

Philosophy 332.01E—History of Philosophy II Spring 2014

Dr. Bill Bolin

Office & Hours: HL 324, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 2:30p—5:00p and by appt.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will allow you many opportunities to explore important philosophical issues that people have pondered from the eighteenth century and continue to ponder today. These issues include reality, an afterlife, ethics, and consciousness, to name but several. We will read a number of essays that explore different ideas about where those concepts originate and how our thinking about them might determine our actions, even as we gain an understanding of how such thinking developed through the those historical eras. The course is organized so that conflicting, competing, and even complementary theories will be investigated and can be discussed in interesting and civil ways. Assignments include two essay exams, four short written responses to the reading, and a few short quizzes over the reading. One textbook is required:

- Melchert, Norman. *Philosophical Conversations: A Concise Historical Introduction*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN: 9780195328462

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will write response papers that demonstrate an understanding of important philosophical concepts addressed from the eighteenth century through the twenty-first century and how those concepts might be applied to contemporary issues.
- Students will write two exams that demonstrate understanding of the main schools of thought in Western philosophy from the eighteenth century through the present day.
- Students will be able to view themselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world, and this ability will be assessed through a response paper.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To acquire an overview of the history of philosophy from the eighteenth century through the twenty-first century.
- to acquire an overview of the various cultural and social influences on thinking throughout the ages and from different cultures.
- to formulate articulate responses to the reading assignments and ensuing discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: You'll have a mid-term and a final, each covering roughly half of the semester. These exams will solicit short answers of 3 or 4 sentences, as well as longer, more richly detailed essay responses. Submit two blank blue books with your name on them before the midterm.

Response papers: In addition, you'll turn in four written responses (1-2 typed, double-spaced pages each) to some of the reading assignments. These responses are not designed to test how well you've read the assigned material. Rather, they serve as opportunities for you to comment on one or two points in the reading, connecting those points to other reading and/or experiences. Each response paper will be evaluated according to the level of detail in your insightful

commentary and sensible connections to other reading and/or experiences or observations. Specific assignments are forthcoming in eCollege.

Quizzes: You'll take six quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These quizzes will be in eCollege and cannot easily be made up. Be attentive to their deadlines.

As a rule I do not accept late assignments.

EVALUATION

Assignment Values	Final Grade Ranges
Midterm Exam 50 pts. Final Exam 50 pts. Response Papers 40 pts. (4 @ 10 pts. each) Quizzes 60 pts. (6 @ 10 pts. each)	A=180--200 B=160--179 C=140--159 D=120--139 F=0--119

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important for several reasons, but it is especially important for you to keep up with the assignments in this class. The tentative calendar below offers only the most general description of activities; more detail will be provided in class as the semester goes on. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, you must contact me and make satisfactory arrangements for turning in the assignment. In most cases, such arrangements will include your emailing the assignment to me as an attachment by the deadline. Failure to make *prior satisfactory* arrangements will result in your forfeiting the right to turn in that assignment. As per university policy, excessive absences (three weeks' worth) may result in your being dropped from the course.

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Plagiarism on one assignment in this course will most likely lead to a failing grade for the course.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR (All reading assignments are from the textbook unless otherwise indicated. A few other readings will likely be assigned as the semester progresses.)

Jan. 14 Overview: Intro to class; reflective writing

Jan. 16 Overview: "A Word to Students," p. xiv; Lecture on the meaning(s) of *philosophy*

Jan. 21 Chapter 11: Hume and Buddha

Jan. 23 Chapter 11, continued: Hume and Buddha

Jan. 28 Chapter 12: Kant

Jan. 30 Chapter 12, continued: Spinoza, Leibniz, Rousseau

Feb. 4 Chapter 13: Hegel and Marx; **RP1 due**

Feb. 6 Chapter 13, continued: Schopenhauer

Feb. 11 Chapter 14: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche

Feb. 13 Chapter 14, continued: Murdock

Feb. 18 Chapter 15: Utilitarians

Feb. 20 Chapter 15, continued: Utilitarians

Feb. 25 Chapter 16: Pragmatists; **RP2 due**

Feb. 27 Chapter 16, continued: James

Mar. 4 Review

Mar. 6 Midterm Exam

Spring Break

Mar. 18 Chapter 17: Wittgenstein

Mar. 20 Chapter 17: Russell, Positivists, Zen

Mar. 25 Positivists: Ayer <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ayer/>>

Mar. 27 Positivists: Ayer, Chapter 2 of *LTL* [in DocSharing]

Apr. 1 Critical-Rationalists: Popper <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/popper/>>

Apr. 3 Language: Putnam, "Meaning and Reference" [in DocSharing]; **RP3 due**

Apr. 8 Chapter 19: Postmodernism and Physical Realism

Apr. 10 Chapter 19, continued: Postmodernism and Physical Realism

Apr. 15 Morality: Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy" [in DocSharing]; **RP4 due**

Apr. 17 Morality, cont.: Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy"

Apr. 22 Epistemology: "Epistemology" parts 1, 2, 4, 6

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/>>

Apr. 24 Epistemology, continued: "Epistemology" parts 1, 2, 4, 6

Apr. 29 Value of Philosophy: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"

[<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1mI2OljCus>]

May 1 Value of Philosophy: Plato, *from The Republic*

May 6 @ 10:30--12:30 Final Exam

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce**

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)¹

¹ In other words, don't be a distraction during class.