

PHIL 3228: THE RATIONAL ANIMAL HONORS

Fall 2011

T & Th 3:30-4:45pm HR/12

Professor Jennifer M. Morton
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Office: NAC 5/136C Phone: x7637
Office Hours: T & Th 12:30-1:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The general aim of this course is to serve as an introduction to central philosophical problems and methods of philosophical argumentation and analysis. We will consider some of the following questions: How can we know there is an external world? What makes a person identical over time? Can we be free if the world is determined by physical laws? Are the consequences of our actions what determine their moral worth?

READING: All of the primary reading for this course will be posted on the course website

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: You will be required to take an in-class exam and a take-home exam as well as write a shorter paper and a longer final paper. You are **required** to bring a **draft** of each paper to class for a peer-review writing workshop on the assigned dates (see schedule). We will also occasionally have in-class quizzes or assignments.

Exam #1	15%
Take Home Exam	20%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages)	25%
Final Paper (5-6 pages)	25%
In-Class Quizzes/Assignments	5%
Participation	5%
Attendance	5%

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY: Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency AND arrangements must be made with me at least **48 hours in advance**. No exams will be issued after the exam date, except for in extreme medical circumstances with a hospital note.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is required. You will be granted up to **3 excused absences** (medical, family emergencies, etc) throughout the term, any absences above that number will affect your grade significantly. If you arrive **late to class**, you will be called on to contribute to the class discussion upon your arrival.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will be subject to penalties in conformity with the College's policy on Academic Integrity.

LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you should be able to: (1) Read philosophical texts (both historical and contemporary) in order to understand the central question addressed and summarize the central philosophical position developed. (2) Learn about different philosophical methods of argumentation and be able to recognize them. (3) Be able to succinctly and logically explain a philosophical argument. (4) Develop the ability to summarize, analyze, and evaluate different philosophical positions through shorter and longer written assignments.

As part of the College's General Education Curriculum, this course is designed to satisfy the requirements for a *Logical-Philosophical Perspective* course. Students successfully completing this course will develop the following proficiencies: will have had multiple experiences in communicating ideas in writing and speaking by completing assignments totaling at least 3500 words of writing, will have had experiences that emphasize analytic and/or philosophical reasoning to critically examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology, and will have had multiple experiences in finding information and evaluating the reliability of this information.

Date	Reading	Assignment
T 08/30	Introduction/Jim Pryor's "Guidelines on Reading Philosophy", Vaughn, Chapter 1 of <u>Writing Philosophy</u>	
KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD		
Th 09/01	Descartes, Meditations I & II	
T 09/06	Moore, Proof of an External World (esp. pp 145-150)	
Th 09/08	Unger, A Defense of Skepticism	
T 09/13	<u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 2	
Th 09/15	Exam #1 (In Class)	
PERSONAL IDENTITY		
T 09/20	Locke, Of Identity and Diversity	
Th 09/22	Reid, Of Identity & Mr. Locke's Account / <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 3	
T 09/27	Hume, Our Idea of Identity	
Th 09/30	No Classes	
T 10/04	No Classes (Friday Schedule)	
Th 10/06	Parfit, Personal Identity/Movie: Memento (Part I)	
T 10/11	Movie: Memento (Part II)	
Th 10/13	No Class/Take-Home Exam Distributed	
FREEDOM & DETERMINISM		
T 10/18	Ayer, Freedom and Necessity	Take-Home Exam Due
Th 10/20	Van Inwagen, The Incompatibility of Free Will & Determinism	Paper Topics Distributed
T 10/25	Kane, Responsibility, Luck, and Chance	
Th 10/27	Strawson, Freedom and Resentment	
T 11/01	Catch-Up	
Th 11/03	Paper Writing Workshop/ <u>Writing Philosophy</u> Chapter 4	Paper #1 Draft Due
FOUNDATIONS OF ETHICS		
T 11/08	Mill, Utilitarianism Chapters 1-2	Paper #1 Due
Th 11/10	Mill, Utilitarianism Chapters 3-4	
T 11/15	Mill, Utilitarianism Chapter 5	
Th 11/17	Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Preface & Section I	
T 11/22	Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section II	
Th 11/24	No Classes (Thanksgiving)	
T 11/29	Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section III	
PRACTICAL ETHICS		
Th 12/01	Singer, Famine, Affluence, and Morality	
T 12/06	Nagel, War and Massacre	
Th 12/08	Singer, All Animals Are Equal	
T 12/13	Paper Writing Workshop/Wrap-Up	Final Paper Draft Due
M 12/19	Paper #2 Due via electronic submission to jmorton@ccny.cuny.edu	