PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE: EAST CAMPUS

Course Information:

PHIL 101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY  
CRN: 20368; TTh E1 107; 1:10-2:25 pm  
TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM, THREE SEMESTER HOURS  
SPRING SEMESTER, 2010 (01/19/10-05/18/10)  
DOES THE CENTER HOLD?, 4th edition

Instructor Information:

NAME: Sandra Sparkman  
HOME/MSG: (520) 323-2871  
VOICE MAIL: 206-6464, Box #76070  
E-MAIL: ssparkman@pima.edu

Instructional Materials:

There is one required text for the course: Does the Center Hold: An Introduction to Western Philosophy, 4th edition, by Donald Palmer. Since all of the readings for the course come from this text, everyone should secure access to a copy (if you can find one used, a copy of the 3rd edition will suffice). In addition to the text, detailed outlines of the class lectures will be provided throughout the semester.

Course Description and Overall Goal:

Since this course is an introductory course in Philosophy, it is general in some ways and narrow in others. It is general in that we will examine some problems that arise in various areas of philosophy as opposed to focusing on problems arising in a specific area. It is somewhat narrow in that we will not have time to sink our teeth into every area of philosophy. In the end, we hope to have an understanding of several primary philosophical issues and to be able to talk about them intelligently.

What We Will Address:

I have divided the course into four distinct, though not wholly unrelated, parts. First we will discuss the arguments for the existence of God and the problem of evil. The issue: if there is an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient God, how can we ever know, or rationally believe, that this God exists? Further, how can we reconcile this existence with the presence of evil? Next we will look at the problem of human knowledge. The question: under what conditions are we justified in saying that we know something; and given those conditions, what sorts of things is it possible for us to know? Third we will address the problem of free will and determinism. The issue: is there a significant sense in which we can say that human beings sometimes do things "of their own free will" in the sense that they could have acted or chosen otherwise? If so, then how, if at all, can this be reconciled with our common sense beliefs about causation and the nature of the world? Finally we will examine various problems regarding morality, such as whether there are any ethical truths, whether moral principles are absolute or relative, and whether the most prominent theories of right action can be reconciled with our common sense notions of moral rightness and wrongness. If time permits, we will also examine the mind-body problem. The question: how can things differing as radically as minds and bodies, if both such things exist at all, be as intimately related as they clearly are in each person?
How You Will Be Graded:

Your course grade is based primarily on how well you perform on 10 (of at least 15) 10 minute quizzes and four multiple choice/true-false, short essay exams. Each exam is worth 50 points, which collectively comprises 80% of your course grade. Regarding the quizzes, each is worth five points. Collectively, they constitute the remaining 20% of your course grade. The quizzes are given randomly at the end of class and cover the material lectured on that day. They are open note, open book, so you are advised to bring your textbook, notes and class handouts to class every day. Since the quizzes are administered in part for roll taking purposes, no make up quizzes will be given (though only your highest 10 scores will count). A standard curve at the end of the semester will determine which point values translate into A's, B's, etc. (90% and greater is guaranteed an A, etc.).

Makeup Exams/Extra Credit:

If for some reason you miss an exam, be prepared to take a makeup exam in the testing center the day you return. Since the exams are typically in the testing center for a week for you to take at your leisure, extensions and exceptions will be granted only in extreme cases. In the event that you wish to raise your grade, extra credit can be arranged but must be discussed with me in advance and must be submitted by 1:00 pm on Friday, May 14, 2010.

Attendance/Class Participation:

Although attendance and class participation do not constitute any specific portion of your grade, attendance is required and class participation is encouraged and appreciated. For your own good, be warned of three things. (1) While more than four absences could result in you being dropped from the course, it will not do so automatically. If you find yourself too far behind to successfully complete the course, you are responsible for dropping yourself. The student withdraw deadline is April 9, 2009. (2) Instructors are required to justify giving a student an instructor's withdraw in lieu of a failing grade; so a “W” is not given easily or automatically. (3) A grade of “incomplete” cannot be given unless you have demonstrated a serious interest in completing the course; so “I”s may be rewarded only if you have completed at least 80% of the work required and only if you request it. On a more positive note, if your course grade is borderline between two grades, attendance and class participation determine whether you receive the higher or the lower grade. So the intent is for them to count in your favor, not against you.

