	
03/22	Nagel, <u>War and Massacre</u>	Outline second paper due
03/24	Rawls, <u>A Theory of Justice</u>	
03/26	Nozick, <u>Justice and Entitlement</u>	Outline returned
<i>Sixth Topic – Meta-Ethics</i>		
03/29	From Singer, <u>One World</u>	
03/31	How to write a philosophy paper II	
04/02	MIDTERM RECESS (NO SCHEDULED CLASSES)	
04/05	Hume, <u>An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals</u> , Gauthier, <u>Morality and Advantage</u>	
04/07	Mackie, <u>The Subjectivity of Value</u>	
04/09	Harman, <u>Ethics and Observation</u> , Sturgeon, <u>Moral Explanation</u>	First draft second paper due
<i>Seventh Topic – The Meaning of Life</i>		
04/12	Camus, <u>The Myth of Sisyphus</u> ,	
04/14	Nagel, <u>The Absurd</u>	
04/16	Taylor, <u>The Meaning of Human Existence</u>	
04/19	Wolf, <u>The Meaning of Lives</u>	
04/21	How to write a philosophy paper III	
04/23	Review	First draft second paper returned
05/01		Second paper final version due