

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

FEB. 07 2001

Philosophy 1020
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY
Winter 2001

Instructor: Tom Enders
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Office hours: Wed. 11:30 – 12:30
 Thurs. 2 – 3 p.m.
 or by appointment

Room: A211
Time: T/Th 4-5:20 p.m.

Course description and objectives:

This course is an introduction to selected classical problems of philosophy through critical discussion and study of the ideas of prominent philosophers. What is reality? How can we know it? To what extent can we know what is real? We will address these general questions, and then give extended consideration to the following: Am I a body only, or do I have a separate, non-physical mind or soul as well? Can people make truly free choices? Does God exist? Do you remain "the same person" all your life? Are you primarily an autonomous person or a social being? What is the meaning of life? (Later topics will build upon earlier discussions. For this reason, and for journal writing purposes, attendance will have added importance.)

This course is designed to introduce you to these "questions that matter" and to help you start to think clearly and systematically about possible answers to them.

Completion of this course should also help to prepare you for further study in philosophy.

Course requirements:

Logic test 10%
Midterm exam 25%
Final exam 30%
Journal 15 & 20%

Required reading material:

Ed L. Miller, Questions That Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy, 2nd Shorter Edition.
Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998.
Course Package, to be available from the College Bookstore

TOPICS

Topic One:

What is philosophy?

Peter Kreeft, The Best Things In Life, Chapter 1: "On Education and E.T." Pp. 15-21
Miller, Chapter 1, pp. 3-24

Topic Two:

Logic – Deduction, Induction, Abduction, Informal Fallacies

Miller, Chapter 2, pp. 25-35

Topic Three:

Reality (1) (or Metaphysics) – **The Idea of Form**, Teleology, Nominalism

Miller, Chapter 3, pp. 39-76

Topic Four:

Knowledge – How do we know? Rationalism, empiricism, theories of truth and Star Trek and postmodernism.

Miller, Part Two (Chapters 6, 7 and 8, pp. 139-218)

Velasquez, Realism and anti-realism, from Philosophy: A Text with Readings, 7th edition.
Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1999. Pp. 208-15

Topic Five:

Reality (2) – Mind and Matter, **the Mind-Body Problem**

Miller, Chapter 4, pp. 77-104, Chapter 5 (in part), pp. 105-25

A.M. Turing "Machines Can Think" and John Searle, "Computers Cannot Think" from
Alburey Castell, Donald Borchert & Arthur Zucker, editors, An Introduction To Modern
Philosophy: Examining the Human Condition, 6th edition. New York: Macmillan, 1994.
Pp. 65-76.

Topic Six:

Free Will and Determinism

Miller, Chapter 5 (in part), pp. 125-36; Chapter 12 (in part), pp. 359-67

Clarence Darrow, pp. 319-24 in Minton and Shipka

Richard Taylor, "The Theory of Agency", in James A. Gould, editor, Classic
Philosophical Questions, 9th edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall,
1998. Pp. 155-57.

Donald Palmer, Determinism, Hard & Soft Determinism and Indeterminism, from
chapter 6 "The Largest Airline in the Free World". Does the Center Hold: An
Introduction to Western Philosophy. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing
Co., 1991. Pp. 239-60, 285.

Topic Seven:

God – Does God Exist? Reason and Faith. Evolution. Religious Experience. God and Evil.

Miller, Part 3 (Chapters 9, 10 and 11) Pages 219-331. Also review pages 85-88.

Topic Eight

Personal Identity – Do people maintain the same identity over a lifetime? Are we primarily autonomous or social beings?

Review Miller, pp. 125-31, 185-9

Velasquez, pp. 119-40.

Topic Nine:

The Meaning of Life – Religious, Existentialist and other perspectives

Miller, Chapter 12 (in part), pp. 348-59

Richard Taylor, "Is Life Meaningful?" In Daniel Kolak and Raymond Martin, editors, The Experience of Philosophy, 4th edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1999. Pp. 582-8.

W.T. Stace, "There is Meaning in Absurdity". In Louis Pojman, editor, Philosophy: The Quest for Truth, 4th edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1999. Pp. 541-8.

From Plato, "The Apology" (translated by Jowett, 3rd edition, 1896)

... Perhaps someone will say "Why cannot you withdraw from Athens, Socrates, and hold your peace?" It is the most difficult thing in the world to make you understand why I cannot do that. If I say that I cannot hold my peace because that would be to disobey the god, you will think that I am not in earnest and will not believe me. And if I tell you that no better thing can happen to a man than to discuss virtue every day and the other matters about which you have heard me arguing and examining myself and others, and that an unexamined life is not worth living, then you will believe me still less. But that is so, my friends, though it is not easy to persuade you.