

PHL 261W.06: Introduction to Philosophy

SYLLABUS

8:00-9:20 TUTH Fall 2007

Dr. Frank Fair email: psy_fkf@shsu.edu Ph: 936-294-1509 Fax: 936-294-3798
Office: AB4 402 Office Hrs: MWF 9:00-9:50, TUTH 9:30-10:50, and by appointment

CATALOGUE COURSE DESCRIPTION: PHL 261 Introduction to Philosophy. [PHIL 1301] A general examination of the fields and issues of philosophy as discussed by both classical and modern philosophers. Philosophical problems discussed include the existence of God, the nature of knowledge and truth, the issue of human free will, and theories of moral judgment. Credit 3.

OBJECTIVES: (1) To acquaint the student with several of the major philosophical issues and the various views people have had about them, (2) to foster logical and objective thinking about the issues, and (3) to enhance the student's self-awareness by encouraging the development and expression of his/her personal views on the issues.

TEXTS:

- (1) *Looking at Philosophy*, 4th edition (2006), by Donald Palmer
- (2) *Fifty Readings in Philosophy*, 3rd edition (2008) by Donald Abel
- (3) *Conjectures and Refutations*. by Karl Popper (Reprint 2006)
- (4) Occasional items on electronic reserve in the library. See Blackboard under Course Announcements for the password.

SOME PHILOSOPHY WEBSITES:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy	http://plato.stanford.edu/
Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy	http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/
Bioethics from U. of Penn	http://www.med.upenn.edu/~bioethic/
The Philosophers' Magazine	http://www.philosophersnet.com/

GRADING:

- (1) Exams: There will be four major exams during the semester and a final exam. Each of the five exams will count 100 points for a total of 500. The grading scale is: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, below 60 = F. Each test is announced in advance and there will ordinarily be a class period set aside for review before each exam. For each exam I will prepare a set of study questions, and the exam itself is taken from those study questions.
- (2) Question Zero: At the end of each of the five units there will be an opinion question to which a developed response will be required. Each opinion question done well will add up to 6 points to the exam grade for that unit. If the question is not done or not done acceptably (that is, if not done on time, not complete or not in compliance with standard rules of English grammar and spelling, etc.), then 6 points will be subtracted from the exam grade for that unit.
- (3) Class participation: there will be occasional credit of 1-3 points for class participation which gives evidence of informed and thoughtful consideration of the issue

ABSENCES: In accordance with University regulations, I will take roll every period. I make no use of the absence record in determining grades. However, if you do not attend class, you must drop the course before the deadline of Wednesday, October 10; otherwise, you will receive an F.

MAKE-UPS: I *hate* to give make-up tests. They are ordinarily longer and harder than the regular test. You must have a good reason for missing a test; having another test the same day, for example, does not count as a good reason. If you must miss a test, please see me as soon as possible to let me know your reason for missing it. **YOUR EXCUSE MUST BE WRITTEN AND APPROPRIATELY DOCUMENTED. AN EXCUSE THAT CANNOT BE VERIFIED WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THAT EXAM.** Of course, if you have a valid excuse, then we will arrange for you to take a make-up as soon as possible.

STANDARD POLICIES: Each of these standard policies is stated in full on the Blackboard website for this course under Course Documents. I have extracted from the full statement a key element as a reminder of the policy in its entirety, but the student must download the posting on Blackboard to have the full policy statement. Here are the six standard policy matters: (1) NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. There will be no retroactive accommodations. (2) ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. (3) CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. (4) VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not he/she will be allowed to remain. (5) ABSENCE ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS: A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present in advance to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). (6) COURSE EVALUATIONS: In accordance with University policy, students will have an opportunity near the end of the semester on a set day and time to complete a course evaluation.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE PHL 261W.06 Introduction to Philosophy CID 4788 Fall 2007

August

UNIT I Epistemology—the Philosophy of Knowledge

Tues 21 First day of class. Philosophy as more of an attitude and not a discipline with a distinctive method or subject matter. Beginning the story of Philosophy with the Sophists and Socrates.

Thur 23 Reading: (1) Palmer LOOKING AT PHILOSOPHY (LAP) pp. 1-9 and pp. 48-71 for the historical background and (2) Abel FIFTY READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY (FRP) #42 Plato's dialogue Crito and #13 a selection from Plato's dialogue The Republic

Tues 28 Reading: (1) Palmer LOOKING AT PHILOSOPHY (LAP) sections from Chap. V on Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley and (2) Abel FIFTY READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY (FRP) #14 Descartes, #15 Locke, and #16 Berkeley

Thur 30 (1) FRP #17 Hume & #18 Kant (2) LAP pp. 201-218 Hume and Kant (3) Karl Popper CONJECTURES AND REFUTATIONS (CR) pp. 3-39 On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance

September

Tues 4 (1) CR pp. 43-72 Science: Conjectures and Refutations

Thur 6 Review for First Exam.

