Syllabus

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: WORLD PHILOSOPHY

Winter 2012-2013
PHI 107 - 0080-LEC(15230)

“The Death of Socrates”, 1787, by Jacques-Louis David

Instructor: Derek Michaud
Email: derek.a.michaud@maine.edu
Voicemail: 207.228.8291
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm via Skype (derek.michaud) or phone, or by appointment.

Course Description

This course presents the world’s view of philosophy from ancient to contemporary times. The thinkers will be chosen from a broad range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Emphasis will be placed on the wide diversity and historical backgrounds of philosophical positions. This course satisfies the Cultural Interpretation requirement of the new Core Curriculum. Prerequisite: A college writing course.

Required Reading/Textbooks

Additional required reading will be available on Blackboard.

**Communications**

*Email*
USM email is an official means of communication for this course. Messages from the instructor will be sent to your university account and to no other address. If you need assistance with your email account contact the USM Help Desk at 207.780.4029 or email them at helpdesk@usm.maine.edu.

*Blackboard*
Course information, including announcements made on Blackboard and emailed, this syllabus, handouts, etc. is available online via Blackboard for enrolled students. Access to Blackboard is required.

**Course Withdrawal**

Withdrawing from this course is your responsibility. If, for any reason, you leave this course, you must officially withdraw before the posted deadline.

**Course Readings & Lectures**

Reading and understanding philosophical texts can be very challenging, but also rewarding and even fun if you put in the time needed. The readings for this course are often difficult. Do not be surprised if there are sections that are hard to understand. Whether you are willing to expend energy on this course and be persistent in your efforts is largely your responsibility and depends on your level of motivation. This course takes work. It is not always fun. If you have reason to believe that you are not willing or able to motivate yourself please reconsider your decision to take this course.

Short introductory video lectures will be provided on Blackboard (under “Reading Assignments & Lectures” or [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6buGrHha-c4PtweykfmyynihjVCDY61h](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6buGrHha-c4PtweykfmyynihjVCDY61h)) for each section of the course. These should be reviewed before reading the assigned material from the Bonevac and Phillips textbook (*IWP*) and any additional texts that might be assigned for the section. Additional readings will all be available on Blackboard.

**Submitting Papers & Other Assignments**

Papers and other assignments must be submitted electronically via the link on our Blackboard site (listed under "Written Assignments") or by email to me at derek.a.michaud@maine.edu via your USM email account. Hardcopy papers will not be accepted.
Requirements & Course Grades

Final course letter grades will be determined by your cumulative performance on the following assignments.

**Terminology Quiz – 10%**
Early in the course students will be responsible for completing a brief quiz on the basic terminology needed to begin a serious study of philosophy. The quiz will be completed on Blackboard under “Written Assignments.” The Terminology Quiz is due no later than 11:59pm on December 18th.

**Blog Posts – 50%**
Students will be responsible for writing brief (no more than 500 words) blog posts responding to reading assignments. Blog posts are due according to the schedule in the course outline below. Posts must include a summary of the reading assignment(s) as well as at least one discussion question per post to contribute to our course discussion. Students must also write a response (“Comment”) to at least one post per blog written by another student in our class in which they contribute to the discussion begun in the post and/or offer an answer to the discussion question(s) posed by the other student. Responses should be written within one week of the original post and a respectful, civil tone is expected throughout the blogging assignment (see the discussion of Behavior in the class below).

*Blackboard: Written Assignments > Blog*

**Final Reflection Paper – 40%**
Students will produce a final critical reflection paper in which they support their preferred theory or philosopher selected from those discussed in the course and apply it constructively to a discussion of a philosophical issue of their choice.

This assignment will be completed in three parts.

On **January 4th** a statement of your topic including a formal thesis and a preliminary bibliography of the sources you intend to use in your paper will be due.

On **January 11th** an outline of your paper including your revised bibliography will be due.

The final paper will be due during the period assigned for our class for final exams (TBA).

The three parts of the Final Reflection Paper will be evaluated on the following scale:

- **Topic (thesis and bibliography) – 10%**
- **Outline – 10%**
- **Final Paper – 20%**
  - **Content (10%)** Mastery of the content involved in your paper (getting the "facts" right essentially). You may disagree with a philosopher but that is no excuse for not understanding what they have said.
Structure (5%)  The structure of your paper matters. These points are earned for the quality of the argument you offer for your thesis.

Style (5%)  The remaining five points are earned for the formal details of an academic paper (proper spelling, grammar, citations of sources, etc.). All written work should be reviewed for proper spelling, grammar, citations, and for the overall flow of the text. Is it clearly written or does it require a reader to “fill in the blanks” to get your point?

