



A M B R O S E

PH 125 Introduction to Philosophy Winter 2012

Time: Wednesday & Friday 8:15 – 9:30
Location: 2133

Instructor Information:
Kenneth M. Nickel (MAR, MSc, PhD ABD)
Associate Professor of Philosophy
410-2000 (ext. 6903)
Office: L2103
Office Hours: Fridays 1:00 – 3:00
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Course Description

The course introduces students to the broad survey of the Western philosophical tradition. Special attention will be given to enduring philosophical issues including, but not limited to, the nature of reality and knowledge, the existence of God, the mind/body problem, freewill and determinism, value theory and ethics.

Course Objectives

1. Students should learn the classical philosophical positions regarding the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.
2. Students should gain knowledge of the most prominent historical contributors to the Western philosophical tradition.
3. Students should develop an appreciation for the invaluable contribution that philosophy has made to other disciplines and fields such as science, politics, law, education, and theology.

Required Textbook

The Ideal Reader (2011) – available only in the bookstore

Recommended Textbook

- Vaughn, Lewis, & McIntosh, Jillian Scott (2009). *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and Participation** 10%
- Attendance will be taken regularly at the beginning of class. Students are expected to attend each class session with **an engaged frame of mind**. Students should be prepared to contribute **thoughtful** conversation to the topics under discussion. **Absence from class merits a deduction of half a mark (.5) for the first three absences and one (1) full mark for all subsequent absences.** Class participation is assessed on the balance. For example, if a student misses four classes and generally “participates” well in class he or she *generally* cannot achieve more than 7.5 out of 10 for this portion of his or her grade.
 - **Students in class but otherwise engaged in non-class activities are simply in the same room and may be assessed as absent.** Students who arrive late or leave early may be marked as absent. As a general rule **two late arrivals or early departures** will amount to one absence.
 - Students can enhance their participation grade by contributing commentary and analysis to online discussion forums.
2. **Midterm Examination** 20%
- February 15th
3. **Research Paper** 25%
- Due: Thursday, April 5th @ 4:00 PM
 - A separate handout regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle.
 - Students who have not submitted research papers will not be permitted to write the final exam.
4. **Final Exam** 45%
- Date: Monday, April 16th @ 9:00 AM in 2131
 - **Students must pass the final exam** to ensure a passing grade in the course. A student who performs well during the term but fails the final exam may fail the course.
 - Students should refrain from scheduling flights or travel of any sort that will conflict with the Final Examination schedule. Final examinations will not be rescheduled to accommodate travel arrangements.

Grading:

| Letter Grade | GPA | Description | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|
| A+ | 4.0 | | 96-100 % |
| A | 4.0 | Exceptional | 91-95 % |
| A- | 3.7 | | 86-90 % |
| B+ | 3.3 | | 82-85 % |
| B | 3.0 | Exceeds Expectations | 75-81 % |
| B- | 2.7 | | 72-74 % |
| C+ | 2.3 | | 68-71 % |
| C | 2.0 | Meets Expectations | 63-67 % |
| C- | 1.7 | | 60-62 % |
| D+ | 1.3 | | 56-59 % |
| D | 1.0 | Minimal Pass | 50-55 % |
| F | 0.0 | Failure | 49 < % |

Important Dates

- Last day to enter a course without permission, withdraw from course and receive tuition refund, and change from credit to audit is January 22.
- Last day to request revised time for a final examination is March 5th.
- Last day to withdraw from courses without academic penalty is March 23rd.

Important Notes

- Students are responsible to check the Moodle course site and their Ambrose e-mail accounts regularly. E-mail may be used to notify students of cancelled classes or other important details relating to the course.
- Use of cell phones, recording devices, head phones, and all other non-essential technology is **prohibited**. **Text messaging** during class is **absolutely prohibited** and may be detrimental to your attendance and participation grade.
- **Lap top computers, I-pads, tablets, etc., are prohibited** from general use during class. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis for students with relevant disabilities. Lap tops used for purposes unrelated to taking lecture notes are prohibited.
- Students are expected to respect the learning environment of the classroom. Make every attempt to be on time and to remain seated until the class session ends. Keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum as they are distracting to both the instructor and fellow classmates.
- *Ambrose is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.*
- *Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.*
- *Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension." Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."*
- *Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus for their records.*

PH 125 COURSE OUTLINE¹

- JAN 11 Introduction
 JAN 13 The Real Human Predicament: Boredom!
 JAN 18 Philosophy Begins!: How *Euthyphro* starts everything!

Epistemology: What is knowledge? How is it acquired? What can be known? What is 'Truth'?

- JAN 20 Plato, Descartes (Spinoza, Leibniz): Rationalism and Skepticism
 JAN 25 Empiricism: Locke & Hume
 JAN 27 Kant & Critical Philosophy
 FEB 1 James, Russell, Bradley, & Truth Theory
 FEB 3
 FEB 8 Postmodernism and Feminist Epistemology
 FEB 10
 FEB 15 **Midterm Exam**

Metaphysics: What is real? Is there anything really 'out there'?

- FEB 17 Idealism and Materialism: Locke/Armstrong, Berkeley/Rorty, *et al*
 FEB 22 READING WEEK
 FEB 24 READING WEEK
 FEB 29 The Mind-Body Problem: Descartes & Searle: Dualism, Physicalism
 MAR 2 Nagel: *What is it like to be a bat?*
 MAR 7 Global Impact Day: No Class
 MAR 9 Physics and Metaphysics: O'Hare and Quantum Mechanics /
 Fashionable Nonsense and the "Sokal Affair": When physics gives way to metaphysics ... and when metaphysics gives way to ... BS.

¹ This course outline is provisional and may, at the discretion of the instructor, require revision over the course of the term. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the outline to accommodate, amongst other things, timely issues or pressing concerns.

Personal Identity and Immortality: What is human being? What is a human being? What am I? Can I survive through time?

MAR 14 The Problem of Self Identity: Hume, Reid, and Dennett
 MAR 16 Immortality: Plato and Penelhum (& LYC!)

Freedom to Choose: Am I free to act and believe as I will? What causes me to act or believe?

MAR 21 Indeterminism, Determinism, Compatibilism, and Weakness of Will
 MAR 23

Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysical, Epistemological, and Moral Considerations

MAR 28 "Knowing" that God exists: Do we need reasons to justify beliefs?
 MAR 30 Contemporary challenges of "New Atheism"

Ethics: What is the good life? What should motivate us to be moral?

APR 4 The Right and the Good: Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, & Mill.
 APR 6 Good Friday – No Class

APR 11 Creating Meaningful Lives: Sartre, Kierkegaard and Christian Existentialism.