**History of Philosophy II--Phi 307 A**

**Georgetown College Department of Philosophy**

***Section A:  MTRF 8:00-9:15am, (Online)***

**Instructor:  DT Sheffler**

Office:  Pawling Hall 310

Office Hours: MTRF 9:15—10:00am (Zoom) and by appointment

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**Course Description:  Survey of the development of Western philosophical thought within its cultural contexts from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century.  Exploration of issues foundational to contemporary philosophy, theology, and the sciences.**3 hours

**Course Objectives**

Satisfaction of the course requirements will enable students:

·       To understand and evaluate the philosophical positions advanced by the central figures in the modern period in answer to some of life’s most fundamental questions. (*Exams, Mini-Papers, Argumentative Essay, and Skill-Building Exercises*)

·       To read complex philosophical classics with increasing analytical rigor, independence, and appreciation.  (*Exams, Skill-Building Exercises*)

·       To hone skills involved in the art of argumentation, i.e., accurately identifying, characterizing, and evaluating the arguments of others as well as making compelling arguments of one’s own.  (*Skill-Building Exercises, Mini-Papers, Exams, Argumentative Essay*)

·       To exhibit thought (in both written and oral forms) that is clear, logically structured, creative, and marked by excellent critical judgment and increasing independence.  (*Skill-Building Exercises, Mini-Papers, Exams, Argumentative Essay*)

·       To gain a more complete and refined understanding of their own worldview by understanding and critically evaluating the historical and philosophical context of that worldview.  (*Final* *Exam*)

·       To clearly see the connections between historical philosophical thought and the fundamental questions of ordinary life while cultivating resources for self-transformation and life-long learning. (*Skill-Building Exercises,* *Mini-Papers, Argumentative Essay, Exams*)

**Required Texts:**

Ariew, Roger and Eric Watkins, editors.  ***Modern Philosophy:  An Anthology of Primary Sources***.

            Indianapolis:  Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.  1998.

**Course Requirements**

·       Attendance and Class Participation (7 or more unexcused absences hurt you)

·       Skill-building Exercises          10%

·       5 1-2 page Mini-papers                                      15%

·       1 Argumentative Essay  8-10 pages               25%

·       3 Exams                                                                   50% (1st --15%;2nd and 3rd--20%)

**Final Grading Scale:**

A = 100-92; A/B = 91-88; B = 87-82; B/C = 81-78; C = 77-70; D = 69-60; F = 59 and below

**Attendance and Class Participation**

Although attendance does not compose its own segment of the grade, it is mandatory and failure to attend class will adversely impact your grade. Incentivizing attendance will be especially important this semester since our course will be held through online sessions and rather early in the morning. Since the practice of philosophy depends heavily on real-life discussion, we all need to make a team effort to show up and participate. Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class period. Perfect attendance will result in an extra credit of +2 percentage points. The first 2 unexcused absences will not count against you, but beginning with the 3rd absence, each absence will subtract 2 percentage points from your final grade. This goes to a **limit of 7 unexcused absences** at which point you can no longer pass the class. For your reference:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Absences | Percentage Change to Final Grade |
| 0 |  |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |

**The Writing Flag**

*Requirements*:  This course satisfies a W-flag requirement in the Foundations and Core Program.  Students will do a minimum of 20 pages of formal writing (Mini-Papers and an Argumentative Essay) and informal writing (Skill-Building Exercises and Exams which are predominately essay exams).   More information about each of the writing assignments is included below.

*Value of Writing*:  There is a well-established connection between good thinking and good writing.  We hope, of course, that all our philosophy students will leave our classes with a better understanding of the course content, but we also hope that our philosophy students will leave as better thinkers—able to analyze and understand complex materials, critically engage the arguments of others, and create powerful arguments of their own.  All the skills necessary to put together a clear, logically structured, well-reasoned, well-researched essay, will mirror and complement the very skills students will need to do excellent thinking about the problems (philosophical and otherwise) they will encounter after leaving behind the four years of higher education.  We value clear and powerful writing because we value clear and powerful thinking.

*Note*:  Students must complete their English composition requirements before they can receive credit for a W class.  Students may receive writing credit for no more than one W class in any semester.

**Skill-Building Exercises and Mini-Papers**

For Skill-Building Exercises, I will sometimes assign reading questions, writing exercises, thinking exercises, or other skill-building homework based on student needs.  These small, periodic homework assignments help build the skills students will need (analytical reading skills, skills in critical thinking and creative problem solving, skills in argumentative writing, etc.) to think and write well about the issues considered in this course.  Five 1-2 page Mini-Papers will also be required.  These short essays are used to develop writing and thinking skills by requiring students to produce compact arguments which critically evaluate or interpret the positions encountered in the course readings.

**Unit Examinations**

Tests are predominantly essay exams with a few short answer objective questions.  There are three unit examinations.

