

OXFORD COLLEGE
PHILOSOPHY 100: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Ken Anderson
Fall 2005
Office: 106A Language Hall
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SYLLABUS:

The objective of the course is to introduce the student to a range of philosophical methods and problems. We will try to accomplish this through the close reading and discussion of some foundational texts in the philosophical tradition. This semester we will be focusing on the meaning of being human. The course will be divided roughly into three parts. The first part will consist of texts by the seminal figures of the Ancient and Modern traditions, Plato and Descartes. The second part will deal with the question of human nature and the possibility of liberation through Rousseau's romantic naturalism, Sartre's existentialism and Camus' novel of existential commitment. The third part will present a contrast to these traditional approaches to the issue with Dennett's scientific consideration of consciousness and Suzuki's non-Western transcendence of rationalism.

Also, we will be watching and discussing a number of movies during the semester. These will be seen as exemplifying or challenging the philosophical concepts we will be considering. I plan to have five films over the course of the semester.

TEXTS: Plato, Trial and Death of Socrates
 Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy
 Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality
 Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions
 Camus, The Plague
 Dennett, Kinds of Minds
 Suzuki, An Introduction to Zen Buddhism

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Two short essays of 3 - 5 pages
- 2) Three exams: 9/30, 11/4, 12/21 2:00 - 5:00
- 3) A number of quizzes and short writings
- 4) Class participation
- 5) Attendance is mandatory. More than three absences will affect your grade.

GRADING: The exams, the essays and class participation will each count approximately equally toward the final grade, the quizzes and short writings a bit less. I will use +/- grading.

"Every thinker puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place." -John Dewey