Philosophy 2200 (Ways of Knowing)
Spring 2009
Dr. Robert N. Robinson

This course is part of the General Education Program at Kennesaw State. It is intended in part to familiarize you with the discipline of philosophy. In this course we will look at some of the traditional questions that have interested philosophers from many cultures and many times. These questions include how and what we know about our world, ourselves, and our ethical responsibilities within this context. Furthermore, we will look at how philosophy and philosophical thinking relate to other disciplines and how philosophy might help us in thinking about and understanding everyday questions and problems.

Text:
Kit R. Christensen, Philosophy and Choice, 2nd Edition

Objectives:
When you complete this course, you should have achieved the following:
- A familiarity with the vocabulary of philosophy, its major concepts, the historical development and consequences of these concepts, and methods of philosophical inquiry within some western and non-western traditions;
- An understanding of the different contexts and criteria for knowledge;
- An understanding of human diversity and the differing values that arise from diverse points of view; and
- An understanding of the relationship of philosophy to the other disciplines and areas of inquiry.

Grading Requirements:
There will be three opportunities to build your grade, each worth one third of the final grade. Major tests will be preceded by information about study areas and questions:
1. A mid-term exam, the result of which will be known before course drop date.
2. Participation i.e., several short papers (“gems”) written out of class the thoughts of which will add to classroom discussion, group discussion in class, and class attendance.
3. The final exam.
Both exams will consist of several essay questions, two or three of which will be chosen by the student. The instructor prefers to read two questions answered fully, but a third question may be attempted to add strength to the test if the student finds it desirable. If the mid-term exam is missed, another “makeup” exam may be set or additional questions on the mid-term material may be included on the final exam.

Academic Honesty:
Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade
adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

**Class Attendance:**
Attendance is not mandatory. However, Philosophy is not amenable to a ‘teach yourself’ approach, and those who routinely miss class have with few exceptions done poorly in the past. Arriving late, although intrusive, is better than not arriving at all, but punctuality is appreciated. Since class participation is worth one-third of the grade, attendance is strongly encouraged. A student can’t participate unless he/she is present in class. More than five absences will lower the final grade.

**Office Hours:**
My office is located in the office for adjunct philosophy instructors. My office hours are to be announced. My telephone number is 404-221-8819. Please leave a message if necessary.

**Class Time:**
The class may not always end exactly on time since the class is largely discussion and question/answer. Such a format makes it impossible to anticipate exactly how long a discussion will run. Topics taken up will be pursued until a convenient stopping point is reached.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

I. Philosophical Inquiry: How and Why  
(Write a three-page essay on your thoughts of what philosophy is)

II. Assignment of group questions and discussion  
b. Boethius, “The Consolation of Philosophy”  
c. Radhakrishnan, “The Spirit of Indian Philosophy”

III. Truth: Epistemology  
a. Descartes, from “Meditations On First Philosophy”  

IV. Being: Metaphysics  
a. Plato, from “The Republic”  
b. Sri Aurobindo, “The Reincarnating Soul”

V. The Good: Personal and Social  
a. Aristotle, from “Nicomachean Ethics”  
b. Mill, from “On Liberty”

VI. The Beautiful: Aesthetics  
b. Beardsley, “Tastes Can Be Disputed”

VII. Philosophy of Religion: God and Religion

The instructor reserves the right to add or subtract from this outline when it is thought to be an improvement to the general course.