Philosophy 2200
Ways of Knowing
Semester: Fall 2014
Location: Social Sciences Building, room 3029
Time: MW 11:00-12:15pm
CRN: 81260

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Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:00am; 3:30-5:00pm

Course Description:
A philosophical, critical examination of the different ways of knowing and thinking in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences including ethical and religious perspectives. Emphasis is on the nature and purpose of philosophical inquiry as applied to selected issues within philosophy and the broader implications of these methods and questions for other disciplines and in everyday contexts.

Course Introduction and Format:
“Ways of Knowing” is a course designed to introduce students to philosophy as both an academic discipline and as a practical activity, or vocation, important and useful in our everyday lives. That is to say, a fundamental premise of this course is that philosophy is not the exclusive provenance of the professional philosopher.

In order to highlight this premise, our course will be designed around the interlaced philosophical problems of moral disagreement and identity, or ‘the self.’ Do all humans possess the capacity to reason about moral issues? If so, why do we so often disagree about the most fundamental moral problems? What role does our sense of self, and the manner in which it is constructed, play in our moral imagination? Do different cultures or moral systems espouse the same moral truths, just in different moral languages, or do our moral differences go ‘all the way down’? Are moral truths objectively real, or something else? How can we know? Isn’t ‘you ought to do X’ just a fancy way of saying ‘I want you to do X’?

We will brush up against these moral questions and more, including thorny questions of epistemology (the study of knowledge and truth-claims) and metaphysics (the study of reality) as we move through this course. We will begin with the question of moral disagreement in our own time before moving to a study of the moral topography of ancient Greece. Here we will pause to consider the character of Socrates and his account of virtue and the good. Then we will turn to some more explicitly religious examples of reasoning about morals and moral identity, including Confucius, the Buddha, Saint Augustine of Hippo, and al-Ghazālī. We will spend several weeks investigating the sources of our own modern tradition through the writings of Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant before finally turning to the postmodern revolt against reason and then again to
our own late-modern situation of moral disagreement, hopefully better equipped than when we
began to understand our contemporary moral landscape.

In this course we will read closely key texts by seminal figures supplemented by lectures and
secondary readings designed to provide background and context. These texts are often difficult
and require an investment of time and focus on your part. If you are unable to give these texts,
and your fellow students, the time they deserve, you might consider enrolling in a different
course.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

**PHIL 2200** satisfies one of Kennesaw State University’s general education program
requirements. It addresses the CRITICAL THINKING general education learning outcome.
The learning outcome states: Students articulate a position on an issue and support it by
evaluating evidence relevant to the position, considering opposing positions or evidence, and
evaluating the implications and/or consequences of this issue. For more information about
KSU’s General Education program requirements and associated learning outcomes, please visit
http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=14&poid=1248

By the end of this course students will have achieved:

- Facility in critical thinking, including the ability to articulate a position on an issue and
  support it with relevant evidence, anticipate and respond to counterarguments, and
  consider the implications and consequences of their position

- Advance skills in reading, writing, and speaking—the central skills of a liberal arts
  education

- A general knowledge of the history and contexts of Western and other philosophical
  thought, including a general knowledge of the themes and issues that have come to define
  these traditions

- Competency in the technical vocabulary of philosophy, its contours, and how this
  vocabulary both informs and intersects with other disciplines in the humanities and social
  sciences

- Develop an appreciation for and understanding of moral difference, both as a
  philosophical problem and a characteristic of our contemporary public life

**Required Texts:**

2. Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazali’s Path to Sufism: His ‘Deliverance from Error’ (al-
   Munqīdhd min al-Dalal)*, trans. R. J. McCarthy (Fons Vitae, 2001)


*other required readings will be posted on the course website and placed on reserve in the library

**Attendance Policy:**
Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal. I will take attendance every class period.

**Electronic Devices Policy:**
You are welcome to use your laptop in class. You may not use a tablet or any phone device. No texting. You are not allowed to audio or video record class without my consent.

**Course Assessment:**
Grading for this course will be based on four (4) examinations in which the student will be asked to demonstrate direct knowledge of the primary texts studied in the course, including the contexts, arguments, and counterargument of the positions embodied in the texts. Each exam will ask the students to reflect, in writing, on the course material in the form of both short answer and longer interpretative essays. Each exam will be worth 20% of the final course grade, with the exception of the final exam, which will be cumulative and worth 30% of the final course grade. All exams are taken in class and are closed book. More information about the format and content of each exam will be given in class as each exam approaches.

The final 10% of the course grade will account for attendance and participation, which I take to mean not only being physically present in each class period, but being mentally present as well—having read the texts thoroughly and having prepared thoughtful questions and comments that facilitate class discussion and collaborative learning. As such, 5% will measure attendance and the other 5% participation. You may miss two (2) class meetings (unexcused). Beyond that, each unexcused absence from class will lower your attendance grade by 0.5%. So, three unexcused absences will result in a 4.5% attendance grade and so forth down to a 0.0% attendance grade for 12 unexcused absences or more.

The 5% participation grade is more subjective and allows me to measure the extent and quality of your verbal participation in class discussion. The participation grade may also include short, ‘low-stakes’ assignments in which you are asked to reflect on a particular text in writing (usually a page or less).

**Grading:**
Exam #1: 20%
Exam #2: 20%
Exam #3: 20%
Final Exam: 30%
Attendance: 5%
Participation: 5%

Exams cannot be made up without documented medical excuse. All make-up exams will be held at the end of the semester on the Departmental make-up exam day. You will need to present your ID in order to sit for the exam.