Tues 11 **FIRST EXAM—100 POINTS—1/5 OF FINAL GRADE**

UNIT II Ethics—the Philosophy of Right Living

Thur 13 (1) FRP #1 Plato's dialogue Euthyphro and #33 Aristotle (2) Palmer pp. 72-87 Aristotle

Tues 18 (1) LAP pp. 325-331 Logical Positivism and pp. 366-379 Sartre (2) FRP #39 Sartre and #40 Rachels

Thur 20 (1) #34 Aquinas and #38 Nietzsche (2) LAP pp. 130-142 Aquinas and pp. 271-279 Nietzsche

Tues 25 (1) FRP #36 John Stuart Mill and #35 Immanuel Kant (2) LAP pp. 219-223 and pp. 280-288

Thur 27 Review for Second Exam

October

Tues 2 **SECOND EXAM—100 POINTS—1/5 OF FINAL GRADE**

UNIT III Metaphysics--Especially (a) Free Will versus Determinism and (b) The Mind-Body Problem

Thur 4 (1) LAP pp. 10-44 PreSocratics (2) CR pp. 183-206 Back to the PreSocratics

Tues 9 FRP #28 Hospers, #30 Taylor, and #32 Holmstrom (Free Will and two kinds of Determinism)

Thur 11 FRP #20 Descartes, #21 Armstrong, #22 Nagel

Tues 16 (1) FRP #26 Dennett and (2) CR pp. 261-271 The Problem of the Irrefutability of Philosophical Problems

Thur 18 Review for the Third Exam

Tues 23 **THIRD EXAM—100 POINTS—1/5 OF FINAL GRADE**

UNIT IV Political Philosophy—What is the Best Way to Govern Our Communities?

Thur 25 CR pp. 130-160 Three View Concerning Human Knowledge and pp. 161-182 Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition

Tues 30 (1) FRP #43 Hobbes and #44 Locke (2) LAP pp. 173-176 Hobbes and 188-195 Locke

November

Thur 1 (1) FRP #46 Marx and Engels (2) CR pp. 452-466 Prediction and Prophecy in the Social Sciences and pp. 477-488 Utopia and Violence

Tues 6 FRP #47 John Stuart Mill On Liberty and #49 John Rawls

Thur 8 (1) CR The History of Our Time: An Optimist's View and (2) Stein Ringen "Where Does Freedom Come From?" from his book *What is Democracy For?* ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE

Tues 13 Review for the Fourth Exam

Thur 15 **FOURTH EXAM—100 POINTS—1/5 OF FINAL GRADE**

UNIT V Philosophy of Religion—Can we know that God exists?

Tues 20 (1) FRP #3 and #4 Anselm and Aquinas (2) LAP on the medieval philosophers pp. 104-142

Tues 27 FRP #5, #6, and #7 Paley, Hume, and Dawkins. [NOTE: I highly recommend Kenneth Miller's *Finding Darwin's God* as a well-informed and thoughtful discussion of the issues raised here. Miller is a nationally-known biologist who is also a traditional religious believer, and his book is very readable.]

Thur 29 FRP #8, #9, and #10 Augustine, Mackie, and Hick

December

Tu 4 (1) LAP on Pragmatism pp. 299-312 (2) W. K. Clifford "The Ethics of Belief" ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE (3) FRP #11 and #12 Pascal and James

Thur 6 **Review for Final Exam. Last Class Day.**

Thur 13 **8:00-10:00 FINAL EXAM—100 POINTS--1/5 OF FINAL GRADE**

DEADLY FAULTS OF GRAMMAR, SPELLING, AND USAGE

1. Apostrophes--please do not write "it's" unless you mean the contraction for "it is." You would not write "hi's" or "her's," so do not write "it's" when you mean the possessive "its." But **do** use the apostrophe to show possession for nouns as in "the first doctor's opinion."
2. The Latin phrase "et cetera" is abbreviated "**etc.**"--**Not** "ect." which does not even pronounce correctly.
3. Proper spelling of "receive" and its relatives is helped if you remember "i before e except after c..."
4. Surely it is not **too** much to expect that you remember that there are two o's in **too**.
5. In speech "could have" and "should have" are contracted to form "could 've" and "should 've." Only the ignorant write the non-English "could of" and "should of."
6. How about trying to get straight "except" and "accept"? Perhaps mnemonics will help: "Everyone except Edward elected Elvira empress." vs. "Anthony accepted adversity admirably."
7. In the same vein, "The **E**instein effect ended everything" vs. "Anteaters affect ants adversely." If it helps, try to remember that "effect" is usually a noun, and "affect" is almost always a verb.
8. Notice the "try to" in the preceding. Delete the nonsense phrase "to try and" from your speech repertoire.
9. If you mean "they are" when writing a contraction, then write "they're." Then all you have to do is to keep straight the possessive term "their" and the pointer word "there" (the opposite of "here").
10. How about remembering "If you **lie**, I won't believe you" so that you can spell "believe" correctly?
11. Do not use the words "criterion" and "criteria" unless you can remember that you can have **only one** criterion, but criteria are **many**.
12. When you "recite" a poem you are "citing" it again. That is not the same as locating the building **site** where you first caught **sight** of the poem inscribed over a doorway.
13. Does it occur to you that if you omit one of the two R's in "occurred" you would wind up with something that rhymes with "cured"? And if there are two R's in "occurred," then how many should there be in "occurrence"?
14. Subject and verb should agree in number, so no "he don't" or "they doesn't."
15. There is no "ate" in "definitely," just as there not an "ate" in "finite" or "definite."