

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE
Humanities Division
PHI 101: Introduction to Problems in Philosophy
Course Outline

Course Number & Name: PHI 101 Introduction to Problems in Philosophy

Credit Hours: 3.0 **Contact Hours:** 3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:** N/A **Other:** N/A

Prerequisites: Grades of "C" or better in ENG 096 and RDG 096

Co-requisites: None **Concurrent Courses:** None

Instructor: Dr. S.K. Schindler

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Spring 2019

Text: Philosophical Dilemmas. Phil Washburn. New York: Oxford University Press. 4th Ed. 2014

Course Description: Introduction to Problems in Philosophy is an introduction to the basic problems of philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy and aesthetics. In class lectures will give some of the background necessary to understand the problems and the various positions taken by selected philosophers. The readings assigned will demonstrate how various philosophers have responded to the problems. The readings will also be discussed and criticized in class.

General Education Goals: PHI 101 is affirmed in the following General Education Foundation Category: **Humanistic Perspective.** The corresponding General Education Goal is as follows: Students will analyze works in the field of art, music, or theater; literature; and philosophy and/or religious studies; and will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Course Goals: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental philosophical issues, such as "free will" and determinism, whether it is ever right to disobey the law or the moral justification of political power;
2. critique the positions set forth in assigned philosophical essays by comparing how various philosophers deal with the similar metaphysical questions such as what is the nature of reality;
3. discuss various ethical problems from different philosophical viewpoints (e.g. Kant's categorical imperative, Mill's utilitarianism, and Aristotle's "golden mean"); and
4. describe various methods of acquiring knowledge (epistemology) and explain through argument and by historical example how there are many different methods of inquiry encompassed under the term "scientific."

Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs): Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental philosophical issues, such as “free will” and determinism, whether it is ever right to disobey the law or the moral justification of political power:
 - 1.1 *research philosophical topics in the text, library, on the Internet and in periodicals;*
 - 1.2 *compare at least two philosophers’ positions on a given philosophical issue ; and*
 - 1.3 *identify and discuss one’s own position on the same given philosophical issue*

2. Critique the positions set forth in assigned philosophical essays by comparing how various philosophers deal with the similar metaphysical questions such as what is the nature of reality:
 - 2.1 *discuss different approaches to metaphysical issues (e.g., regarding the existence of God, Aquinas’ teleological argument, Anselm’s ontological argument, Pascal’s wager, William James’ pragmatic argument, etc. will be evaluated)*

3. Discuss various ethical problems from different philosophical viewpoints (e.g. Kant’s categorical imperative, Mill’s utilitarianism, and Aristotle’s “golden mean”):
 - 3.1 *describe in written and/or oral form an ethical issue faced by oneself or a friend and explain how Kant, Mill, Aristotle or some other philosopher might help resolve the issue*

4. Describe various methods of acquiring knowledge (epistemology) and explain through argument and by historical example how there are many different methods of inquiry encompassed under the term “scientific”:
 - 4.1 *describe rationalism as it is presented, for example, by Plato;*
 - 4.2 *describe and critique empiricism as it is presented, for example, by Descartes;*
 - 4.3 *describe and critique pragmatism as it is presented by William James; and*
 - 4.4 *explain why the idea of hypothesis and data collection to verify is an inadequate explanation of the acquisition of “scientific” knowledge*

- 4.5 **Methods of Instruction:** Instruction will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, and journal writing.

Outcomes Assessment: Test and exam questions are blueprinted to course objectives. Rubrics are used to score the critical papers and weekly journals for the presence of course objectives. Data is collected and analyzed to determine the level of student performance on these assessment instruments in regards to meeting course objectives. The results of this data analysis are used to guide necessary pedagogical and/or curricular revisions.

Course Requirements: All students are required to:

1. Read the textbook.
2. Be an active participant in class discussions.
3. Complete all class requirements – a minimum of three short critical papers (3-4 pages), One longer research paper (4-5 pages), classwork, quizzes, worksheet questions,
4. Observe appropriate class etiquette (Arrive on time. Be prepared. No eating in class. No electronic device use. Respect for differing opinions.)

Methods of Evaluation: Final course grades will be computed as follows:

Grading Components	% of final course grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignments: Three Short Critical Papers- Take home essays Each student will write two analytical and/or comparative reaction papers to the readings. Each paper will be 3-4 typed pages in length. These papers are designed to enhance understanding of all the facets of philosophy.	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Presentation/Portfolio Review	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classwork/Worksheet Questions/ 4 In-class writings: Designed to compare/contrast different philosophical approaches and its practical application	40%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and Class Participation	10%

Academic Integrity: Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
- cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
- interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
- fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

Student Code of Conduct: All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

TIMELINE OF PHILOSOPHERS & EVENTS

Ancient Greece 800-300 BCE

460-400 BCE	Sophists Active in Greek City-States
469-399 BCE	Socrates
427-347 BCE	Plato
384-322 BCE	Aristotle

