

PHIL101G: The Art of Wondering

(Las Cruces Campus, Class # 42776)

October 28th, 2009 version

Mon, Wed., Fri.: 8:30-9:20 pm

New Mexico State University, Fall Semester, 2009

Hardman Hall 206

Instructor: Dr. William Michael Kallfelz

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Office Hours: MWF: 2:00-5:00 and by appt.

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Home page : <http://www.glue.umd.edu/~wkallfel>

Note to the Student: Course contents will be made available on **Blackboard (Beginning August 21st)**. Such contents include ppt sildes, notes, announcements, and syllabus updates. I will be posting and circulating announcements of updates via email. *Please check your primary email address (i.e., the one you reported as primary in the Banner system) regularly!*

Course Overview & Statement of Purpose

This course approaches fundamental questions considered to be essentially “philosophical”. These questions include (but are not limited to) issues involving religion, ethics, free will and knowledge (from the most general standpoint). In exploring these questions, the student will become familiar with the special kind of critical thinking that is at the heart of most (if not all) philosophical enquiry. This kind of critical reasoning involves *rational reflection*, raising questions in a *disciplined, systematic, and coherent manner*, evaluating and making rational *arguments* (i.e., a chain of reasoning with clearly stated assumptions or premises and a logically derived conclusion).

No philosophical prerequisite material or ability is assumed or expected from the student, other than an openness for rational reflection and inquiry. This would entail some critical thinking and analysis, including, of course, a willingness to critically examine basic presuppositions and entertain others. As in most philosophical activity, it is important to keep in mind here that the goal is not so much to arrive at any fixed “answers,” rather to develop a systematic means of critical inquiry: In other words, the endeavor is to *question* in a coherent, consistent, and systematic way.

Course Assignments & Grading Policy:

Exams and Quizzes

- There will be a total of three fifty-minute exams (each worth 25% of grade) assigned on dates **Sept 18, Oct 30, Nov. 20**. The lowest exam score will be dropped (total: 50% of grade)
- Weekly quizzes: Six short quizzes (each worth 5% of grade) will be assigned on Fridays (based on material covered from Monday and Wednesday) on non-

exam weeks (for a total of four or 20% of grade) since the lowest two quiz scores shall be dropped.

- **The final exam is worth 30% of grade**
- **Make-Up Policy:** Make up exams will be permitted only under documented university approved excuses. If you require a make up exam, it is YOUR responsibility to contact the instructor.

Final Exam Date

MWF@ 8:30am-9:20am Wed., Dec. 9th 8:00-10:00am

(Check http://www.nmsu.edu/~registra/final_examination.html

for any possible updates or changes). Link for the Fall2009 Academic Calendar:

http://www.nmsu.edu/General/academic_calendar.html

- **Last Day to Drop without penalty: Wednesday Oct. 14th**
- **Thanksgiving Recess: November 23-27**
- **Last Day of Regularly Scheduled Class Meetings: Friday, Dec. 4th**

Final Grade Scale

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class:
A: 89.5%-100.0%; **B:** 79.5.0% -89.4% ; **C:** 69.5% - 79.4%; **D:** 59.5%-69.4%; **F:**< 59.5%

Incomplete Grade and Late Policy

- An "I" grade shall only be awarded, based on the discretion of the instructor. Subject to this discretion, the student must have **satisfactorily** completed a **sufficient** portion of the course by the end of the term. For further details, see p. 30, *NMSU's Catalog for the Academic Year 2009-2010*.

Proscribed Behavior & Classroom Courtesy

Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, overt and covert behavior violating NMSU's policy on diversity, as well as meeting any item(s) constituting sexual harassment. Other forms of proscribed behavior would violate the norms of courtesy, as judged by the discretion of the instructor. Aside from obvious norms, such as refraining from unruly behavior (whether in the form of verbal outbursts or other) such norms of courtesy would also include:

- Remember that oral participation in philosophy entails *well-thought out* questions posed in a rational framework. If necessary, write your question down and/or rehearse it silently before sharing it in class. Make an effort to be succinct, clear, and concise. (Note: If you prefer, you may also email questions for discussion section. More details

- concerning email policy shall be posted in the **Announcements** section of the Blackboard site for this course).
- Refraining from private conversation and/or other forms of communication among peers both inside and outside of class (i.e., texting, emailing, etc.) during lectures or discussion days.
 - **Switching cell phones off during class.**
 - Avoiding eating and drinking in class. If you *must*, do so noiselessly and with utmost discretion.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

There are four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes dishonesty of these four types. For further information, please consult:

<http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/plagiarismforstudents.htm>. Incidents of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously, and will be forwarded to the office of judicial programs any cases of it that come to attention.

