Course Information:

PHI 101: INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY (CRN 21963)
THURSDAYS 5:00-6:30pm, SPRING SEMESTER 2010
SELF-PACED COURSE, THREE SEMESTER HOURS
PREREQUISITES: NONE
NEC PHONE: 206-2525; NEC FAX: 206-2530

Instructor Information:

NAME: Sandra Sparkman
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            Catalina Village Shopping Center
            7816 E. Wrightstown Road
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            Attention: Sandra Sparkman

Instructional Materials:

TEXT: Questions That Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy, 5th edition, by Ed. L. Miller and Jon Jensen
SPARKMAN’S LECTURE NOTES: Handouts available through instructor and NEC front desk

Miscellaneous Materials:

In effort to help you prepare for the exams, I have placed a practice/sample exam for each section of the course together with the key on reserve in the East Campus library. You will need a Pima Community College Student ID card to gain access to them. They are also available on the course webpage (go to ECC.pima.edu/~ssparkman), and I can e-mail them upon request. In addition to the lecture notes and the practice exams, you may want to make use of the Encyclopedia of Philosophy for supplementary reading. There is a set available at each of the Pima Community College Campus libraries.

Course Description and Our Overall Goal:

This course is an introductory course in Philosophy, and thus 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 the 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 the primary philosophical issues and to be able to talk about them intelligently.

Course Objectives:

I have divided the course into four distinct, though not wholly unrelated, parts. Upon completion of the course, the student should have a working knowledge of them and be able to do the following.
  1. Outline and critically discuss the three traditional arguments for the existence of the Judeo-Christian God (viz., the Ontological, Cosmological, and Teleological arguments) and explain the implications
their success or failure have for the possibility of natural theology (i.e., the possibility of our having genuine knowledge of, or a rational belief in, this God).

2. Explain the Problem of Evil and critically assess the traditional solutions that have been proposed to reconcile the presence of evil with the existence of an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient God.

3. State and explain the primary tenets of Rationalism with specific references to the Epistemological theories of Plato and Descartes (this includes showing how the Doctrine of Innate Ideas functions in each of these philosophers' views).

4. State and explain the primary tenets of Empiricism with specific reference to the Epistemological theories of Aristotle, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Russell.

5. State and explain the metaphysical views of Dualism, Materialism and Idealism and illustrate the role and importance these play in the epistemological views of the philosophers referenced above.

6. Explain how the problem of Free Will and Determinism is generated and the serious implication it has regarding moral responsibility.

7. Critically evaluate the three traditional positions philosophers have taken on the issue of Free Will and Determinism (viz., Hard Determinism, Compatibilism/Soft Determinism, and Libertarianism) and explain how they handle the dilemma regarding moral responsibility.

8. Present the arguments for, or rationale behind, the common challenges to morality (viz., Psychological Egoism, Ethical Relativism, Ethical Subjectivism and Emotivism/Logical Positivism) and outline the considerations against these views.

9. Critically discuss the arguments for and against two consequentialist theories of moral rightness (viz., Ethical Egoism/Egoistic Hedonism and Utilitarianism) and the role at least one theory of the good (e.g., hedonism, eudemonism, etc.) plays in them.

10. Critically discuss three deontological (nonconsequentialist) theories of moral rightness (viz., The Divine Command Theory, Kantianism and Ross’ Intuitionism) and assess the advantages and disadvantages each has compared to consequentialist theories.

Attendance/Class Participation:

Since this is a self-paced course, attendance and class participation are not strictly required and do not constitute any specific portion of your grade. However, I strongly encourage each student to visit my office hours periodically, especially prior to exam dates, so I can assess his/her progress and preparedness for each exam. It would be best if students take the exams when I am at the center so that I can review the material with them or conduct a group discussion before they take the exams.

