

Robert Mitchell

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CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY OF
HONOLULU

Philosophy 10090 - Introduction to
Philosophy

Fall Accelerated Evening Session

October 2 - December 15, 2000

Prerequisite: English 102

E-mail: PH10090@aol.com

Web Page:

<http://http://iqthost.com/rmitchell/PH10090/>

WebBoard: acad.chaminide.edu:8080/~8

SYLLABUS

Catalog Description: A study of the nature of philosophical thought and methods by examining actual examples from a selection of classical Greek, medieval Christian, and modern European philosophers. Students will develop an understanding of ways in which western culture functions.

Course Description: This survey course explores the major themes, questions, problems, and intellectual styles that characterize the major branches and schools philosophy. The purpose of the exploration is to: (1) gain an understanding of the differing approaches of various prominent philosophers to fundamental philosophical problems and questions, (2) identify the central issues and concerns that characterize and comprise philosophy as a universal human endeavor, (3) examine the rational, non-rational, and irrational elements of philosophic inquiry, (4) conduct critical and reasoned assessments of the various arguments and positions held by philosophers toward key philosophical issues, and (5) engage in a comparative examination of contemporary philosophical issues, questions, and problems. The course will focus upon the philosophical traditions of the West.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

Recognize the general themes and worldviews that characterize various branches and schools of philosophy.

Identify key issues, problems, and questions addressed by the major branches

of philosophical inquiry.

Demonstrate knowledge of major thinkers, basic concepts, and defining approaches of major schools of philosophic thought and endeavor.

Demonstrate an understanding of philosophical reasoning and engage in rudimentary philosophical discourse and inquiry.

Participate actively in rational discussions of philosophical issues and questions.

Critique philosophical arguments and express philosophical opinions in writing.

Class Format and Activities:

This course is offered online utilizing e-mail, web page, web board, and other internet technologies and resources. Students are required to have access to a computer that is connected to the internet prior to registration. Students are also expected to be familiar with basic internet technology including sending and receiving e-mail and attachments, web board postings, navigating the World Wide Web, performing informational searches on the internet, and transmitting and downloading files. Regular weekly e-mail communication with the instructor and the submission/completion of all required assignments is important to the successful completion of the course. Collaborative electronic communication between classmates concerning course content is encouraged.

There are two required in-person meetings; an orientation meeting held at the beginning of the term and a final meeting, at which a final examination will be administered, at the conclusion of the term. Orientation and final meetings are held on the Chaminade University of Honolulu campus at hours designated in advance.

Specific weekly course assignments, as described in the course schedule, are to be completed by the student. Weekly course assignments typically include: (1) a reading assignment, and (2) a web board discussion question. In addition, students are required to prepare and submit two reflection papers on topics assigned by the instructor, take one mid-term examination, prepare and submit one written Term Paper on a topic preapproved by the instructor, and take one comprehensive final examination. Students may also be required to submit additional written assignments and/or quizzes from time to time as determined and directed by the instructor. Written assignments are due to the instructor via e-mail by the due dates stated in the

Course Schedule: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor directly with any questions, or for clarification of assigned tasks, prior to due dates. No late submissions will be accepted.

Text:

Required Text: Stewart, David and Blocker, H. Gene. Fundamentals of Philosophy, Fourth Edition. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996.

Optional Text: Gaarder, Jostein. Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of

Philosophy. Berkley Books:
New York, 1996.

Reading Assignments: In order for students to participate effectively in Web Board discussions, prepare for examinations, and prepare written assignments, it is expected that each student read assigned readings during the time period indicated on the Course Schedule.

Study Guide: The instructor will provide students with a Study Guide covering course materials. Students are responsible for all items appearing in the Study Guide.

Course Web Page: Course materials and access to the Web Board are available through the course Web Page. Students are required to read and assume responsibility for all course materials, requirements, assignment schedules/deadlines, and resources published on the Web Page. Contact the instructor immediately if there are any aspects of the Syllabus or other course documents that require explanation or further clarification.

Web Board Participation: Web Board-based class discussions are utilized as a means of stimulating and encouraging thoughtful reflection concerning the topics, themes and subject matter covered in the course. Regular weekly participation in web board discussions is required. In the event that technical difficulties arise disrupt access or utilization of the web board system, the instructor may elect to utilize e-mail to conduct discussions and maintain dialogue.

