Introduction to Philosophy -- PHI 101
Section BA H

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description:
This course is designed as an introduction to some of the enduring questions of thinking that have and continue to consume philosophers. Through the careful study of selections from classic and contemporary works of Western philosophy, we will consider a wide range of subjects within the field of philosophy (logic, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, social and political philosophy). Some philosophical questions we will address: Can we prove that God exists? How can we be sure the external world exists? What is knowledge and what can we know? What makes an action morally right or wrong? What is justice?

Course Objectives:
To closely examine the process of philosophy, a process with which we not only ask certain kinds of questions about knowledge, morality, and politics, but a process that also helps us understand how to think and speak rationally and systematically about those questions. We will gain valuable experience in asking and answering difficult questions, and in creative and constructive thought processes—experience we can apply to other traditional academic disciplines, as well as to our everyday lives. In addition, you will become familiar with a variety of issues that have occupied the field of philosophy from ancient times through to the present day, along with various strategies employed to address those issues.

Required Books:

Photocopies of other readings will be provided for you.

Assessment:
Your Final Grade will be determined in the following manner:

Class Participation: 10%
Three Exams:
    Exam I: 10%
    Exam II: 25%
    Exam III: 25%
Paper: 30% (First Draft: 5%, Second Draft: 10%, Final Draft: 15%)

Grading Scale:

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Grading Scale:
Course Requirements:

Class Participation (10%) will be calculated based upon ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION in class discussions, which includes raising relevant questions and making comments that pertain to the topic being discussed and to the assigned readings. Participation also includes HOMEWORK and IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS. Excessive absences and consistent lateness to class will affect your grade negatively.

Exam I (10%) is a short quiz on philosophical reasoning. There are NO MAKE-UP exams.

Exam II (25%) & Exam III (25%) are both in-class short answer exams, which will be based on readings and class discussions. There are NO MAKE-UP exams.

One Paper (30%) based upon your assigned readings. You will write several drafts of the same paper and you will be graded accordingly: First Draft: 5%, Second Draft: 10%, Final Draft: 15%. More details will be provided shortly. All papers must be handed in ON TIME. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Papers will be graded on BOTH content and grammar. You are expected to carefully proofread your essays for spelling, grammar, and style. All references must be cited. For writing assistance, contact The Writing Center: Bradley Hall Ballroom, 516-572-7195 or http://www.ncc.edu/Academics/AcademicDepartments/English/WritingCenter/

A great online resource that provides help with writing a philosophy paper, citations, style and grammar: http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html

Weekly Reading Assignments:
How to Help Yourself: Although the readings in this class may be shorter in length than the ones you are used to in other courses, you will probably find that they are harder to get through and harder to understand. It will help if you take notes in a notebook while you are reading, and/or if you write down a short summary of what you have understood after reading each selection.

Attendance and Lateness Policy:
Your presence in class is vital to your education. Being in class is not just about listening to a lecture. Class time provides you with an opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussions that help you learn the material. Perfect attendance will raise your overall grade. More than THREE (3) absences will result in a reduction of your FINAL GRADE. Excessive absences, FIVE (5) or more, will result in automatic FAILURE of the course. Consistent lateness to class will also affect your grade negatively. It is the student’s job to keep track of his or her absences.

Cell Phones:
Turn OFF all cell phones and electronic devices (iPod, BlackBerry, etc.) before class begins. Students who do not abide by this may be asked to leave the class and consequently counted as absent from class.

Academic Integrity:
Cheating and Plagiarism will result in automatic FAILURE of the course! See the Student Code of Conduct for more details: http://www.ncc.edu/administration/policies/code_conduct.htm.

Contact Information:
I can be contacted via email at afavia@gc.cuny.edu . If you do not receive an acknowledgment response from me then I have not received your email. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure I have received his or her email.
Introduction to Philosophy

**Class Schedule** (subject to revision)

**What is Philosophy?**
- Class 1: Beardsley & Beardsley, "What Is Philosophy?" (3-12)
- Class 2: Plato, "Defense of Socrates" (13-42) & Voltaire, “The Bon Brahmin” (Copy)
- Class 3: Russell, “The Value of Philosophy” (417-420)

**Reasoning**
- Class 4: The Pre-Socratics (Copy) and Salmon, "The Scope of Logic" (43-50)
- Class 5: Barker, "Improving Your Thinking" (50-56)
- Class 6: Cohen & Nagel, “Fixing Belief” (56-59)
- Class 7: Readings Continued

**God & Faith**
- Class 8: Nagel, "Does God Exist?" (183-191), Aquinas, Summa Theologica (236-239), Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: Fifth Meditation* (239-241), and Paley, *The Argument from Design* (Copy)
- Class 11: EXAM I, Readings Continued
- Class 12: Swinburn, "Why Does God Allow Evil?" (191-201)
- Class 13: Pascal, "The Wager" (Copy), and Blackburn, "Pascal's Wager" (210-212)
- Class 14: Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" (Copy) and James, “The Will to Believe” (Copy)

**Knowledge & Skepticism**
- Class 15: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: First and Second Meditations* (125-129 AND 174-180)
- Class 16: Readings Continued
- Class 17: Locke, Selections from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Copy)
- Class 19: Hume, Selections from *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 129-139 AND Copy)
- Class 20: Russell, “The Problem of Induction”
- Class 21: Review for Exam II

**Morality**
- Class 22: NO CLASS
- Class 24: Exam II
- Class 25: Plato, Euthyphro (218-235)
- Class 26: Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (251-261) & Regan, “How Not to Answer Moral Questions” (262-265)
- Class 27: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (pp. 307-313)
- Class 29: Mill, *Utilitarianism* (pp. 318-323)
- Class 30: Readings Continued

**Society & Justice**
- Class 31: Hobbes, Selections from *Leviathan* (Copy) & Rousseau (Copy)
- Class 32: Plato, *Crito* (pp. 383-396) and M. L. King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (pp. 332-339)

**Class 33:** Paper: Final Draft. Review for Exam III

**Class 34:** Exam III