



## **PH 125 Introduction to Philosophy Winter 2013**

Time: Wednesday & Friday 8:15 – 9:30  
Location: A2131

Instructor Information:  
**Ken Nickel (MAR, MSc, PhD ABD)**  
**Associate Professor of Philosophy**  
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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 and understand the classical and enduring philosophical issues related to metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.
2. Students should gain knowledge of the most prominent and significant 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 natural science, social 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.

## Useful Online Resource

- <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP)

## Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and Participation** 10%
  - Please make every effort to be seated and prepared for class by 8:15. 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 who arrive after attendance has been taken at 8:15 are responsible to identify themselves to me at the end of class. Otherwise, they may be counted as absent.
  - Students *may* enhance their participation grade by contributing commentary and analysis to online discussion forums.
  
2. **Midterm Examination** 20%
  - Friday, February 15th
  
3. **Research Paper** 25%
  - Due: March 27<sup>th</sup> @ 8:15 AM
  - A separate document regarding topics, format and submission guidelines, and late policy will be available on Moodle.
  - Students who have not submitted research papers prior to the Final Exam will not be permitted to write the Final Exam.
  
4. **Final Exam** 45%
  - Date: Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 AM
  - **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:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
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 %
<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>		<b>68-71 %</b>
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 20 @ 11:59 PM.
- Last day to request revised time for a final examination is March 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Last day to withdraw from courses without academic penalty is March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Important Notes

- **Students are responsible to check the Moodle** course site and their Ambrose e-mail accounts regularly. Moodle will remind students of upcoming topics and readings. 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 prohibited.
- Phones must be put away during class.
- **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 and needs. Students wanting to use lap tops in class must discuss this with me personally. 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](mailto: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 OUTLINE<sup>1</sup>***

- JAN 9            Introduction  
 JAN 11            Historical Origins & Plato's *Euthyphro* : Introduction to  
                          'intellectualism' vs. 'voluntarism' and 'realism' vs. 'nominalism'.

### ***Epistemology: What is knowledge? How is it acquired? What can be known? What is 'Truth'? Is 'reality' essential for knowledge?***

- JAN 16            Rationalism and Scepticism: Plato, Descartes (Spinoza, Leibniz):  
 JAN 18  
  
 JAN 23            Empiricism and Scepticism: Locke & Hume  
 JAN 25  
  
 JAN 30            Kant & Critical Philosophy  
 FEB 1             James, Russell, Bradley, & Truth Theory  
  
 FEB 6  
 FEB 8             Postmodernism and Feminist Epistemology

### ***Metaphysics: What is reality? Of what does a human being consist? What is the relationship between physics and metaphysics?***

- FEB 13            Materialism vs Idealism: Locke/Armstrong, Berkeley/Rorty, *et al*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

FEB 15	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
FEB 20	READING WEEK
FEB 22	READING WEEK
FEB 27	NO CLASS
MAR 1	The Mind-Body Problem: Descartes & Searle: Dualism, Physicalism Nagel: <i>What is it like to be a bat?</i>
MAR 6	The Christian Debate: Plantinga vs van Inwagen

***The problem of Self Identity***

MAR 8	Of what does personal identity consist? Hume, Reid, and Dennett
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***The problem of Immortality***

MAR 13	How does personal identity endure over time? Plato and Penelhum
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***The problem of Freewill: Am I free to act and believe as I want? Is determinism compatible with freewill?***

MAR 15	Indeterminism, Determinism, Compatibilism, and Weakness of Will
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**Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysical, Epistemological, and Moral Considerations**

MAR 20	Does God exist? Can we know that God exists? What is the relationship between reason, desire, and faith?
MAR 22	Compatibility of Science and Religion: Contemporary challenges of "New Atheism"

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

MAR 25	The Right and the Good: Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, & Mill
MAR 27	NO CLASS

APR 3	
APR 5	Creating Meaningful Lives: Sartre, Kierkegaard and Christian Existentialism.