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 September 27, 2002. The second hour exam will be on November 1, 2002. The third hour exam will be during the scheduled final exam time. All three exams are required for a passing grade in the course.

2. There will be occasional in 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 in class writing assignments are worth 10% 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 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 each. 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     Miller, What is Philosophy?
Chapter 2     Miller, A Little Logic
Chapter 13    Miller, God and Reason, pp. 309 - 317
Chapter 12    Miller, God and the World, pp. 290 - 297
Chapter 16    Miller, Challenges to Morality
Chapter 2     Rachels, The Challenge of Cultural Relativism
Chapter 4     Rachels, Does Morality Depend on Religion?
Chapter 5     Rachels, Psychological Egoism
Chapter 6     Rachels, Ethical Egoism
Chapter 7     Rachels, The Utilitarianism Approach
Chapter 8     Rachels, The Debate Over Utilitarianism
Chapter 10    Rachels, Are There Absolute Moral Rules?
Chapter 11    Rachels, Kant and Respect for Persons
Chapter 5     Miller, Mind and Matter
Chapter 6     Miller, Idealism
Chapter 9     Miller, The Way of Reason
Chapter 10    Miller, The Way of Experience
Chapter 21    Miller, Liberalism vs. Marxism
Chapter 22    Miller, 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).