Cheating:

Students are expected to act in accordance with the Pima Community College Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, etc., will not be tolerated. Anyone caught engaging in such behavior will receive a failing grade for the course. Scholastic ethics is taken seriously.

ADA Compliance:

Pima Community College is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act entitles qualified students to reasonable accomodations in the education environment. In order to request and obtain these academic accomodations, students must register with the Disabled Student Resources office (DSR) on campus. DSR will evaluate the required medical documentation, identify the requisite accomodations and authorize the implementation of them. The East Campus DSR phone number is 206-7699.
Office Hours:
Since most of you have classes before and/or after mine, my office hours are best done by appointment. However, I am generally available on campus 11:30 am-noon on Mondays and Wednesdays and 2:30-3:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In addition, I can be reached via the e-mail address and phone numbers listed above.

Miscellaneous:

- Because of insurance limitations, non-registered visitors are not allowed to attend class sessions.
- Out of respect for fellow students, keep telephones, pagers and other electronic devises that distract others on “silent” or turned off.
- Students creating disturbances that interfere with the learning of others will be asked to leave.
- Officially, eating and drinking are not allowed in the classroom.
- Obviously, leave alcohol, illegal drugs and all lethal weapons at home.
- For your own protection, always keep a hard or electronic copy of your essays until I return the graded original to you, especially if you submit it through a third party such as the staff in the Adjunct Faculty Office or the US Mail.
- There are sample/practice tests on reserve in the East Campus library to help you prepare for the exams. They are also available on the course webpage or via e-mail upon request.

Present/Tentative Exam Schedule:
Exam #1: Feb 15-20
Exam #2: Mar 9-23
Exam #3: Apr 8-15
Exam #4: May 12-13

Since the semester ends Tuesday, May 18, 2010, all exams, papers and assignments must be submitted by 1:00 pm on that day, no exceptions.
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Jan 19-21: Introduction and administrative business; brief overview of the course; Brief overview of Logic; Intro to Theology; Pascal’s Wager (ch. 1).

Jan 26-28: The Ontological Argument for the existence of God: Anselm, Descartes; The Cosmological Argument for the existence of God: Aquinas, Clarke (ch. 5).

Feb 2-4: The Cosmological Argument continued; The Teleological Argument for the existence of God: Paley (ch. 5).

Feb 9-11: Atheism and the Problem of Evil: Mackie (ch. 5).

Feb 16-18: Intro to Epistemology: Skepticism; Rationalist theories of knowledge: Plato, Descartes (ch. 2).

Feb 23-25: Sensory experience as the foundation of knowledge--Empiricism: Aristotle, Locke (ch. 3); Rodeo Day Holiday.

Mar 2-4: Empiricism continued: Berkeley; Phenomenalism: Hume (ch. 3).

Mar 9-11: The problem of certainty: Hume, Russell; The problem of free will and determinism and its implications for moral responsibility -- the dilemma (ch. 6).

Mar 15-21: Spring Break

Mar 23-25: Hard Determinism (a case for the incompatibility of free will, moral responsibility and determinism): Schopenhauer, Haspers (ch. 6).

Mar 30- Apr 1: Soft Determinism (a case for the compatibility of free will, moral responsibility and determinism): Stace; Libertarianism (a case for the compatibility of free will, moral responsibility and indeterminism): Taylor (ch. 6).

Apr 6-8: Libertarianism continued: Campbell (ch. 6).

Apr 13-15: Intro to theories of right action, theories of value, virtue and challenges to morality; Psychological Egoism; The role of consequences in determining right action: Ethical Egoism: Hobbes (ch. 7)

Apr 20-22: Ethical Egoism continued; Utilitarianism: Bentham, Mill (ch. 7).

Apr 27-29: The role of duty in determining right action: The Divine Command Theory; Kant (ch. 7).

May 4-6: Intuitionism: Ross; Ethical Relativism: Stace (ch. 8).