**Argumentative Essay**

This essay represents your chance to ‘do’ philosophy—to demonstrate your mastery of the skills involved in good philosophical practice.  Your assignment will present you with a challenge or question based upon the course material, and your paper will set out your best philosophical answer to the challenge or question.  These papers will include both expository elements (accurately and completely interpreting and describing the view of a particular philosopher and at least one or two articles from the secondary literature) and critical elements (offering relevant criticisms or defenses of the positions of a particular philosopher).   Students will have opportunities to consult with me as they progress through three distinct stages of work on the Argumentative Essay:  the abstract/thesis stage, the rough draft stage, and the final draft stage.  The final Argumentative Essay will be evaluated both for the quality of writing and the quality of the content.   Note that there will be two different deadlines for the argumentative essay to allow students maximum flexibility to fit the essay into their existing course work loads.

**Late Papers and Missed Assignments or Examinations:**

Late papers will ***NOT*** be accepted and assignments or examinations will ***NOT*** be taken late unless the instructor is informed ***ahead of time*** of a problem or there is a ***documented*** emergency (e.g. illness with Doctor’s note) that prevents you from informing the instructor in advance.  By itself, your claim that you had an emergency is not sufficient.  You need to provide some form of verification.  If you have not notified the instructor of a problem ahead of time or if you are unable to provide documentation/verification of your emergency, you will receive a ***non-negotiable*** zero. Assignments can always be turned in or taken early.

**Canvas Resources and Email**

During the course of the semester, I will post assignments, updates, and other helpful resources for the class on the Canvas site.  I will also frequently communicate with the class via email.   ***Please let me know if you need assistance in utilizing online resources.***

***IMPORTANT NOTES***

·       If accommodations are needed for a disability, please notify me during the first class period or as soon as possible.

·       The Academic Honor Code must be observed in this course.  Please see the Student Handbook for details.  Any infraction of the Honor Code with regard to student work (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in a failing grade of ‘0’ for the assignment, and depending upon the circumstances, further action could be taken through the appropriate administrative channels.   I will have to assume that any plagiarism contained in “a draft sent by mistake” was intentional, and I will have to assume that you are sending the finished product.  So make sure you check the draft you send.

·       Please note that the policies and course outline stated in this syllabus are subject to minor change.

**Course Outline**

***I do not include daily calendars in my course outlines because I try to take a pace that is appropriate to the individual students who populate my classes.  I commonly adjust assignments and pace as I get a feel for the needs of the specific class.  The reading assignments and assignment due dates will be given clearly at the beginning of each class period.  If a student misses a class, it is his or her responsibility to contact a classmate or me to get the relevant assignments.***

I.  ***Course Introduction and Historical Context***

             A.  Luther:  “Freedom of a Christian”

             B.  Montaigne:  “The Apology for Raymond Sebond”

             C.  Dewitt/Shapin:  “The Aristotelian Worldview”/*The Scientific Revolution*

D.  Pico:  “Oration on the Dignity of Man”

II.  ***The Rationalists***

            A.  Descartes (Intro, pp. 1-3)

1.  *Discourse on Method*(pp. 12-19)

                         2.  *Meditations on First Philosophy* (pp. 22-55)

                         3.   Suggested--Objections and Replies II, III, and IV (Hobbes and Arnauld, pp. 56-80)

**\*\*First Exam:  Part I (45%)\*\***

            B.  Leibniz (Intro, pp. 181-183)

                        1.  “Discourse on Metaphysics” (pp. 184-207)

                        2.  “The Principles of Philosophy or the Monadology” (pp. 235-243)

                        3.   Suggested--“Primary Truths” (pp. 225-228)

                        4.   Suggested--“A New System of the Nature and Communication of Substances, and of

                              the Union of Soul and Body” (pp. 229-234)

**\*\*First Exam:  Part II (55%)\*\***

III.  ***The Empiricists***

            A.  Locke (Intro, pp. 259-260)

                        1.  *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (selections, pp. 270-329; 339-367)

                        2.  Suggested—Preface to the *New Essays*, Lebiniz (pp. 374-385)

**\*\*Argumentative Essay (first wave)\*\***

            B.  Hume (Intro, pp. 483-485)

                        1.  *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (selections, pp. 491-532; 550-557)

                        2.  *A Treatise on Human Nature* (selections, pp. 558-572)

                        3.  Suggested--*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*  (Canvas:  Parts 1-5; 9-12)

**\*\*Second Exam\*\***

IV. ***Kant (Intro, pp. 573-576)***

            A.  *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Come Forward as a Science*

(pp. 579-633)

VII.  ***Epilogue***

            A.  Kant:  “What is Enlightenment?” (Canvas)

            B.  Toulmin:  *Cosmopolis* (selections).  (Canvas)

**\*\*Argumentative Essay (second wave)\*\***

**\*\*Final Exam\*\***