Introduction to Philosophy Fall, 2013

Phil 2010 Dr. Steve Clinton

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**Course Syllabus**

**Description:** “Contemporary problems introduce major areas of philosophy: metaphysics, theories of knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, 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.”

Philosophy always begins with wonder about life. Philo (love) of sophia (wisdom) is about finding our way to engage in life and love practical wisdom. The world does not talk about this practical approach to life very much.

**Objectives:** You will be encouraged to grow in **knowledge** of philosophy and to make **choices** and shape your own values. This class is very interactive, with large group and small group **discussions**. You will be encouraged to **communicate** your knowledge and values in groups and papers and to write about and **act** on your convictions. There is no prerequisite for this class.

**Philosophy of Education:** Education is about you, the student, learning new information about yourself and about life, and learning how to choose to live a better life in light of that information. We will cover plenty of traditional academic components and we will do a number of activities which will lead you to apply your past knowledge and present learning to life issues.

**Attendance**: Active participation in class and in discussion groups is the single most important factor in your probable success in this class. We will be covering topics from the text in class, and have three quizzes and a final, and there will be occasional handouts from the professor. Second, the ability to participate in class and group discussions is essential and depends upon four hours per week of reading and writing. There will be group discussions most weeks and participation will count toward your grade. Third, papers answering questions will be written each week, on your own, during the semester, per the schedule. If you are not committed to read and write each week, please do not take this section.

**Withdrawal**: If students do not attend one of the first three class sessions they will be dropped. If you miss two consecutive weeks of class you will be withdrawn from the class. All withdrawals will reflect the grade in the class at the last time of attendance (WD or WF).

**General Information**: My job is to help you learn and experience this class successfully and thereby to succeed, at least in academics, so feel free to contact me at the email above. I have no office, or office hours, but I will be glad to meet with you by appointment. The professor may change assignments or class content at any time.

**Classroom Behavior:** We want an open expression of opinions and beliefs and we need an environment which helps this process. It will be important for you to express thoughts, experiences, and opinion in group discussions. Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. If you have any special needs please let me know.

Valencia College is dedicated to promoting honorable personal and social conduct. By enrolling at Valencia, a student assumes the responsibility for knowing and abiding by the rules articulated in the Student Code of Conduct (6Hx28:10-03). The instructor reserves the right to refer students who are disruptive to the learning environment to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. There is to be no recording of other students or the faculty in video or audio modes.

Common courtesy, such as turning cell phones off at the beginning of class or being on time so you do not disrupt the session for others, are expected of all students. Being late to class more than once, or cause interruptions, or other behavioral problems, will result in your grade being lowered.

Do not: use any electronics in class, including but not restricted to: cell phones, iPods, or laptop computers; prepare homework for other courses during this class; engage in private conversations with classmates in class; leave and re-enter the classroom while the class is in session. Please stay focused on the discussions and content.

# **Assignments – no papers will be accepted after the due dates**

1. Group Notes: You will form groups of four students which will meet approximately weekly for discussion of reading assignments. Due Dec. 3. Each student will keep a log of your experience of the group (one page, about 250 words of notes per week, using full sentences), including:

1) the date and page being discussed,

2) comments from people in each session,

3) any conclusions you reach.

2. Weekly papers: after class and discussion, write a one page answer to assigned questions. There are 11 questions. Due Nov 28.

3. Three periodic quizzes on current chapters of the textbook.

4. During week fourteen you will write a response paper to the class (5 pages) :

1) which theories and issues in the class have been important for you in forming your own philosophy (use class notes and the book), and

2) any conclusions you have reached about answers to the nine questions (from your group logs and/or what you believe at the end of the class).

Note that this response is not a summary of the content of the class. You will turn in your response, on Dec. 5

**Textbook**

Velasquez, M. (2011). *Philosophy*. 11th Ed., Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadsworth.

