Ways of Knowing

I. Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Gilbert V. Lepadatu

E-mail: Please use the Vista e-mail system to contact me. I will do my best to respond to your e-mail within twenty-four hours (excluding weekends). It would be a great help to me if you do not use my external Kennesaw e-mail address (glepadat@kennesaw.edu) to contact me unless there is some problem with Vista. This policy keeps my e-mail records for this course together in one location.

Office and Office Hours: During the semester, I will maintain virtual office hours within iCollege from 1-3 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. If you would like to meet with me in person, please contact me so that we may arrange a meeting on the Clarkston campus.

II. Course Information

Course Description: This course is part of the General Education Program. 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.

Course Objectives: When you complete this course, you should have achieved the following:

1. 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;
2. An understanding of the different contexts and criteria for knowledge;
3. An understanding of human diversity and the differing values that arise from diverse points of view;
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Weekly Course Preparation Time: At the collegiate level, each unit of semester course credit requires 2 to 3 hours of outside class work per week. So, a three-credit course such as this one requires 5 to 9 hours of your time outside of the classroom each week. This includes your time in the weekly discussion assignments, your various writing assignments, the time needed for assessments, and, most importantly, your time reading and mastering the assigned material. The assigned reading in this class comes in just short of 400 textbook pages. This is an average of 25 pages of reading per week (excluding exam weeks). You will find that reading philosophy may be more demanding of your time. Please be sure to set aside an adequate amount of the 5 to 12 hours per week required for this course in order to allow at least two careful readings of the assigned material. Read slowly and mark up the text. Take notes. Keep an "I don't get it" list of questions to ask your instructor or your colleagues. If you give the material the time and attention it requires, it is more likely that you will master it and do well in this class. Finally, while I appreciate the fact that students are busy with other activities in their lives, being busy does not justify a reduction in the amount of time you are required to spend on this course. If your schedule does not permit you the time needed for this course, you are advised to take the course when you do have the necessary time available.

Course Textbooks: All reading material will be provided by the instructor in Vista.

Course Format: Our meetings will be divided into lecture, discussions, short reading sessions, class assignments and sometimes movie presentations (not necessarily in this order).

III. Grading Policy (Back to Syllabus Contents)

Class Attendance and Participation: University Attendance Policy Preamble "Students' academic success is the major priority of the University. Because regular participation enhances the learning process, students are expected to adhere to the attendance policy set forth by the University and individual faculty members. Differences in content and teaching styles exist among courses, which can impact students' learning. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes to better prepare them for assignments, tests, and other course-related activities. Students are accountable for assignments and material covered during an absence."

Students may miss 3 classes without penalties. All emergencies, family obligations, illness, injuries, court dates, car problems, etc. fall into this category. For every other absence the students will incur a 10-point penalty (a letter grade).
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Exams

3 (three) tests and One PAPER.

Each exam (20 each) reiterates what is done in class: lecture, class discussion, documentaries and readings. The exams emphasize knowledge of texts, reasoning acuity, and composition skills. Some questions will be true/false, multiple choice, and matching questions based primarily on the assigned readings. Other questions will be in the form of short essays (one or two) on the readings and lectures. No late work will be accepted.

ONE formal PAPER (30 points)

You will write one formal paper, of at least 3 full pages in length (Times New Roman, 1.5 spaced, no more than one inch margin, font size of 12).

The purpose of the formal papers will be for you to show that you can use the analytical and critical thinking skills acquired in class to develop a sustained argument on a subject in philosophy. Further information is given in the Formal Paper Grading System.

One exam will be administered online in Vista.

NOTE: Exam questions may be viewed only one at a time and may not be revisited during the exam period.

Philosophy Term Paper:

The ethics term paper is a cumulative project that will be completed in three stages throughout the semester. Briefly, Part I, worth up to 5 course points, will provide a thorough description of the subject you will be exploring in your examination of a contemporary moral issue. Part II, worth up to 10 course points, will provide a detailed outline of the term paper including an annotated bibliography of the sources you will be using in the paper. Finally, Part III, worth up to 15 course points, will consist of the completed term paper itself. More details regarding the term paper will be provided later in the semester. Students are encouraged to get an early start on this project by working through "How to Write an Ethics Paper" (more details later).

Bonus Points:

Active engagement in class discussions as well as the online discussion forum throughout the semester may earn you up to 15 points (in increments of 5 points). To get extra points for participating in the online discussion forum you must write at least one post (at least 100 words) every week. The minimum number of posts required to get extra points is 10. The instructor reserves the right to decide at the end of the semester who deserves 5, 10 or 15 points for active participation.

