HU253: Introduction to Philosophy

Section 01
Walker 108
T & R 12:35 - 1:50 pm
Spring Quarter 2000

Course Description:
This course introduces you to some of the major philosophical arguments that have been made about the nature of reality, knowledge, and social justice. It also will introduce you to some basic concepts related to the rules of logic and critical reasoning. There is a great deal of information that you will need to read, think about, and learn during the quarter. This information is being assigned in order to give you enough background to begin understanding how philosophical arguments are being made around us all of the time so that you can begin critically applying what you learn in this class to issues that affect you and your community.

Required Texts: BEING TEXTS TO CLASS EVERY DAY

Chapters from the books listed below. On Reserve in the Van Pelt Library:

Requirements & Grading:
Please note that everything must be completed in order to pass the course.
Participation & Preparedness ........................................50 %
Midterm Paper................................................................25 %
Final Paper....................................................................25 %

Participation & Preparedness: Philosophy can be a lot of fun and tremendously engaging if everyone prepares adequately and participates. Keep in mind that not doing your work thoroughly or showing up for class affects you as well as other people in the class. It is crucial for you to have read the assignment on the day it is due. If you do not read the texts (with care and thought), it is unlikely that you will be able to make meaningful contributions to class discussions. This neglect also will make it harder for you to understand the concepts and theories being covered.

There will be frequent writing assignments due during class. Expect one each time a new reading is assigned. These assignments will be checked for comprehension, completeness, and appropriateness. No make-ups will be given. Two of these assignment grades can be dropped to allow for students who miss class for plant trips, interviews, and other excused absences.

Midterm Paper: 5 pages, typed, double-spaced. Graded according to the quality of its argumentation and analysis, logical organization, appropriateness to the assignment, degree of effort/thought, completeness. The assignment will be based on the readings (and movie) from week one through week six.

Final Paper: 5 pages, typed, double-spaced. Graded according to the same criteria as the Midterm Paper. The assignment will be based on the readings from week seven through week ten.

The MTU Writing Center:
For help interpreting the readings, preparing for class discussion, and composing your philosophy midterm and final papers, visit the Writing Center for regular or walk-in appointments. The coaches are a great resource for ideas and strategies for approaching the work involved with this class. Visit them at 107 Walker, 487-2007.

MTU's Policy on Discrimination:
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please contact your instructor and call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students at 7-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action office at 7-3310.
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WEEK ONE
03/07 T Introduction to Course Content and Each Other
03/09 R Discuss What is Philosophy? pgs. 1-27

WEEK TWO
03/14 T Discuss The First Metaphysicians pgs. 57-68
Discuss Plato & Socrates -- The Theory of Forms pgs. 71-84
03/16 R Discuss The Degrees of Reality & Knowledge -- After Plato & Aristotle pgs. 84-100

WEEK THREE
03/21 T Discuss Mind and Matter pgs. 105-126
03/23 R Discuss Idealism pgs. 131-142; 150-152
Discuss Materialism pgs. 155-180

WEEK FOUR
03/28 T Discuss Skepticism pgs. 185-207
03/30 R The Way Of Reason pgs. 211-229

WEEK FIVE
04/04 T Discuss The Way of Experience pgs. 233-255
04/06 R Discuss The Problem of Certainty pgs. 259-270

WEEK SIX
04/11 T View The Matrix
04/13 R View The Matrix

WEEK SEVEN
04/18 T Midterm Paper Due
Discuss A Little Logic pgs. 31-45
04/20 R Discuss Informal Fallacies pgs. 45-51

WEEK EIGHT
04/25 T Discuss Historical Background on Social Theory pgs. 491-504
04/27 R Discuss Liberalism vs. Marxism pgs. 507-530

WEEK NINE
05/02 T Discuss The Question of Justice pgs. 535-560
05/04 R Discuss Justice and the Politics of Difference pgs. 3-14; 156-191

WEEK TEN
05/09 T Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice pgs. 1-28; 52-75
05/11 R Finishing Up -- Discussions & Course Evaluation

FINALS WEEK: FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, 5/15/00, 5 PM, WALKER 311

Note: I reserve the right to revise the syllabus to better serve the needs of students in this class.