PHIL 2200: Ways of Knowing

Semester: Spring 2015
Location: English Building, Room 168
Time: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45

Instructor: John R. Wolfe
Phone: 470-578-6294
Office: Social Science 402, Room 4005
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-1:00
Email address: jwolfe15@kennesaw.edu

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.

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

Required Reading


The Upanishads. Trans. Valerie Roebuck. Penguin. 9780140447491


Additional readings will be made available through D2L and are detailed in the course schedule below.

**Attendance Policy**

*Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal.*

Students are expected to *attend* class: Showing up for class and doing the readings are minimal requirements for this class in precisely the same way that eating and breathing are minimal requirements for living.

Students are expected to *attend to* class. Students are expected to pay attention to what is going on and ask questions concerning what they do not understand. Regarding paying attention, see the policy on electronic devices below. Regarding asking questions realize that this is one of the few ways your instructor has to know whether you are “getting it.” Never be afraid of appearing stupid by asking a question concerning the readings or the lectures. If there is something you are not getting, there are probably at least three other students in the same boat, and you will be doing them a favor by speaking up.

Students are expected to *participate* in class. Philosophy involves dialog, and students should strive to make productive and courteous contributions to the class discussion and thereby to our collective understanding of the topics we cover. Students who have been quiet will occasionally be asked questions in class both to assess understanding and to give them the opportunity to voice their own take on things.

Sadly, this kind of thing must be quantified, so:

- Every student begins this class with 15 out of 20 possible points for attendance and participation.
- Every absence reduces this score by one point.
  - An excused absence will not result in the loss of a point. Absences will only be excused in the following circumstances:
    - Documented Illness: In order to be excused for illness, you must present a note from a medical professional stating that you were unable to or advised against attending class.
    - Documented Imprisonment: There are few better excuses than literally being locked up by people with guns.
    - Documented Attendance at the Funeral of a Close Relative
- Regular productive contributions to the class discussion may raise this score by up to one point every two weeks.
- The D2L grade book will be updated to reflect current attendance and participation scores on 2/1 (just prior to the withdrawal deadline), 3/3 (Midterm), 4/2 (Spring Break), and 4/28 (last regular session).
Electronic Devices Policy

Use of electronic communication or computing devices is at all times prohibited in the classroom. Students who violate this policy will be marked absent for the day of the violation.

Recording of lectures in any fashion is likewise prohibited.

Apocalyptic Circumstances

Nature destroys the best human plans, and other humans destroy the rest. Should a hurricane, blizzard, bomb threat, pole shift, gamma ray burst, or other unforeseen situation result in the closure of the University we shall try our best to make do.

In the event of the cancellation of one class we will simply meet as usual the next time and pick up where we would have. Any assignments due the canceled day will be considered due the following session.

If the University is shut down for several days instruction will switch to the D2L platform. Students will be provided with lecture materials, discussion boards will be opened to allow students to earn participation points, and when possible, assignments will be given and turned in through the various gadgets D2L provides.

Communication Outside of Scheduled Class Times

Positively the best way to speak with your instructor is to meet with him during office hours. If this cannot be managed, then email is, of course, a workable solution. However, be advised that emails consisting of questions which could be answered by looking at this syllabus or at announcements made through D2L will not be answered. Emails asking whether “anything important” has been missed due to absence will be ignored with extreme prejudice. Consider this one of your instructor's pet peeves.

Recommended Outside Resources

Students who wish to research a topic further are advised to start with the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. This is an enormous and excellent, if sometimes overly polemical, resource which has been made available online and at no cost.

Assignments and Assignment Policies

Assignments

The grade is largely determined by four major assignments, three of which are writing assignments:

The Terminology Quiz: This quiz, given early in the course, ensures familiarity with basic logical and philosophical terms.

The Midterm Paper: A 5-6 page long paper written on a topic chosen from a list distributed in class.

Thesis Proposal: A 500 word (or so) abstract of your proposed final thesis.

Final Thesis: A substantial work of philosophy, 10-12 pages in length.
**Late Writing Assignments**

Written assignments will be penalized one letter grade if they are turned in more than ten minutes after the beginning of class on the due date. They will be penalized a further letter grade if they are not turned in 24 hours after that. Two letter grades is the maximum penalty assessed for lateness.

This penalty will be waived only if an extension was previously granted or the policies of the university require it.