**Grades**

Attendance 14

Group notes 13

questions 11

Quizzes 21

Response paper 11

Final Exam 30

Total 100

**Schedule**

Aug 27, 29 Introduction to Philosophy; Thursday - group notes 1

Sep 3, 5 3-36; discuss p.10:3, 4; p. 16:3; p. 30:2\*, 3, 4

Sep 10, 12 47-94; p. 51:4\*; p. 74:3, 4, 5; 97: 1, 2

Sept 17, 19 98-108; p. 107:2, 3\* ; Propositions

Sept 24, 26 133-185; p. 144:2; p. 152:1, 3; 170: 3; 185-6:3, 7\*

Oct 1, 3 186-204; p. 203:2\* 4; Syllogism & Venn Diagrams

Oct 8, 10 221-260 ; p. 225:3; 242:2, 5, 7\*; 258:3, 5; 271:2

Oct 15, 17 Memorization, Review of metaphysics and quiz 1

Oct 22, 24 295-350; p. 326:1, 3\*; 338:1, 2,; 349: 3, 4; Good Arguments

Oct 29, 31 367-412; p. 376:1-10; 396:5\* 7, 10

Nov 5, 7 429-483; p. 433:1, 3\*; 446:4a, d; 455:1; 463:3; 483:2; Quiz 2

Nov 12, 14 517-579; p. 537:1, 3, 4\*;554:3, 5; 578:6

Nov 19 Review/Thanksgiving

Nov 26, 28 597-611; 610:2, 4, 6\*; quiz 3; Notes and Questions due Thursday

Dec 3, 5 Response paper due Thursday; Review for final

Dec 10 Final Exam

Discuss each of the numbered questions listed each week. Write up the numbered question which has the asterisk after the number, for example 2\* or 7\*

**Bibliography**

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Grenz, Stanley J. (1997). *The Moral Quest*. Downers Grove: IVP.

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Hughes, et. al. (2010). *Critical Thinking*. Broadview.

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O’Neill, Onora. (1975). *Acting on Principle: An Essay on Kantian Ethics*. NY: Columbia Univ. Press.

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Villanueva, Enrique, et al. (2003). *Realism and Relativism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

**E resources:**

apa.org/ethics/

ccel.org

classics.mit.edu

commfaculty.fullerton.edu/lester/ethics/ethics\_list.html

comp.uark.edu/~rlee/semiau96/kantlink.html

digitl.library.upenn.edu/books

earlham.edu/~peters/philinks.htm

eppc.org/

epsociety.org

ethics.acusd.edu/index.thml

ethics.org

ethics.sandiego.edu/

etsjets.org

georgetown.edu/centers/woodstock/links/links\_ethics.htm

globalethics.org

groups.apu.edu/ctrf

iep.utm.edu/e/ethics.htm

iml.umkc.edu/philosoph/resources/html

izew.uni-tuebingen.de/english/sp.htm

mapnp.org/library/ethics/ehtxgde.htm

members.aol.com/kiekeben/links2.html

ocf.org/OrthodoxPage

pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/

pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/

perseus.tufts.edu

philosophy.ucf.edu/pi.html

scu.edu/ethics/

toi.edu/articles.htm

users.ox.ac.uk/~worc0337/phil\_index.html

utm.edu/research

vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2724

wsu.edu:8000/~dee/WORLD.htm

**Getting to know each other worksheet**

Circulate and meet people, find someone who can sign one of the following. One person may only sign one box per worksheet.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Enjoys football or basketball |  |
| 2. Has a job that works from home |  |
| 3. Does not play a musical instrument |  |
| 4. Goes to church or synagogue weekly |  |
| 5. Vacations four weeks (or more) per year |  |
| 6. Has children |  |
| 7. Likes Bubbalou’s |  |
| 8. Has, or has had, an opposite gender boss |  |
| 9. Knows who T. S. Eliot is and why he is important |  |
| 10. Hates yard work |  |
| 11. Has owned a Corvette or Trans Am, or Mustang |  |
| 12. Works more than 60 hours per week |  |
| 13. Sleeps on a waterbed or airbed |  |
| 14. Has a 2-person (or bigger) spa at home |  |
| 15. Owns a timeshare |  |
| 16. Plans to major in Philosophy |  |

**Why study the classics?**

Mark Twain said that a classic was something which people talk about, but don’t read. This represents the popular attitude today to almost anything from the past. We have this attitude because we live in a time of incredible change and complexity. World population first grew to one billion in 1870. Today it is six billion and by 2050 it will be 12 billion. No one in history has faced anything like the population and technology challenges of today. With all the changes we don’t think the past is relevant to our issues. Also, the development in the 20th century of movies, TV, and the internet has led to a cultural fixation on entertainment. In non-western cultures there is far less of this and media is used more for news and information.

But neither population nor technology deal with issues of why we exist, or why our individual lives matter, and what we hope to accomplish together in the long run. If we ask these questions we begin to appreciate the past, as it tells of the aspirations of the human spirit, the reality of success and failure and how these events mark us and change us, and of the inner drive to reach higher. We begin to see ourselves as creators *and* custodians, not just occupants of the world.

