

Grande Prairie Regional College
Philosophy 1020 (UT)
Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality
Winter 2008

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD
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Room:
Time: T 6-8:50 p.m.

Office hours: W 4:15–5:45 p.m.; F 1:30–3 p.m. and by appointment

College Calendar course description:

This is an introduction to the classical problems of philosophy through study and critical discussion of selected philosophical classics and contemporary works. Emphasis will be placed on questions of the nature and extent of human knowledge and classic problems about the nature of reality and our place in it.

Course Description Winter 2008:

This course is an introduction to selected classic problems of philosophy in the fields of metaphysics and epistemology, the fields in which questions are asked about the nature of reality and the nature and limits of human knowledge. They include the following questions which are key questions for a range of academic disciplines and for decision-making in life. What is human nature? Is there a shared human nature? What are the basic ingredients of the universe? To what extent can we know what is real? What is truth? Does science give us access to truth? Should we reject the concept of objective truth? What am I? Do I have a mind or soul separate from my body? Can people make truly free choices for which they can be reasonably held responsible? 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?

This course is designed to help you achieve a good understanding of these questions and the ways in which they are related to one another. It should also enable you to begin to think clearly and systematically about possible answers to these Big Questions.

Completion of this course should also prepare you for further study in Philosophy.

*Note that due to the challenging nature of the questions and the answers philosophers have presented, the connectedness of topics, and the journal assignment, regular attendance is strongly advised.

Course requirements:

- Logic test..... 10%
- Midterm exam 25%
- Final exam 30%
- Journals 15 & 20%

Required reading material:

Manuel Velasquez, Philosophy: A Text With Readings, 10th edition.
 Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008.
 Mark Woodhouse, a preface to Philosophy, 8th edition. Belmont,
 California: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006.

Conversion table:

A+ 90 - 100	B+ 76 - 79	C+ 67 - 69	D+ 55 - 59
A 85 - 89	B 73 - 75	C 64 - 66	D 50 - 54
A- 80 - 84	B- 70 - 72	C- 60 - 63	F 0 - 49

For conversion of letter grades to the four-point scale see Calendar p. 37.

Please note that you are expected to write the final exam when scheduled by the Registrar’s Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control.

Also note: You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with College Calendar information pertaining to cheating and plagiarism, for which there are a range of penalties (see pages 44-5). Also note and observe key dates during the term (pp. 15-16).

Topic Schedule:

- 8 January I. Introduction. What is philosophy? Wisdom and truth. Philosophy and Science. Branches of philosophy. The value of philosophy. Liberal Arts education.
- 15 Jan. I. Introduction concluded.
 II. Logic. Induction. Deduction. Conditional arguments. Categorical logic. Fallacies.
- 22 Jan. II. Logic concluded.
 III. Human nature. Egoism and altruism. Traditional conceptions and objections to them. Darwinian, Existentialist and Feminist critiques.

- 29 Jan. IV. Introduction to Metaphysics and Epistemology. Plato's Cave and Divided Line. Platonic forms. Aristotle's view on forms and art. Materialism, Idealism and Pragmatism. Logical Positivism.
- 5 February IV. Conclusion to topic IV.
V. Epistemology. Skepticism, Rationalism, Empiricism. Kant's solution. Science and certainty of knowledge.
- 12 Feb. V. Epistemology concluded.
VI. Truth. Belief, Knowledge and Truth. Theories of Truth. Antirealism. Postmodernism and Relativism. Science and Truth.
- 26 Feb. FIRST EXAM
VI. Conclusion to topic VI.
- 4 March VII. The Mind-Body Question. Dualism, materialism and identity theory. Behaviouralism. Functionalism and Computers.
- 11 March VIII. Free Will, Determinism and Responsibility.
- 18 March IX. Arguments for the existence of God. Creationism, evolution and science. Problem of Evil. Religious Belief and Experience. Eastern religions.
- 25 March IX. Topic IX continued and concluded.
- 1 April X. Self and Personal Identity. Is there an enduring self? Significance of the answer. Autonomous and social selves.
- 8 April XI. The Meaning of Life. Phenomenology and Existentialism.