**Extensions**

Extensions of up to one week may be granted for the midterm paper and the paper proposal. If a student wishes to be granted an extension she must meet with the instructor during posted office hours prior to the due date of the assignment. Requests for extensions may not be made via email or over the phone. Not all requests for an extension will be granted, and the student should be prepared to explain why this special treatment is necessary. Any lateness penalties will be assigned on the basis of the extended due date, rather than the original.

**Makeup Tests**

Students who have joined the class late will be permitted to make up the logic and terminology quiz during the instructor’s office hour.

**Alteration of Due Dates and Reading Assignments**

Sometimes changes must be made to the schedule of assignments. Any change to the schedule will be made in good-faith consultation with the class. Changes may involve due dates being pushed back, or reading assignments being pushed back. Sometimes reading assignments must be truncated or eliminated. All changes to the schedule will be announced in-class and through D2L.

**Paper Format**

The final thesis for this course must conform to the following format: The margins must be 1" all around. The text must be double-spaced. The body text must be in Times New Roman 12pt while all footnotes must be in Times New Roman 10pt. No additional space may be inserted between paragraphs. All quotations of more than three lines should be treated as “block quotations.” Block quotations should be avoided if possible. Citation should be handled with footnotes. A title page is required, as is a bibliography/works cited. The frontmatter and endmatter (the title page and bibliography) does not contribute to the length of the paper for purposes of the assignment.

On all other matters of citation, style, and formatting consult Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, available in the reference section of the library, or the section on the Chicago style at the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

The student is also encouraged to consult Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* for some basic guidelines on writing. A link to this text will be posted to D2L.

Papers which deviate from this format will receive a penalty of no less than 10 points.
Grading

Grading the Midterm Paper and Thesis

A: The 'A' is reserved for truly exceptional work. If you receive an 'A' on an assignment it means that your work stands head and shoulders above that of your peers. An 'A' assignment shows a level of proficiency far above that expected in a course of this level. Work is awarded an 'A' if it both:

1. Meets the criteria for a 'B' as given below.
2. Presents an exceptionally novel argument, an uncommon insight or, is written in an uncommonly elegant style.

B: A 'B' indicates above-average work. This means that a 'B' is an outstanding grade. Most students should not expect to get a 'B' on most assignments most of the time. Managing a 'B' average in this course is an accomplishment. 'B' work can, of course, be improved, but it is above average. Work is considered 'above average' if it would otherwise be awarded a 'C' but also meets one of the following criteria:

1. Demonstrates an exceptionally good understanding of the concepts used in this course.
2. Demonstrates an exceptionally good understanding of the arguments and positions contained in the works we are studying.

C: The 'C' indicates competent work. If you receive a 'C' on an assignment, it means there is still room for improvement. If your receive a 'C' it means that your understanding of the material is not perfect, but you have not substantially misunderstood anything. Since most college students are fairly competent, a 'C' also is the “average” grade, in the sense that most students who put in the expected amount of work should expect a 'C.' A paper will be awarded a 'C' if it meets all of the following criteria:

1. Demonstrates understanding of the concepts used in this course.
2. Demonstrates understanding of the arguments and positions contained in the works we are studying.
3. Presents a coherent and rationally persuasive argument for the author's thesis.

D: 'D' work is work that needs substantial improvement. It therefore constitutes a sign that you are not putting enough effort into the course. A paper will be judged to merit a 'D' if it meets one of the following four criteria:

1. Contains a substantial misunderstanding of the concepts used in this course.
2. Contains a substantial misunderstanding of the arguments and positions contained in the works we are studying.
3. Presents an incoherent or fallacious argument for the author's thesis.
4. The 'D' is also awarded when portions of the assignment are unintelligible (“word salad”).

F: If you receive an 'F' it means that your misunderstanding of the material is severe. This means that you have more than one substantial misunderstanding of the material, or that the majority of your assignment is unintelligible or illegible. 'F' assignments are as rare as or rarer than 'A' assignments and constitute a sign that you are not putting nearly enough effort into the course. The 'F' grade is also reserved for students who commit acts of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. Such acts merit the receipt of an 'F' for the entire course, irrespective of the quality of any other work.
Grading Scale and Final Grade Computation

Assignments are weighted as follows:

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Terminology Quiz: 5% Points
- Paper Proposal: 5%
- Midterm Paper: 30%
- Final Thesis 40%

Final grades will be assigned using a standard ten point scale as seen below.