Papers must be well-constructed, since they will be short (no more than 3000 words). Discipline in writing is essential, as students are expected to show a historical understanding of the influences important to each figure, a philosophical understanding of the content of each figure, and an understanding of at least three scholarly sources on your topic (in addition to our textbooks). Secondary sources may not include standard reference works such as encyclopedias, popular websites (such as Wikipedia), blogs, or non-peer reviewed periodicals. For additional guidance on conducting research see http://usm.maine.libguides.com/tutorials.

What’s in a Reflection Paper?
A Reflection Paper is not a diary or journal, although these may have been a way of processing your reflections before actually writing the paper. Reflection papers are not merely reports of information (such as one might write in High School) but must also show evidence of critical thinking on the student’s part. Specifically, a reflection paper must argue for (or against) a thesis using a clearly presented line of reasoning and examples where appropriate. A thesis is, most basically, your answer to the question (topic) that you will address in your paper and not merely a statement of fact (no matter how new this information is to you).


Most basically, reflection papers require:
- Author’s name, date, and title.
- Page numbers.
- Formal introduction and thesis statement.
- Well-structured summary of your figure or question/issue clearly and logically to the reader in your own words. This summary of your figure, question, or issue should form the basis for your own critical response.
- Your own critical response to your topic in the form of an assessment of the importance, relevance, or rationality of your topic in your own words. This is where you argue your thesis on the basis of your understanding of your topic as summarized above.
- Formal conclusion demonstrating how you have illustrated your thesis.
- Proper citations and reference list/bibliography following an established academic format (MLA, APA, Chicago/Turabian, etc.). All matters of fact that are not common knowledge require specific references to the source(s) of that information. For guidance on properly citing sources in academic work see: http://library.usm.maine.edu/tutorials/camtasia/citing_sources/citing_sources.html.
## Reflection Paper Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Demonstrates mastery of the topic and appropriate context</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8-9</th>
<th>6-7</th>
<th>1-5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas/thesis are well formulated and clarified</td>
<td>This paper is clear and focused around the main idea/thesis which thoughtfully addresses the assignment. Relevant details, evidence, facts, data, explanations and/or anecdotes amply develop and support the central idea, topic or position.</td>
<td>Excellent. Clear command of the topic and all relevant contextualizing issues.</td>
<td>Good. Command of the topic but may be lacking in important context or depth of scholarly detail.</td>
<td>Adequate command of the basics of the topic.</td>
<td>Fails to show an adequate grasp of the topic and/or is seriously flawed on matters of fact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization is clear, logical and suitable for the assignment</td>
<td>The organization enhances and showcases the central idea, topic or position. The order, structure, or presentation of information is clear and logical and transitions are clearly signaled. The requirements for the structure of the assignment have been followed.</td>
<td>The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion and reasonably follows the requirements of the assignment.</td>
<td>Organization has been attempted, but it does not fully serve the central idea or topic, and the reader is not always sure why some material is included. It reads like a first draft. It may not follow the organization prescribed by the assignment.</td>
<td>A clear sense of direction is absent. Details, evidence, facts, data, examples or explanations seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure.</td>
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<td>Style</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Sentences are clear and effective. Source material consistently conforms to appropriate documentation. Language communicates with sophistication the author’s intent and knowledge of the subject matter. It achieves the level of formality or technical accuracy required for the assignment.</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates reasonable control over standard writing conventions. There may be an occasional awkward sentence. Source material largely conforms to appropriate documentation requirements.</td>
<td>The paper demonstrates a fair control over a limited range of standard writing conventions, but errors may interrupt the reading of the text. Sentence structure is confusing. Repeated errors in documentation show lack of knowledge of the requirements.</td>
<td>Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one of these problems. Plagiarism is present due to lack of documentation.</td>
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<td>Appropriate language is employed</td>
<td>Language used adequately communicates intent and is appropriately formal or technically accurate for the requirements of the assignment.</td>
<td>Language may be vague or include vocabulary inappropriate for the assignment.</td>
<td>Language is much too often unclear or inappropriate for the assignment. Technical language is absent or misapplied.</td>
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Disability Support Services

Students with documented disabilities who believe they may need accommodation(s) in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Support for Students with Disabilities (207.780.4706) in order to ensure that such accommodations are accomplished in a timely manner. See http://usm.maine.edu/success.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of information are violations of academic integrity that will not be tolerated in this class. For more information, please contact the Office of Community Standards at 207.780.5242.

Plagiarism is taking the writings, ideas, or work of another person and representing it as your own. Some plagiarism is intentional and some is unintentional. Both forms are absolutely prohibited!

