COURSE OBJECTIVES:

You will study some famous philosophers' attempts to answer some very difficult philosophical questions. For example, is the mind something different from the brain or can mind be reduced to brain activities? Do our perceptions correspond to the way the world actually is? Is morality relative to cultures? Is morality even possible? Is there one conceptual framework that is adequate to guide moral decisions and, if so, what is it? If God is omnipotent and benevolent, why is there evil in the world? Can the existence of God be proved?

You will be asked to read about, think about, and write about questions such as these. You should learn something about the nature of argumentation in the process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Course grade is primarily determined by three essay type hour exams, 20% each. The first hour exam will be in class on Thursday, May 30, 2002. The second hour exam will be on Thursday, June 13, 2002. The third hour exam will be Thursday, June 27, 2002. All three exams are required for a passing grade in the course.

2. You should submit a discussion question based on the readings, along with a suggested answer, as these are assigned. Discussion questions may be submitted in class only on the date they are due. At least two discussion questions may be missed to allow for excused absences. Flippant or irrelevant questions (or suggested answers) will be regarded as a non-submission. In addition, there will be occasional class writing assignments which can be turned in only at the end of the class period. In class writing assignments will be checked for completeness and appropriateness. The discussion questions and in class writing assignments are worth 20% of the course grade. A solid record of in class writing assignments is needed to earn this portion of the course grade. In class writing assignments will require you to refer to your textbook, so you should bring your text to each class meeting.

3. Two brief out of class writing assignments on assigned topics are due on the date announced in class. Quality of out of class writing assignments will be judged on the basis of quality of argumentation, logical organization, appropriateness to the assignment, degree of effort, completeness, etc. Out of class writing assignments are worth 10% of the course grade. Details on length, etc., will be given when the assignments are made.

4. Regular class attendance and participation in discussion is expected. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what was assigned, covered or discussed in your absence. Class attendance and participation is worth 10% of the course grade.
READING SEQUENCE:

Chapter 1   What is Philosophy?
Chapter 2   A Little Logic
Chapter 13  God and Reason, pp. 309 - 317
Chapter 12  God and the World, pp. 290 - 297
Chapter 16  Challenges to Morality
Chapter 17  Hedonism
Chapter 18  Utilitarianism
Chapter 19  The Role of Duty
Chapter 5   Mind and Matter
Chapter 6   Idealism
Chapter 21  Liberalism vs. Marxism
Chapter 22  The Question of Justice

The professor reserves the right to revise the syllabus as the course progresses.

Michigan Technological University complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean for Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (3310).