A 100-90
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F 0-59

When computing final grades, Written assignments will be given the highest point value in their bracket. For example, if your thesis or midterm paper receives an 'A,' it will count for 100 percentage points, if it receives a 'B,' it will count for 89 percentage points, and so on.

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 penalty for plagiarism is failure of the course.

Examples of Plagiarism Avoidance websites:
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 Schedule

Week 1: Introduction
   Th 1/8: Course Introduction, Basic Concepts
   Reading: Syllabus

Week 2: Greek Philosophy
   Tu 1/13: Basic Concepts Continued
   Reading: Lau, Miniguide Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
   Last day for drop/add
   Th 1/15: Methods of Philosophy
   Reading: Euthyphro

Week 3: Greek Philosophy Continued
   Tu 1/20: The Self, The Philosophical Life
   Reading: Apology
   Terminology Quiz
   Th 1/22: The Knowing Subject
   Reading: Meno

Week 4: Greek Philosophy Continued
   Tu 1/27: Self and Society
   Reading: Crito
   Th 1/29: Reality
   Reading: Phaedo
Week 5: Early Indian Philosophy

Tu 2/3: Monism and Pluralism
Select *Upanishads* (TBA)

Th 2/5: Atman and Brahman
Select *Upanishads* (TBA)

Week 6: Early Buddhist Philosophy

Tu 2/12: *Anatta*

*The Debate of King Milinda* Book 1: 1-4

Th 2/14: Dependent Origination, Karma, Nirvana

*The Debate of King Milinda* Book 1: 3-7

Week 7: Modern Philosophy

Tu 2/17: Individualism and Rationalism in the Scientific Revolution

*Discourse on Method* 1-3

Th 2/19: Skepticism and the Science of Consciousness

*Meditations* Prefatory Materials, Meditations 1-2

*Midterm Paper Topics Distributed*

Week 8: Modern Philosophy Continued

Tu 2/24: The Ultimate Ground of Being and Knowledge

*Meditations* Meditations 3-4

Th 2/26 Mind and Matter, Freedom and Scientific Law

*Meditations* Meditations 5-6

*Discourse* 5

Week 9: Modern Philosophy Continued

Tu 3/3: Empiricism and The Limits of Knowledge

*Enquiry*
Th 3/5: Skepticism and Natural Science

*Enquiry*

**Week 10: From Modern Philosophy to German Idealism**

Tu 3/10: Skepticism and Natural Theology

*Enquiry*

Th 3/12: The Good Will

*Groundwork* Preface 1-3, 6, Chapter 1

**Week 11: German Idealism and its Discontents**

Tu 3/17: The Critical Philosophy

*Groundwork* Chapter 2

Th 3/19: Kant's Metaphysics

*Groundwork* Chapter 3

**Week 12: German Idealism and its Discontents Continued**

Tu 3/24: Pessimism, East Meets West

Schopenhauer

Th 3/26: Will and Idea

Schopenhauer

**Week 13: German Idealism and its Discontents Continued**

Tu 3/31: The Will to Power, Apollo and Dionysus

*Twilight*

Th 4/2: The Hermeneutics of Skepticism

*Twilight*

**Week 14: Spring Break**

Tu 4/7: No Class

Th 4/9: No Class
**Week 15: From the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century**

Tu 4/14: The Death of God and Relativism

*Twilight*

Th 4/16: Philosophy and Social Science

Hegel, "Outlines of the Phenomenology of Spirit"

Marx, “Estranged Labor”

**Week 16: The Twentieth Century**

Tu 4/21: The Things Themselves, The Crisis of The Sciences

Husserl, “Phenomenology and Anthropology”

Sartre, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of the Philosophy of Husserl”

*Paper Proposal Due*

Thu 4/23: Freedom and Nothingness

Sartre “Existentialism and Humanism”

Sartre Excerpt from *Nausea*

**Week 17: The Twentieth Century Continued**

Tu 4/21: Freedom and Society

Beauvoir, “An Existentialist Looks at America”

Th 4/24: Contemporary Developments

Readings TBA

**Week 18: Conclusion**

Tu 4/28: Wrapping Up Designated Catch-Up Day

**Final Exam Week**

Final Thesis Due, Course Evaluations