

Philosophy 1000

Introduction to Philosophy

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Office Hours: T-H 10:00-10:30 am; 2:30-3:00 pm and by appointment

Required Text: Falikowski, Anthony. *Experiencing Philosophy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004.

Course Description: Philosophy 1000 is for students of all disciplines; it teaches the general nature of philosophy, its origins and its influences on human experience. It offers an introduction to philosophical theories of knowledge, ethics and values, truth, reality, being, science, politics and religion. Requirements include examinations comprised of essay and objective questions; written essays, both formal and informal; quizzes; participation in class discussions and group presentations. This course satisfies general education requirements in the humanities block.

Course Objectives:

Students who complete Philosophy 1000 will:

- Be able to explain, critique and apply the principle theories of philosophy, including ethical theories, epistemological theories and religious and political theories;
- Be able to read the literature of the field critically, be able to identify, explain and critique arguments, and be able to synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- Be able to articulate and apply a well-developed set of philosophical principles to a variety of real-life situations;
- Be able to participate effectively and critically in formal and informal discourse about philosophical issues;

Students will study the enduring creative expressions of humans that reflect their experiences, as well as their feelings and ideas about themselves, other humans, the past and the universe. By learning how others have asked the “big questions” in creative ways and seeing their answers, students will make progress in answering those same questions for themselves and in realizing the universality of the human condition.

Course Requirements:

NOTE: This is a reading- and writing-intensive course.

Three “discussion” papers	20 points each	60
One term paper	100 points	100
Four “Motivated Questions” 40	10 points each	
Two midterm exams 100	50 points each	
Final Exam	100 points	100
	Total points possible	400

Discussion Papers: Discussion papers are to be about 2 pages typed, double spaced, unless otherwise noted. Since these papers are aimed at stimulating understanding and class participation in discussions, they are only graded on the basis of grammar, punctuation, spelling, paragraph development and other elements of conventional English, and not on whether the writer has a solid grasp of the concepts involved. Every paper submitted starts out as an “A” paper, and will lose one letter grade for every three errors. There are five opportunities to submit, so students can choose to skip two of these discussion papers, since only three count towards the final grade. I will not accept late papers.

Term Paper: This paper should be about 4 pages long, typed, double-spaced, and written on the topic of your choice, chosen from a menu of topics I will provide. Grades for the long paper will be based on the content, organization, strength of argument and quality of critical thinking the student demonstrates. I will supply a handout on how to write a philosophy paper.

Motivated Questions: Everyone will be responsible for coming to class on at least four occasions with a “Motivated Question.” A motivated question is a inquiry into the issues raised in that particular day’s reading. These need not be typed, but they must be written up, since we will begin many class periods by reading some of them aloud for class discussion. The questions will not be graded, only credited upon submission.

Midterm Exams: There are two midterms scheduled on the syllabus; be sure to note the dates. These exams will be a combination of objective (multiple choice, true/false, identification) and short essay responses. I offer makeup exams only in the case of genuine need, such as illness or family emergency.

Final Exam: The final exam will be an essay exam. Details will emerge over the course of the semester. Dixie State College requires that students sit for a final exam in ALL classes; furthermore, final exams are given only on the day listed in your DSC course schedule. Please do not ask to take early exams.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Dixie State College requires regular attendance and absences will be reflected in lower scores. In the case of genuine illness or family emergency, events I consider to be legitimate excuses for missing class, students may contact me for an exception to policy. As for participation, this class is geared to discussion so the student's engagement with the topics and contributions to the discussions is vital.

CLASSROOM DECORUM: Because college course work requires focused study and open exchange of ideas, I expect the classroom to be a place of courteous interaction and mutual respect. This means that the students will arrive *ON TIME* and stay until the class is dismissed; they will avoid horseplay, private conversations and any other disruptive behavior in the classroom. Student demeanor should reflect a willingness to adapt to new and different learning styles and tasks befitting an institution of higher education. Accordingly, students may not bring cell phones, pagers, Ipods and similar electronic devices to class.

My classrooms are always free-expression zones where everyone may feel safe to speak regardless of philosophy; consequently, in addition to requesting respectful treatment of one another, I also request that no weapons be carried, regardless of conceal-carry permits. (Exceptions, of course, will be made for certified law officers.)

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: Dixie State College has strict penalties for plagiarism and cheating. Either act will cost the student a passing grade in this class and, in extreme instances, can result in expulsion from school.

ADA: Dixie State College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If any student needs special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or has other needs related to a disability, please contact Sherry Dial (Disability Resources, Student Services Center, EXT. 7516)

EXTRA CREDIT: Under normal circumstances, there is no such thing. If, however, an opportunity for students to expand their philosophical awareness presents itself at or near Dixie State College, I may make an exception. If extra credit should be offered, it will be available equally to every person in class. Students may not negotiate for extra credit because they have been absent, missed due dates for papers, or have done poorly on an exam without a legitimate reason.