Online Chat: The instructor may opt to implement Online Chat sessions during the term. Participation by students in Online Chat sessions is recommended but optional and not required.

E-Mail Communications: Students are to sign and provide course identification on all messages, assignments and other communications directed to the instructor. Students are encouraged to maintain the same e-mail address throughout the term. Notify the instructor promptly should a change in e-mail address be necessary.

Technical Assistance: In the event that technical questions or difficulties arise, students are encouraged to contact the Chaminade Computer Lab for assistance. The Computer Lab may be reached by telephone at 735-4819.

Term Paper: Each student is required to write and submit one term paper on a topic approved in advance by the instructor, which is due to the instructor via e-mail or facsimile on the date indicated in the Course Schedule. Term paper topics must be selected from the

list of potential subjects provided or negotiated directly with the instructor. Term papers are due on the assigned submission date, should be typed in a double space format and be no less than five nor more than eight pages in length, and constitute 20% of the overall course grade. The papers will be graded on the basis of correct format, style, punctuation, and grammar as well as original content. Papers should be double-spaced with all references cited properly. For information concerning proper formats and citations, consult the "MLA Handbook."* The Term Paper should be written in the first person singular voice. Please see the "Paper Requirements" web page for further details and instructions.

* The MLA Handbook is available for reference use in the Sullivan Library, and is for sale through the Chaminade University Bookstore. In addition, the Purdue Online Writing Lab is an excellent online writing resource, including MLA handouts and an internet link to the MLA web site. This site may be reached through the internet at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Examinations: There will be two examinations during the course; one mid-term examination and one final examination. The mid-term examination will be transmitted for completion by each student via e-mail and the final examination must be attended and completed by each student in person on the date and time assigned in the Course Schedule. No make-up examinations will be allow for the final examination.

Grading: Excellence in this course requires not only academic mastery of course content, but also personal reflection upon the relevance of issues regarding religious meaning to the human community. Minimum satisfactory performance entails the successful completion of the following: (1) weekly discussion group postings concerning topics provided by the instructor (pass/fail); (2) one mid-term examination; (3) the submission of one written paper on an approved topic of five to eight pages in length; and (4) one comprehensive final examination. The weight of the various elements comprising the overall course grade is summarized as follows:

Discussion Group Postings	20%	Pass/Fail
Midterm Examination	20%	
Term Paper	20%	
Final Comprehensive Examination	40%	
Total	100%	

Grades will be calculated as follows:

90 - 100 A
 80 - 89 B
 70 - 79 C
 60 - 69 D
 0 - 59 F

All grades will reflect the standards set forth in Chaminade's 1998-99 General Catalog. As indicated in the catalog, an "A" signifies outstanding scholarship and unusual intellectual initiative; a "B" signifies superior work; a "C" signifies a competent grasp of the subject matter; a "D" signifies inferior work; and an "F" indicates failure to grasp the minimum subject matter. Since the final examination comprises 40% of the overall course grade, it is not possible to attain a letter grade higher than a "D" if the final examination is failed or missed.

Expectations: Philosophy 10090 is a writing-intensive course taught during an accelerated evening session. Consequently, the course necessitates an extensive amount of independent reading, research, writing, discussion and critical reflection on behalf of each student in order to satisfactorily complete course requirements.

Deadlines: Students are expected assume responsibility for knowing, observing and meeting assignment deadlines as described in the course schedule. Late or make-up assignments will not be accepted by the instructor, except under extraordinary documented circumstances, such as military deployment or serious illness. It is the students' responsibility to provide the instructor with verifiable documentation for any extraordinary circumstances that prevent the submission of assignments on time, and to present a plan to complete missed deadlines and/or assignments missed to the instructor for approval.

Incomplete Grades: As indicated earlier in this Syllabus, Incomplete grades will not be issued except in extraordinary circumstances and in no event unless the majority of work has been completed to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Regular Participation: With the possible exception of documented emergencies, there will be no extensions given on assignment due dates or the final examination without the prior approval of the instructor. Students who fail to submit assignments or comply with other requirements are advised to withdraw from the course in order to avoid a final course grade of "F". Grades of "Incomplete" will only be given in cases of documented extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control.

Mutual Consideration and Respect: As subjects examined during this course may touch upon topics, beliefs, and/or issues considered sensitive by some students, it is imperative that all students demonstrate courtesy and respect concerning the views, opinions, and beliefs of others.

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