Grading Scale:
Students are evaluated on the following scale:
  A – Excellent (90-100%)
  B – Good (80-89%)
  C – Satisfactory (70-79%)
  D – Passing (60-69%)
  F – Failing (59% or below)

I—Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course.
Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

Academic Honesty:
The high quality of education at Kennesaw State University is reflected in the credits and degrees its students earn. The protection of high standards of academic integrity is crucial since the validity and equity of the University's grades and degrees depend upon it.

No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

Students suspected of violating the KSU statement of Academic Honesty will meet with the instructor to discuss the violation AND will be reported to the Department of Student Conduct according to the process outlined at the following link:
https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/scai-misconduct-procedures
The consequences for violation of this code will depend on the nature of the case and will be left to the discretion of the instructor. Violation will almost certainly result in failure of the assignment and may result in the failure of the course.

The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. If you have any questions about the nature of plagiarism or how to properly cite sources, please make an appointment with me or visit the following resources:

http://plagiarism.org/
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml
http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html

ADA Compliance:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. This statute guarantees equal opportunity for this protected group in the areas of public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Should you require assistance or have further questions about the ADA, please contact: Ms. Nastassia Sanabria, ADA Compliance Officer for Students 470-578-6443.

Course Outline:
Subject to change at the discretion of the course instructor

Part I: Introductions

Week 1 (Aug 18, 20): Course Introduction. What is Philosophy? How does one do philosophy? Why is it important?

Required Readings: Bertrand Russell, “The Importance of Philosophy” (D2L)


Required Readings: Alasdair MacIntyre, from After Virtue (D2L)
Jeffrey Stout, from Ethics After Babel (D2L)

Part II: Ethics and the Self in Greek Philosophy

Week 3 (Sept 3): the Greek world; philosophy and religion in the polis; philosophy as a way of life
No Class Monday September 1: Labor Day
Plato, from the *Republic* (D2L)

**Week 4 (Sept 10, 12):** Plato’s Self Mastery

“Euthyphro”, “Phaedo”, “Meno”
Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, pp. 22-38 (D2L)

**EXAM #1 (Wednesday September 12)**

**Part III: Religious Ethics**

**Week 5 (Sept 15, 17):** Chinese Traditions on Ethics and the Self

Required Readings: Confucius, *The Analects*, selections (D2L); Mencius on ethical intuition (D2L)
Yang Xiao, “Ethical Thought in China” (D2L)

**Week 6 (Sept 22, 24):** The Philosophical Traditions of India

Required Readings: the *Bhagavad Gita* on karma and dharma (D2L)
Buddha, from *The First Sermon* (D2L); *The Lankavatara Sutra* (D2L)
Selections from The Upanishads (D2L)

**Week 7 (Sept 29, Oct 1):** Medieval Christians on Sin and the Self—“In Interiore Homine”

Required Readings: Augustine, *On the Freedom of the Will* (selections, D2L)
Augustine, *Confessions* (D2L)
*The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (selected verses, D2L)

**Week 8 (Oct 6, 8):** Islam, Ethics, and Moral Identity—“The Straight Path”

**Lat Day to Withdraw: Wednesday, October 8**

Required Readings: Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī, *The Deliverance from Error* (all)
*The Noble Qur’ān*, (selected verses, D2L)
EXAM #2 (Wednesday October 8)

Part IV: Modernity, Ethics and the ‘Punctual’ Self

Week 9 (Oct 13, 15): The Advent of Modernity—Seeking a new foundation for morality; the revolt against religious dogma

Descartes, *Discourse on Method* (Indianapolis, 1960)
“Ethics and Reason” from *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (optional, D2L)

Week 10 (Oct 20, 22): Locke’s Empiricism and Natural Law Theory

Locke, from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (selections, D2L)
“Early Modern Natural Law Theory” from *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (optional, D2L)

Week 11 (Oct 27, 29): Hume’s Empiricist Ethics and Kant’s Deontological Theory

Required Readings: David Hume, from *A Treatise of Human Nature* (D2L)
Immanuel Kant, *What is Enlightenment?* (D2L)
Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section (selections, D2L)

Week 12 (Nov 3, 5): Kant and Hume continued…

Required Readings: Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Second Section (selections, D2L)

EXAM #3 (Wednesday November 5)

Part V: Philosophy, Religion, and Moral Disagreement

Week 13 (Nov 10, 12): The Foundations of Postmodernism

“Nietzsche” from *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (D2L)
TBD on postmodernism

Week 14 (Nov 17, 19): Nietzsche’s Revolt Against Christian Morality

Required Readings: Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (continued)
Foucault, TBD
Thanksgiving Break: November 24-28—No Classes!

**Week 15 (Dec 1, 3):** Moral Disagreement and Modern Identity

Required Readings: Charles Taylor, “The Conflicts of Modernity” from *Sources of the Self* MacIntyre, “Justice as a Virtue: Changing Conceptions” and “After Virtue: Nietzsche or Aristotle, Trotsky and St. Benedict” from *After Virtue* (D2L)

**Week 16 (Dec 8):** Course wrap-up and Review; moral disagreement in our own time—discussion

**Monday Nov. 8: Last Day of Classes, Fall Semester 2014**

Required Readings: None

**Final Exam (Exam #4):** Wednesday, December 10, 10:30am!