Syllabus

Week #1

Aug 22 Course Introduction; a definition of philosophy
24 A little logic: Read Chap. 3, pp. 125-136. **Come to class ready to talk about Plato's "Euthyphro"**

Week #2 More Logic & Epistemology

29 Read Chap. 3, pp. 139-164. **Be prepared to identify informal logical fallacies; define inductive and deductive reasoning, and recognize a syllogism when you see one.**

31 Introduction to Epistemology; read Chap. 4, pp. 170-188. **Be prepared to discuss Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and try to grasp his theory of *Forms*. This is your first opportunity to submit a Motivated Question.**

Week #3 Epistemology

Sept 05 Rationalism: Read Chap. 4, pp. 189-202. **Come to class to discuss Descartes. Submit a Motivated Question if you wish. First opportunity for a discussion paper on Descartes.**

07 British Empiricism: Read Chap. 4, pp. 202-223. **Come to class with a clear understanding of both rationalism and empiricism; be ready to discuss how the two theories of knowledge differ. Think about whether you are a rationalist or an empiricist. By all means, submit a Motivated Question, if any of this intrigues you.**

Week #4 Epistemology & Philosophy of Religion

Sept 12 Epistemology and Culture: Read Chap. 4, read "An Afrocentric/Feminist Standpoint," pp. 226-228 and "The Language of the Hopi" pp. 248-250." **Motivated Questions welcome.**

14 The Ontological Argument for God: Read Chap. 4, pp. 250-253. **Be prepared to get a serious grip on the concepts of ontological and deontological arguments during this class period and the next several. Offer M.Q's if you dare. Second opportunity for a discussion paper on St. Anselm.**

Week #5 More Religion

Sept 19 The Deontological Argument; read pp. 253-262.

21 Theodicy; Agnosticism, Atheism; other worldviews.

Week #6 More Religion and Freedom vs. Determinism

Sept 26 **First Midterm Exam**

28 Freedom and Determinism; FIRST, take the "Purpose in Life" test on page 63, and then read Chap. 2, pp. 76-82 to focus the discussion. **Be prepared to discuss and feel free to ask a M.Q.**

- Week #7 Free or Determined?**
 Oct 03 Chap. 2, pp. 50-62. Are we free or fated? Can you explain the difference between determinism and fatalism? How does—or could—one live in a determined universe? You are free to ask a M.Q.
- Oct 05 Chap. 2, pp. 66-74. What is existentialism? What is wrong with this theory, if anything? Be prepared to discuss. *Third opportunity for a discussion paper on existentialism.*
- Week #8 Free or Determined?**
 Oct 10 Chap. 2, read pp. 97-115. Be prepared to discuss Buddhist determinism. How does it differ from Roman stoicism? Ask a M.Q.
 12 Semester Break; no classes
- Week #9 Ethics and Moral Decision Making**
 Oct 17 Take the “Ethical Perspective Indicator” on pp. 278-282. Be prepared to talk about your own ethical perspective in an objective way, if possible. Try to understand the various perspectives described on pp. 281-2.
 19 Character Ethics: Read Plato, pp. 282-296. Submit a M.Q. if you wish. Take the “Platonic Character Type Index” test on p. 285 and be ready to discuss your results.
- Week #10 More Ethics**
 Oct 24 Utilitarian Ethics: reading to be assigned.
 26 Second Midterm Exam
- Week #11 Ethics**
 31 More on utilitarian ethics; *Fourth opportunity to submit a discussion paper on John Stuart Mill.*
 Nov 02 Kant and deontological ethics; read pp.308-319. This is tough going, so do your best to grasp Kantian ethics and we’ll make sense of it together. By all means, ask M. Q.s.
- Week #12 Ethics**
 Nov 07 More Kant.
 09 Read Existentialist and Objectivist Ethics, pp. 334-356. *Final opportunity to submit a discussion paper on Nietzsche or Rand.*
- Week #13 Political Philosophy**
 Nov 14 Career Day; no classes
 16 Take the test on “My Political Outlook” on pp.380-382; read pp. 383-386. Be prepared to discuss. Term paper due.

Week #14 Political Philosophy

21 Society: Organic or Manmade? Read pp. 399-419.

23 Thanksgiving Holiday; no classes

Week #15 Political Philosophy

28 More on the absolutist and the Democrat and the social contract

30 John Stuart Mill; reading to be assigned.

Week #16 Social Philosophy

Dec 05 Karl Marx; reading to be assigned; John Rawls and Robert Nozick;
reading to be assigned.

07 Rawls and Nozick continued; review for final exam.

Final Exam December 12, 9:30-11:30 am