Shakespeare uses the protagonist Hamlet to face these questions in his day. “To be, or not to be; that is the question.” Should we continue to live or give up, and die? Hamlet faces two choices. First, the bitter conclusion of blind Gloucester “As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; They kill us for their sport.” Second, the implicit determinism of facing death with the attitude, “If it be now, ‘tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.” Hamlet makes a third choice, “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.” Hamlet chooses to believe that there is a God who shapes us; we work on the details.

Similarly in art, Picasso wanted to speak against the social corruption and population growth which was destroying the value of the individual in modern, mass society. So he took a truth, social disintegration of individuals on a massive scale, and combined it with unusual art forms to create in 1907 a new art form: cubism. Cubism joined other forms of social protest art, and as part of that movement is still evident today.

At the heart of any culture are a set of *values*; how a people define themselves and life. Discovering the values which lead to healthy stability, or to change when needed, are the focus of studies of the humanities. The classics of Western thought and life reflect style, artistry and intellect and create new ways of seeing life. They portray life as complex, which it is, and often depict both negative and positive characteristics of life. The purpose is to examine and test the values which help us to adapt and face the future with hope. We study authors and artists who make enduring impact in changing or elevating culture and values rather than ones who make significant but time-bound impressions. In this way the classics of all the humanities have a transforming effect: we come to self-understanding of who we are and the choices we face, which we may not even have seen as possibilities before.

**A Chart and Glossary of Philosophic Terms**

I. Many terms and ideas are included under the general idea of “Philosophy.” This document is intended to supply the most historically accurate use of the terms, up to and including the discussions of the present.

II. Some assumptions of this document are:

1. There is no universal standard for philosophical terms or systems, other than the original author’s meanings.

2. The whole field of knowledge is dynamic, so any definition or diagram is tentative, depending on the perspective and intent of the designer.

3. A few great contributors stand out in each century, either because of their innovative approach to the field or because of their insight and ability to synthesize the ideas in relevant application to their culture.

III. Philosophy: the love of wisdom. Technically, making basic ideas clear and justifying descriptions and beliefs of reality.

* 1. Major divisions
     1. Metaphysics: questions of reality, humanity, God
     2. Epistemology: questions of how we know; judgment of truth; logic
     3. Axiology: personal & social ethics; meaning of life

B. Major philosophers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Solomon  2. Plato  3. Aristotle  4. Augustine  5. Aquinas  6. Descartes  7. Locke  8. Berkeley  9. Kant  10. Hegel  11. Kierkegaard | 12. James  13. Heidegger  14. Rawls  15. Rahner  16. Chisholm  17. Putnam  18. Noddings  19. Plantinga  20. Craig |
|  |  |

Nine Questions in Philosophy

1. What is the nature of reality – materialism, idealism, realism, existentialism

2. What is human nature – ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ thought, soul, memory, consciousness

3. Is there a God – existence, nature, good and evil, religious experience

4. What are good sources of knowledge – reason, experience, intuition, systematic consistency

5. How can we test truth – reason, experience, science, intuition,

6. What is good critical thinking – propositions, syllogisms, arguments, fallacies

7. What should I do – egoism, utility, duty, rights, character

8. What should we do –justice, the state, liberty, social issues

9. What is the meaning of life – theism, nihilism, self-chosen

**Structural Derivation of Ethics**

Axiology: Theory of Value

Social Ethics Personal Ethics: Nature of the Good The Meaning of Life

Conduct Character

Egoism Utilitarianism Duty Rights Character

(me) (everyone) (imperative) (natural, divine) (intuition)

Relativism Absolutism

**Rokeach Value Survey**

began with 250 items, analysis to 18; test on 10,000 people in five countries

all people hold the same values, but the order (importance) changes

cultures are characterized by a value set

a value set represents a world view (consistent way of thinking and acting)

tells us what is, not what ought to be

Milton Rokeach - The Nature of Human Values: Eighteen Terminal Values

A Comfortable Life

An Exciting Life

A Sense of Accomplishment

A World at Peace

A World of Beauty

Equality of Opportunity

Family Security

Freedom

Happiness

Inner Harmony

Mature Love

National Security

Pleasure

Salvation

Self-respect

Social Recognition

True Friendship

Wisdom