**PHI 2010 Course Syllabus**

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**Fall 2019**

**West Campus Building One 234**

**Fridays 10:00 – 12:45**

**Course Information**

**General Information**

*Course Title:* Introduction to Philosophy

*Course Reference Number:* PHI 2010 W36 17075

*Credit Hours:* 3

*Prerequisites:* none

*Catalog Description:* Contemporary problems introduce major areas of philosophy: metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, theories of knowledge and philosophy of religion. Students explore writings of notable philosophers, past and present, and examine how their ideas have shed light on problems and their relevance to modern life.

**Contact Information**

*Professor:* Cameron Clark

*Email:* cclark132@mail.valenciacollege.edu

**Textbooks and Reading**

Andrew Alexander’s ***Philosophizing*** is the required text for this course. ISBN 978-1-5249-7614-9. You should be able to find it in the book store. All other course materials will be posted in Canvas. You will sometimes be required to have these materials with you in class, either as a printed or electronic copy.

**Description**

Use the word “philosophy” in a conversation and you’ll probably encounter several different kinds of reactions. Some people treat it with a sort of reverence, as if philosophers have some secret knowledge that’s difficult to understand. Some people write it off as navel gazing that doesn’t really affect our concrete day-to-day lives. And still others have a disdain for philosophy because it destabilizes concepts and ideas we ought to be certain about.  
  
Whatever you believe in general, and however you feel about philosophy in particular, this course is designed to make you reconsider those positions. At the end of the semester, after we’ve done a wide survey of thoughts and thinkers, you will leave the course both more and less certain than about philosophy.

**Core Competencies**

The faculty of Valencia College has identified four core competencies that define the learning outcomes for a successful Valencia graduate. These competencies are at the heart of the Valencia experience and provide the context for learning and assessment at Valencia College. You will be given opportunities to develop and practice these competencies in this class. The four competencies are:

1. **Think** – think clearly, and creatively, analyze, synthesize, integrate and evaluate in the many domains of human inquiry
2. **Value** – make reasoned judgments and responsible commitments
3. **Communicate** – communicate with different audiences using varied means
4. **Act** – act purposefully, effectively and responsibly.

**Learning Outcomes**

*Cultural & Historical Understanding*: Match authors with their views, arguments, and key terminology.

*Communication Skills*: Post five sets of discussion posts, reading and interacting with their fellow students on the course website [Canvas].

*Ethical Responsibility*: Point to potential contradictions between their particular ethical judgments and theoretical ethical commitments.

*Information Literacy*: Search and find articles as requested.

*Critical Thinking*: Identify the characteristics of good arguments. Describe how and where arguments fall short of the standards of good arguments. Explain how to fix arguments that fall short of the standards of good arguments.

**Course Requirements**

**Grades**

You will be graded from a potential of 1,000 points distributed among 8 quizzes, a presentation, and your scholarly participation in discussion and activities.

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| Points | Grade |
| 900 – 1000 | A |
| 800 – 999 | B |
| 700 – 799 | C |
| 600 – 699 | D |
| 500 and below | F |

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| --- | --- |
| Assignment | Available Points |
| 8 quizzes | 400 points |
| Discussion | 400 points |
| Final Exam | 200 points |

**Due Dates**

Reading is to be done **prior** to the class which it is assigned. Quizzes must be done before their deadline.

**Quizzes**

There will be 8 quizzes online that will be multiple choice and/or true-false questions. Quizzes are 50 points each and are repeatable. Failure to submit a quiz by the deadline will result in a 0.

**Discussion**

Students will be evaluated on their ability to dialogue with interlocuters during each class. Every student will receive a score out of 50 points each class, with their final discussion grade being an average of their eight best scores. There will be ample opportunity to participate in both small group and classroom discussions. Students who contributes thoughtfully during small group activities or large group discussions will receive high marks in this area.

**Final Exam**

You will select a topic from the semester on which to give a 5 minute oral argument. Topics will be chosen during the first two weeks of class, and presentations will occur on exam day. A rubric and instructions for the oral presentation will be on Canvas.

**Attendance and Tardy Policy**

In accordance with Valencia’s requirements attendance will be taken every class. As classroom participation is a key component of your grade attendance in class is highly recommended but will not directly influence your grade.

**Weekly Topic and Reading List**

**August 30th: Is Philosophy Worthwhile?**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* “Plato’s Idealism” p 23 - 24

Plato *Apology*

Russell *The Value of Philosophy*

**September 6th: Ethical Relativism or Ethical Absolutism**

Benedict, *Anthropology of the Abnormal*

W.T. Stace, *The Concept of Morals* p. 45 - 62

**September 13th: Religion and Egoism**

*Abraham and Isaac*

King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Plato, *The Myth of Gyges*

Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*

**September 20th: Duty or Consequence**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 32 – 34 “Kant’s Rationalism”

Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 34 – 36 “Utilitarianism”

Mill, *Utilitarianism* Ch 2. “What Utilitarianism Is”

**September 27th: Virtues and Authenticity**

Anscombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 108 “Kierkegaard”

Kierkegaard, *On the Dedication to that Single Individual*

**October 4th: Freedom and Determinism**

Baron d’ Holbach, *The System of Nature*

James, *The Will to Believe*

**October 11th: What is Religion?**

Streng, *Ways of Being Religious*

Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*

**October 18th: Anslem and Aquinas**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 98 – 99 “St. Anslem”

Anslem-Gauillno, *The Ontological Argument*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 99 – 101

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Question 2

**October 25th: The Problem of Evil and Projecting God**

Mackie, *Evil Shows That There Is No God*

Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*

**October 31st: Form or Nature?**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 68 – 70 “Plato”

Plato, *Meno*

Alexander *Philosophizing* p. 70 – 72 “Aristotle”

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

**November 8th: Can I Know Reality?**  
Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 76 – 78 “Descartes”

Descartes, *First Meditation*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 84 – 86 “Hume”

Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding p. 15-39*

**November 15th: Experience or Perception**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 82 – 83 “Locke”

Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 83 – 84 “Berkeley”

Berkley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principals of Human Knowledge*

**November 22nd: Natural State and Social Contract**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 50 - 52 “Hobbes” and “Locke”

Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Locke, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*

**December 6th: Communism and Capitalism**

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 58 – 59 “Rawls”

Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*

Alexander, *Philosophizing* p. 55 – 57 “Marx”

Marx, Engels *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

**December 13th: Final Exam**

**Important Policies**

**Withdrawal Deadline and Policy**

*A student who withdraws from class before the withdrawal deadline of November 1st, 2019 will receive a grade of “W.” The professor will not withdraw any student for any reason; it is the responsibility of the student to withdraw themselves before the withdrawal deadline and to be aware of the date of the withdrawal deadline.*

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain the highest degree of academic integrity. Any work that is found to be plagiarized, that is any words or ideas that are not original to the student and are not credited to their source, will automatically count as a 0 and will be considered for referral to the Dean of Students.

**Baycare Behavioral Health’s Student Assistance Program**

Valencia is committed to making sure all our students have a rewarding and successful college experience. To that purpose, Valencia students can get immediate help that may assist them with psychological issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. Students have 24-hour unlimited access to the **Baycare Behavioral Health’s confidential student assistance program** phone counseling services by calling **(800) 878-5470**. Three free confidential face-to-face counseling sessions are also available to students.

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a Notification to Instructor (NTI) form from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discuss specific needs with the professor, preferably during the first two weeks of class; accommodations will not be applied retroactively. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines accommodations based on appropriate documentation of disabilities.

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