Intentional plagiarism includes copying another person's work or ideas (including format, structure, graphics or photos) and intentionally not documenting (citing) the source. Unintentional plagiarism includes not documenting (citing) a source or forgetting to use quotation marks around another author's words (“. . .”).

Both forms of plagiarism are serious offenses in the academic world. As a rule of thumb, if you have any doubts, document or cite a source. Whenever you rely on another person's work, you should provide full and accurate documentation within the body of the text (either parenthetically or in a footnote or endnote). The only acceptable way to include another person's words or ideas into your own work is through an approved form of academic documentation. In this class the preferred documentation system is the 7th edition of Kate L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007; http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html) but any consistently used system is acceptable (APA, MLA, etc.).

For additional information on plagiarism and help in avoiding it see http://libguides.middlesex.mass.edu/content.php?pid=184426&sid=1562942.

In this course, any assignment found to be plagiarized will receive a grade of zero (0).

Participation

This course depends on the free and open exchange of ideas. You will read, study, and discuss ideas you may not agree with. These ideas, and the people who express them, should be respected at all times. Disagreeing with a figure or their ideas is not an excuse for failing to
understand them. A spirit of open-mindedness and tolerance is anticipated and expected in this course. When responding to the opinions of others, this spirit of tolerance should also apply.

Occasionally, there is behavior in a class that is disruptive, offensive, or harmful. Such behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Examples of such behavior include but are not limited to: personal conversations on the course website, comments that are insulting and/or offensive, personal attacks of any kind directed at students, faculty, or figures we are reading (about), and other instances of immature behavior.

**Topics Covered**

- Definitions of Philosophy
- Comparing Traditional and Contemporary Philosophies
- Comparing Euro-American, Indian, Chinese, and African Philosophies
- Prominent Metaphysical & Epistemological Theories
- Status and Justification of Moral and Aesthetic Values

**Course Goals and Objectives**

The main goals and objectives of the course are as follows:

- introduce you to philosophical ways of thinking;
- introduce you to philosophies from diverse cultures across the world;
- increase your awareness and knowledge of influential philosophical issues, problems, and systems;
- help you understand the aims, nature and methods of philosophical activity;
- introduce you to a range of philosophical issues and alternative solutions to them;
- help you master an elementary vocabulary of philosophical terms;
- help you see the connection between philosophical concepts and practical issues in everyday life;
- help you see the connection between philosophical issues and your own experience;
- help you become more able to analyze, assess, criticize, and defend a philosophical point of view;
- critically examine the reasoning behind and arguments for and against various philosophical positions;
- help you sharpen communication and critical reasoning skills;
- encourage you to be a more critical, independent thinker;
- increase your ability to compare and contrast philosophical positions from different cultures
## Course Outline Winter 2012-2013

The following schedule should be used as a guide to planning your reading and written work. While every effort will be made to follow the schedule as presented here it may become necessary to alter our plans during the course of the semester. Any such changes will be announced via email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Written Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Comment on Sample Blog Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/18</td>
<td><strong>Introduction (Blackboard)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Introduction to Philosophy/The Branches of Philosophy”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hooper, “Corigliano d’Otranto thinks it is Italy's most philosophical town, therefore it is,” <em>The Guardian</em>, 17 July 2012.</td>
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<td>12/23</td>
<td><strong>Indian Philosophy – Ethics</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.1</td>
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<td>12/23</td>
<td><strong>Indian Philosophy – Epistemology</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/23</td>
<td><strong>Indian Philosophy – Metaphysics</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.18</td>
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<td>12/23</td>
<td><strong>Indian Philosophy – Self</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.7</td>
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<td>12/30</td>
<td><strong>Western Philosophy – Ethics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>IWP</em>, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, &amp; ch.5</td>
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<td>12/30</td>
<td><strong>Western Philosophy – Epistemology</strong></td>
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<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.14 &amp; ch.16</td>
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<td>12/30</td>
<td><strong>Western Philosophy – Metaphysics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>IWP</em>, ch.19, ch.21 &amp; ch.22</td>
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*Blogs 1-4 are due no later than 11:59pm 12/23*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Reading &amp; Assignments</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Philosophy – Self</strong></td>
<td><em>IWP</em>, ch.9 &amp; ch.10</td>
<td>8th Blog Post</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Reflection Paper</strong></td>
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<td>TBA</td>
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**Blogs 5-8 are due no later than 11:59pm on 12/30**

**Blog 9 & Final Reflection Paper Topic & Bibliography are due no later than 11:59pm on 1/4/2013**

**Blog 10 & Final Reflection Paper Outline are due no later than 11:59pm on 1/11**