How You Will Be Graded:

One’s course grade is based on how well one performs on four sets of homework assignments and four exams. The homework assignments are comprised of true/false and short answer questions over each of the sections of the course (viz., Theology, Epistemology, Free Will and Determinism, and Ethics). Collectively they are worth 20% of your course grade. The exams are comprised of two parts: an objective section consisting of multiple choice and true/false questions and an essay portion. Each exam comprises 20% of your course grade. The objective section of the exams will be administered either during the assigned class times or in the NEC testing center at a time and date arranged between the student and NEC staff. (Upon request, and given advanced notice, I can make them available at the East Campus testing center as well). Students are allowed to use their textbook, graded homework, handouts, practice tests, and notes on the exams. The essay portion of the exams are take home. A standard curve at the end of the semester will determine which point values translate into A’s, etc. (90% and greater is guaranteed an A, etc.). Since the semester ends Tuesday, May 18, 2010, all exams, papers and homework assignments must be submitted by that date, no exceptions.
Withdraws and Incompletes:

Students should be warned that failing to keep up with scheduled assignments and exams will likely result in falling too far behind to successfully complete the course, or at least to complete it with the desired grade. For this reason, if a student finds him/herself in this position on or before April 13th, he/she may want to consider withdrawing from the course since this can be done without my permission and without incurring any grade penalty. Again, since this is a self-paced class, no number of absences or tardiness in completing assignments, exams or essays will get a student dropped from the course. So remember: as a student, one is responsible for dropping oneself. In addition, in order to request and merit a grade of “I” (incomplete), the student must have completed at least 80% of the required assignments, exams and essays by May 18, 2010 and have a strong reason to justify why he/she was unable to complete the course work in the allotted time. Also, bear in mind that a grade of “I” becomes a grade of “F” if unfinished assignments, essays and/or exams are not completed within one academic year.

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.

Present Assignment and Exam Schedule:

Homework and Exam #1: February 19-24
Homework and Exam #2: March 26-April 2
Homework and Exam #3: April 9-16
Homework and Exam #4: May 6-13

NEC Facility and Testing Hours:

The Northeast Center is open Monday through Thursday 8:15am-9:30pm, Fridays from 8:15am-4:45pm, and on Saturdays 8:15am-5:00pm, including Spring Break. Students may drop off assignments during these hours at the front desk. Students needing to pick up materials must do so during NEC staff hours which are: Monday through Thursday, 8:15am-7:00pm; Fridays, 8:15am-4:45pm; and Saturdays, 8:15am-noon. The testing center is open Monday through Thursday 8:15am-6:45pm (last exam issued at 5:30pm), Fridays 8:15am-4:30pm (last exam issued at 3:30pm), and on Saturdays 8:15am-11:45am (last exam issued at 10:30am).

Course Outline and Recommended Schedule:

February 4: Introduction, orientation, administrative business; Brief overview of Logic (ch.1-2).

By February 11: Intro to Theology; Pascal’s Wager; The Ontological Argument for the existence of God: Anselm, Descartes; The Cosmological Argument for the existence of God: Aquinas, Clarke (ch. 12-13, especially pages 265-279, 297-304, and 309).

By February 18: Teleological Argument for the existence of God: Paley; Atheism and the Problem of Evil: Mackie (ch. 12, especially pages 279-296; ch. 15, especially pages 347-366).

February 25-26: RodeoHoliday: College Closed; No office hours at NEC. Available by phone or e-mail.
By March 4: Skepticism and Rationalist theories of knowledge: Plato, Descartes (ch. 8-9, especially pages 179-185 and 203-217).

By March 11: Sensory experience as the foundation of knowledge-- Empiricism: Aristotle, Locke (ch.10, especially pages 2225-238).

March 15-21: Spring Break: No office hours at NEC. Available by phone or e-mail.

By March 25: Empiricism continued: Berkeley; Phenomenalism, The problem of certainty: Hume, Russell; (ch. 6 and 11, especially pages 125-143 and 238-246).

By April 1: The problem of free will and determinism and its implications for moral responsibility -- the dilemma; Hard Determinism (a case for the incompatibility of free will and determinism): Schopenhauer, Hospers (pages 169-171, 384-392).

By April 8: Soft Determinism (a case for the compatibility of free will and determinism): Stace; Libertarianism (a case for the compatibility of indeterminism and free will): Taylor, Campbell (pages 169-171, 384-392).


By April 29: The role of duty in determining right action (Deontological/Nonconsequentialist theories of action): The Divine Command Theory; The role of duty in determining right action: Kant; Mixed theories: Intuitionism: Ross (ch. 19).

By May 6: Work on any still uncompleted assignments; turn in any extra credit requested.

May 13: Final Exam

May 18: Semester Ends: all exams, essays and homework assignments due.