Non-Discrimination & Sexual Harassment Policies:

Students with Disabilities: Feel free to call Jerry Nevarez, Director of Institutional Equity, at 505-646-3635 with any questions you may have about NMSU's Non-Discrimination Policy and complaints of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

Please contact Michael Armendariz, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, at 575-646-6840 with any questions you may have on student issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All medical information will be treated confidentially.

Course Textbook

- **(Required)** Phil Washburn *Philosophical Dilemmas: A Pro and Con Introduction to the major Questions*(4th edn), NY: Oxford U Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-19-531464-9.

Abbreviate: PW

Note that the above text is a source or anthology, and as the title suggests, serves equally well for an Introductory Philosophy course (e.g. PHIL101). In addition from selected readings from this textbook, other articles (appearing as photocopied items posted in Blackboard, in folders entitled “Additional Readings”¹ in the Assignments section of Blackboard) from some (or all) of selections from the following sources:

Phillipe Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, (trns. Patricia Ranum), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Karl Britton, *Philosophy and the Meaning of Life*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U Press, 1969.

¹ With the appropriate date(s) of particular weeks.

Benedetto Croce, *The Conduct of Life*, (trnsl. Arhur Livingston). NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924.

Jeffery R. DiLeo, *From Socrates to Cinema: An Introduction to Philosophy*, McGraw-Hill, 2007.

Kevin Gibson, *Business Ethics: People, Profits, and the Planet*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Oswald Hanfling, *The Quest for Meaning*, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

E.D. Klemke & Steven Cahn, eds., *The Meaning of Life: A Reader*, NY & Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2008.

Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge U. Press, 1979.

S. J. Odell, "Life is Not Absurd," *Metaphilosophy*, vol. 14, nos. 3 & 4, Jul/Oct. 1983.

Linnel Secomb, *Philosophy and Love: From Plato to Popular Culture*, Bloomington: IU Press, 2007.

Allen Stairs & Christopher Bernard, *A Thinker's Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*, Pearson & Longman, 2007.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (on-line) <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

Detailed Class Schedule

- Below are the details for weeks 1-2. **The reading schedules shall be posted at the beginning of each week (in the form of an updated syllabus).**
- The Assigned Readings are for the topic covered in class on that day, as homework. I will take roughly 5-10 minutes to answer questions you may have on the readings in the following class period. If you have further questions, please see me during office hours, or bring them up on Fridays. **Note: (BB) refers to readings posted in Blackboard**

| Topic | Date | Assigned Readings |
|--|-------------|--|
| <i>Course Introduction: The Existence of God</i> | 08/21/09 | Intro, pp. 2-13 , p. 16-22 (PW) |
| | 08/24/09 | 22-23 (PW) Optional: Stairs & Bernard: "The Ontological Argument," (BB) |
| | 08/26/09 | 22-25 (PW), Leo Tolstoy: "My Confession," (7-16) (BB) |
| <i>The Problem of Evil and Suffering</i> | 08/28/09 | 42-45 (PW), Optional: Stairs & Bernard: "The Problem of Evil," (7-16) (BB) |
| | 08/31/09 | 42-49 (PW) |
| <i>Death and Mortality</i> | 09/02/09 | Phillipe Ares, pp. 1-27 (ch. 1) "Tamed Death," (ch. IV) "Forbidden Death" (pp. 85-107) (BB). |