Assessment

Three tests = 3 * 20 = 60 points
One final Paper = 30 points
Class Participation = 10 points
Total = 100 points
A = 100-90, B= 80-89, C = 70-79, D= 60-69, E= 50-59 points

Extra Assistance:

If you find that you need extra assistance with any aspect of the course, please contact me to discuss the material.

Important Dates

JUNE 23, JULY 9, 23
JULY 28

IV. Course Policies (Back to Syllabus Contents)
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Policy on Academic Honesty: Cheating includes any attempt to defraud, deceive or mislead the instructor in arriving at an honest grade assessment, and may include copying answers from other students or using unauthorized notes during tests. Plagiarism is a particular form of cheating that involves presenting as one's own the ideas or work of another, and may include using other people's ideas without proper attribution and submitting another person's work as one's own. Violations of the cheating policy will result in a grade of "0" for the assignment in question, and may result in a failing grade for the course at the instructor's discretion.

Policies

- ON DEADLINES
  All assignments have deadlines. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED. Students may NOT submit work to office mailbox, under the office door or by email. If the access to the designated course website is denied, students may use the instructor's academic email to submit their assignments. No other email address is permitted.

  GRAMMAR- AND STYLE-RELATED ERRORS
  The instructor has very strict rules on grammar- and style-related errors. Students are expected to know how to write correctly. I suggest that you proofread any written assignment before you submit it. More than 5 grammar- or style-related errors (typos included) may result in the disqualification of your assignment. As a rule, expect to receive a 1-point penalization for each such mistake.

  Quizzes, exercises, and discussions must be submitted on time -- late contributions will not be accepted. Don't be late! There are no exceptions to this policy. If you do not keep a personal calendar of the deadlines for your assigned work, you may wish to consider doing so for the purposes of this course.

Makeup Policy: - There are no makeups for missed quizzes, exercises, discussions, or papers. - Makeups for a missed exam will be given only in case of a documented emergency (such as a medical emergency or a death in the immediate family). Students must contact me prior to the exam (or as soon as possible after the exam, see my contact information above) and they must provide me with appropriate documentation (hospital records, funeral announcement, etc.). Without both having contacted me and without a documented emergency, no makeup will be given and students will receive "0" points for the missed exam. Makeups for missed exams are more difficult than the original and I reserve the right to alter the format of the makeup examination. - There are no makeups for missed Final Exams.
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Our Learning Environment:
If at any time, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable with something that has happened in this course or feel that something needs to be said that is not being said, please voice your concerns. For example, if you are painfully offended by something that has been written in a discussion thread, or feel that important perspectives are not being considered or not being considered fairly, or that the texts are biased regarding matters of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference or in some other way, please be assured that your concerns will be taken seriously.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement: If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS Counselor will coordinate those services.

V. Course Schedule (Back to Syllabus Contents)

June 2
Introduction (Syllabus & Short Introduction to Philosophy)
What is philosophy? Misconceptions about philosophy. A philosophical Toolkit.
THE GREEKS (Documentary on DVD)

June 4
The Greeks continued

June 9

June 11
Socrates and Plato

June 16
Plato’s theory of knowledge and forms.

June 18
Plato and Aristotle
FIRST TEST

June 23
The rise of Modern Metaphysics and Epistemology: Descartes, Newton
Movie Presentation; Matrix

June 25
Who am I? The self & Personal Identity
Plato: The soul is immortal. Knowledge/wisdom is the path to eternity. Aristotle and Augustine on the soul. Descartes on the soul.
Hume and Locke on the soul. Kant continued.

July 2
1. (a) The self is the Brain. (b) The self is how we behave.
Readings: William James, Does consciousness exist?
http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/consciousness.htm
Thomas Nagel: “What is it like to be a bat?”:
http://members.aol.com/NeoNoetics/Nagel_Bat.html

July 7
Existentialism: Kierkegaard: (1) Existence (2) The leap of faith and the limits of reason.
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July 9
TEST 2
ONLINE TEST
Ethics. What is Ethics?

July 14
Movie Presentation: Paradise now/Walk on Water
Should I be good? Plato’s division of the soul. Justice.

July 16
Cultural Relativism. Facts and values.
Ethical Theories: Virtue ethics, Utilitarianism, Deontology.

1. Does Morality Depend on Religion?
2. iTunes Podcast: from Stanford University, Thomas Sheehan: Historical Jesus, first lecture: “Call me Yeshua” William James,

July 21
3. “The Will to Believe,” Russell, Bertrand:
5. Arguments for the existence of God. God as a proper Name.

July 23
Nietzsche: “God is dead.”
TEST 3

July 28
Final Remarks.
Final paper due.

1.