PHIL 2200-25
Ways of Knowing
Spring, 2014
Location: University Campus
T/Th: 3:30-4:45

Dr. Jeremy R. Bell
Office: TBA
Office Hours: TBA
E-mail: jbell104@kennesaw.edu. If you e-mail me, please make it clear in the subject line or title of the letter that you are a student in my class so that your letter is not mistaken for Spam.

Catalogue 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.

Program Learning Objectives:
PHIL2200 satisfies one of KSU’s general education program requirements. It addresses the Critical Thinking 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 the 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=10&poid=704

Instructor’s Course Description and Objectives:
While we tend to have a fairly casual, and often inconsistent, understanding of knowledge in our everyday lives, philosophers have dedicated millennia of thought and study to determining what knowledge truly is and to what extent we are able to attain it. Indeed, this study has not only proven to be one of the defining aspects of philosophy, it has also provided society with some of its most important and enduring conceptions of how we relate to each other, the world, and the divine, how society is best structured, how we are best able to live a good life, etc. In this course, therefore, we will read a number of authors, ranging from the Classical Period to our contemporary era, in order both to examine the historical unfolding of the philosophical attempt to determine the nature of knowledge and to situate our own views within this trajectory. Through this, we will attain a historically informed perspective of our present-day understanding of knowledge, allowing us to better examine, appreciate, and critique our own lives and world. Because the authors whom we will read will inevitably explore and define
knowledge in relation to other fields of inquiry, this study will lead us to consider a number of related issues and topics within the history of philosophy, such as: ethics (how knowledge relates to human freedom and the good life), psychology (how knowledge relates to psychical functions such as willing and recollecting), theology (the relation between human knowledge and the divine), and ontology (how the nature of existence determines what we can and cannot know).

This class is concerned with reading, lots of it: we will be engaging a variety of thinkers, and, while you won’t be expected to agree with all (or even any) of them, you will be accountable for understanding the terms of each argument presented and will be expected to be able to situate each piece within the context of the class. Our conversations about the reading will be geared toward allowing each student to compose original philosophy papers that analyze issues arising from out of the readings.

Textbooks:

- All other materials will be provided by instructor.

Course Requirements:

**Class Attendance:** You are expected to attend each class session and arrive on time. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. You will be allowed three absences for the term without your grade being affected; *for every subsequent absence your grade for the class will be reduced by one full letter grade* (for example, a grade of an A- for the class will be reduced to a B- upon your fourth absence, a C- upon the fifth, and so on). Please note that I will take attendance at the beginning of class and that you must both be present at that time and throughout the duration of the class in order to be considered present for the day.

**Participation (15%):** A class is, or at least ought to be, an intellectual community within which each member has a responsibility both to him- or herself and to the other members of the community, and which can only thrive if every member takes an active role in it. Participation is, thus, a vital component of the success of the class as a whole and of your success individually. In order to achieve a good participation grade, you should come to class regularly, have read and be well-versed in the reading assignment for the day, demonstrate your familiarity with the text(s) by asking thoughtful questions about them and responding to questions posed both by me and you fellow students, and engage in active and constructive in-class discussions.
Shorter Papers (15% total): Throughout the term you will be assigned a number of short papers in which I will ask you to analyze, reflect on, or explain a variety topics relating to the course. These will typically be one to two pages long, though the length may vary according to the nature of the assignment.

Longer Papers (20% each; 60% total): You will be responsible for writing three 4-6 page papers over the course of the semester. In these papers you will be expected to draw on the course readings to make an argument or provide and exegesis in response to a prompt that I will provide. These prompts will be handed out at least one week in advance of the paper deadlines.

Prefaces (10% total): Because one of the major goals of the course is to develop your skills as an author, it is crucial that you consider not only the content of your writing but also the form of your writing. Thus, in addition to thinking about the argument that you are making in any given paper, or the exegesis that you are providing, you should also think about your use of grammar, syntax, and style, and work to develop your authorial voice. In order to encourage you to actively think about these formal aspects of your writing, I will, unless otherwise specified, require you to include a one to two paragraph “preface” for each of the three longer papers. In these prefaces you will be required to reflect critically on the formal aspects of your writing. Because you are, in effect, writing about yourself, the topic of each preface will be yours to choose; however, it must, in each instance, address one of the aforementioned formal components of writing, i.e., grammar, syntax, style, or voice. You could, for instance, discuss why you chose to use commas in the way that you did (this may seem to be utterly remedial, but comma usage can, at times, prove surprisingly tricky); why you chose to use a semicolon instead of a period or M-dash instead of a colon at a particular point in your essay; why you chose to write in the tense or tenses that you did; why you chose to use certain words rather than others or to arrange words in a particular order (perhaps you wanted to establish a certain cadence or rhythm, or perhaps you wanted to avoid such pretense); or you could discuss broader, more encompassing issues, such as why you chose to style a particular paper in the way that you did or how a given paper expresses your voice as an author. Each preface should address a different issue, or, if multiple prefaces address the same issue, the later preface(s) should be dedicated to explaining what changes and progress you have made in regard to the given issue. Lastly, prefaces will not be counted toward the page-limit of the assigned essay.

All papers should be typed using 12 point Times New Roman font. The body should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins all around. Please don’t forget to use page numbers.

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

Violation of this policy will result in an automatic “F” for the course.

Plagiarism avoidance sites:
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 770-423-6443.

Technology: Unless you have received permission from me or from a relevant university department, please do not make use of computers, tablets, or cell phones in the classroom. Failure to comply with this will result in an absence for that day.

Grading: Grading will be based upon attendance (when applicable), writing assignments, and class participation. Unless otherwise specified, all take-home assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the given due date. Late assignments will be reduced a full letter grade (e.g., from an A to a B) per day; papers more than three days late will not be accepted.
Grading Distribution and Rubric:
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Shorter Essays (total)  15%
Longer Essays (total)  60%
Prefaces (total)  10%
Participation  15%

100-94%   A  
93-90%   A-  
89-87%   B+  
86-84%   B  
83-80%   B-  
79-77%   C+  
76-74%   C  
73-70%   C-  
69-67%   D+  
66-64%   D  
63-60%   D-  
59%       F

Reading and Assignment Schedule:
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Please note that, while we will attempt to follow it as closely as possible, this schedule is not intended to be binding. I am far more concerned that all students in the class develop an understanding of and appreciation for the texts that we will be reading than I am that we stick to the schedule. I will provide all reading and writing assignments either in class or online. If you miss a class, please contact me via email or contact one of your fellow students to get that day’s assignment.

Week 1
1-9: Syllabus; introductory discussion.

Week 2
1-14: Plato, *The Apology*.
1-16: Plato, *The Apology*.

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5
2-4: Buddhism: Selected Readings.
2-6: *First 4-6 page paper due*. Buddhism: Selected Readings.

Week 6
2-11: Buddhism: Selected Readings.

**Week 8**

**Week 9**
3-4: René Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy*, Meditation One.
3-6: René Descartes, *Meditations of First Philosophy*, Meditation Two.

**Week 10**

**Week 11**

**Week 12**

**Week 13**
4-1: No Class: Spring Break
4-3: No Class: Spring Break

**Week 14**
4-8: Jean Paul Sartre, “The Humanism of Existentialism.”
4-10: Jean Paul Sartre, “The Humanism of Existentialism.”

**Week 15**
4-15: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, selected readings.
4-17: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, selected readings.

**Week 16**
4-24: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, selected readings.

**Week 17**
4-29: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, selected readings.

Finals Week: Third 4-6 page paper due.