Hellenistic Age 323-146 BCE

356-323 BCE	Alexander the Great Aristotle (his tutor)
384-262 BCE	Zeno - Founder of Stoicism

ROMAN REPUBLIC & EMPIRE 500 BCE- 500 CE

6 BCE-30 CE	Jesus – Founder of Christianity
121-180 CE	Marcus Aurelius – Emperor of Rome/Stoic Philosopher

312 CE Constantine converts to Christianity

The Medieval Period 500-1500 Warlords/ Instability/Nation-states emerge

The Early Modern Period 1500-1700 Luther/The Protestant Reformation/ Isaac Newton's synthesis

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION 1600-1700

- 1543 Copernicus – Proposed sun-centered solar system
1596-1650 Rene Descartes – Proposed the Scientific Method: "I think; therefore, I am."
1632-1677 Baruch Spinoza- "I feel; therefore, I am"
1632-1704 John Locke *Treatise on Government*

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT 1700-1800

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 1770-1850

- 1651 Thomas Hobbes defends monarchy in *the Leviathan*
1689 The Glorious Revolution-English Supremacy of Parliament
1711-1776 David Hume – *Treatise on Human Nature*
1724-1804 Immanuel Kant – *Critique of Pure Reason* (Categorical Imperative)
1712-1788 Jean-Jacques Rousseau - *Confessions*
1789 French Revolution

THE 19th CENTURY

- 1770-1831 G.W.F Hegel – Dialectics & Culture
1788-1889 Arthur Schopenhauer – Romanticism
1798-1877 Auguste Comte – Positivism
1806-1873 J.S. Mill – Utilitarianism
1813-1855 Soren Kierkegaard - Founder of Existentialism

The 20th CENTURY

- 1905-1980 Jean-Paul Sartre – Existentialism
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COURSE READING

Remember to keep a *Glossary of Terms* in your portfolio

Your weekly course work is divided into: Reading/ Writing/ Research / & Discussion Sections

Week 1

Introduction: What is Philosophy? Read Introduction in Textbook (pgs. 1-14)

Research: The Sophists: Moral Relativism

Plato's Principles: Moral Absolutism

Writing: Worksheet Questions due

Week 2

Read Aristotle's "Can We Understand Happiness?" (pgs.30-41)

Research: Fundamental Principles of Socrates/Plato/Aristotle

Writing: Definition of Aristotle's Golden Mean/Plato's Three levels of the Soul

Week 3

Read Stoicism & Skepticism: "Is Pleasure the only Value?" (pgs. 43-44, 238-251)

Research Aristotle's Definition of Happiness (pgs. 30-32)

Writing: What is your definition of happiness? (personal response 1 1/2 pgs.)

Week 4

Read John Stuart Mill

Research Utilitarianism and Jeremy Bentham

Writing: Explain the political application of Eminent Domain and its relationship to Utilitarianism

ESSAY # 1 due

Week 5

Read Immanuel Kant (pgs. 68-70, 241-242)

Research his Categorical Imperative and principle of Universal Law

Writing: Compare/Contrast Philosophies of John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant

Discussion: How does one define the greater good?

Week 6

Read: David Hume & Determinism (pgs. 391-393)

Research: The Influence of Kant on Hume and others

Writing: Worksheet Questions

Week 7

Voltaire & Rousseau: Philosopher/writers in the Age of Reason and Romanticism

Reexamination of the Individual's Rights in Society (pgs. 169-170, 306-308)

Essay #2 due

Week 8

Read John Locke (pgs. 368-391) and Thomas Hobbes (pgs. 297-299, 307-308)

Research: John Locke & Thomas Hobbes: Free Will & The Social Contract

Locke and Hobbes: Their philosophical Impact on America's Politics: The Federalist Papers

Writing: Personal Response Paper – 1 ½ pgs.

Week 9

Read: Rene Descartes & Dualism (pgs. 366-368)

Descartes & Certainty (pgs. 194-209)

Discussion: How do we know anything for certain?

Week 10

The Great Substance Debate of the 17th c.: Descartes & Spinoza

Research Empiricism

ESSAY #3 due: Is Experience the Source of all Knowledge?

Week 11

Read: Schopenhauer & Comte (pgs. 252-263): Romanticism & Positivism

Response Paper: Does Science Give Us Real Knowledge?

Week 12

Liberty/Equality & Justice: Is Society Based on a Contract (Read Locke & Hegel) pgs. 292-305

Writing: Response paper due on Hegel

Hegel's approach: What is Freedom?

Week 13

Are Scientific Laws Compatible with Free Will? David Hume & William James (pgs.204-207, 393-395)

Research Pragmatism & William James

Week 14

Read: Kierkegaard & the Origins of Existentialism (pgs.381-383)

Worksheet Questions due

Week 15

Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialism

Final Essay

Week 16

Presentations/ Portfolio Review/Final