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| | 09/04/09 | Quiz 1: (material from 8/24-9/02), 52-61 (PW) Oswald Hanfling, ch.4, "Death," pp. 57-85 (BB) |
| | 09/07/09 | Labor Day: No Class ☺ |
| <i>The Question of Faith and Meaning</i> | 09/09/09 | 62-74 (PW) |
| | 09/11/09 | Quiz 2: (material from 9/09), 75-85 (PW), optional: 85-90 (PW) Exam 1 terms and questions posted |
| | 09/14/09 | 92-101 (PW) |
| | 09/16/09 | 101-111 (PW) |
| | 09/18/09 | Exam I: material from 8/24 – 9/16 |
| <i>Free Will, Mind & Brain: Who (and What) Are We?</i> | 09/21/09 | 294-306 (PW) |
| <i>-Determinism & Free Will</i> | 09/23/09 | 308-319 (PW) |
| <i>-Mind & Brain</i> | 09/25/09 | Quiz 3: (material from 9/21-9/23), 320-330 (PW), |
| | 09/28/09 | 331-342 (PW) |
| <i>-Altruism & Selfishness</i> | 09/30/09 | 343-353 (PW) |
| <i>-Gender</i> | 10/02/09 | 372-387 (PW) optional: 389-395 (PW) |
| <i>Philosophy & Love</i> | 10/05/09 | <i>The Symposium</i> (Plato). Available on-line http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/symposium.html Optional: Summary of C. S. Lewis' <i>The Four Loves</i> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Four_Loves |
| | 10/07/09 | Benedetto Croce (ch. 6), "Sex" (BB) Benedetto Croce (ch. 12), "Heart and Reason" (BB) |
| | 10/09/09 | Quiz 4: (material from 10/05-10/07), Linnell Secomb (chapter 1) (BB), optional: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on love (in (BB) see: "SEPPhil_love") |
| <i>Philosophy & Ethics</i> | 10/12/09 | Lynn Sharp Paine, "Work and Family: Should Parents Feel Guilty?", in Gibson (2006), 338-348 (BB) |
| <i>- "Social Contract" View</i> | 10/14/09 | 114-125 (PW) |
| <i>-Liberty</i> | 10/16/09 | 127-137 (PW) |
| <i>-Equality</i> | 10/19/09 | 141-150 (PW) |
| <i>-Pleasure</i> | 10/21/09 | 206-217 (PW) |
| <i>-Happiness</i> | 10/23/09 | Quiz 5: (material from 10/12-10/21), 221-229 (PW) |
| <i>-Moral Relativism vs. Absolutism</i> | 10/26/09 | 231-242 (PW) |

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| <i>Consequentialism vs. Formalism</i> | 10/28/09 | 244-259 (PW) |
| | 10/30/09 | Exam II: material from 9/21 – 10/28 |
| <i>Philosophy, Knowledge, and Truth</i> | 11/02/09 | 398-408 (PW) |
| <i>Science & Knowledge</i> | 11/04/09 | 409-420 (PW) |
| <i>Experience & Knowledge</i> | 11/06/09 | Quiz 6: (material from 11/02-11/04), 421-433 (PW) |
| <i>Certainty & Knowledge</i> | 11/09/09 | 434-448 (PW) |
| <i>What is Truth? (I)</i> | 11/11/09 | 449-458 (PW) |
| <i>What is Truth? (II)</i> | 11/13/09 | Quiz 7: (material from 11/02-11/04), 458-463 (PW) |
| <i>Philosophy, Beauty, and Art</i> | 11/16/09 | Plato, “Art, Imitation, and Morality,” in DiLeo (2007), 525-537, (BB) |
| | 11/18/09 | Leo Tolstoy, “What is Art?,” in DiLeo (2007), 555-564, (BB) |
| | 11/20/09 | Exam III: material from 11/02 – 11/18 |
| | 11/30/09 | Marilyn French, “Is there a Feminist Aesthetic?,” in DiLeo (2007), 584-591, (BB) |
| | 12/02/09 | Course Review & Final Exam Review |
| | 12/04/09 | Course Review & Final Exam Review (cont.) |

- **Note: The Content of the Syllabus is liable to change, please check the Blackboard postings and other announcements for updates.**