

PHL 112: CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Instructor: Dr. Gertrude Postl
Fall 2011, CRN: 94915
Time: T/R 2:00-3:15 p.m.
Location: Annex 103

Office: 120 Southampton Building
Tel. 451-4513 (Main Office: 451-4093)
postlg@sunysuffolk.edu
Office Hours: M 11:00 – 12:00 am
W 10:00 – 11:00 pm
T/T 12:30 – 1:30 pm

OBJECTIVES

This course will enable students to:

1. Identify and comprehend some of the basic ideas, theories, movements, and persons that have shaped the developments of Western Philosophy during the twentieth century into the present (including Logical Atomism, Logical Positivism, Ordinary Language Philosophy; Phenomenology and Existentialism; Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School; Structuralism, Postmodernism, and Deconstruction; Feminist Philosophy).
2. Understand these developments within the context of and as response to the Western tradition of thought.
3. Develop an awareness of the interconnection between schools of thought and socio-political developments during the twentieth century.
4. Comprehend their life experience in terms of a contemporary theoretical framework;
5. Develop skills of critical analysis in speaking and writing.

Procedures for accomplishing these objectives: Lectures, class discussion, in-class group projects, written assignments;

TEXT:

Forrest E. Baird, Walter Kaufmann (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Philosophy. Philosophical Classics*, Vol. V, 3rd ed., Prentice Hall, 2003.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) FOUR QUIZZES: quiz 1: 9/22 quiz 2: 10/13
 quiz 3: 11/10 quiz 4: 12/20

Quizzes will consist of brief essay questions relating to the readings and the course material in general. The lowest quiz-grade will be dropped. No make-up quizzes!

- 2) TWO PAPERS (due 10/20 and 12/15)

Each paper should be at least **three pages long, typed, double-spaced, and in the appropriate academic format** (name, title, correct quotations). Papers received after the deadline will not be accepted! Topics for those two papers will be provided on a separate handout.

If the first paper is handed in early (during the week before the deadline) it may be rewritten in order to improve the grade. The due date for the second version is two weeks after the first version was returned by the instructor. A rewritten paper will not be accepted after this deadline has passed! The first version has to be handed in together with the second version! In order to raise the grade, the rewritten version has to show serious improvements!

- 3) CLASS PARTICIPATION, READING ASSIGNMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

This means **participating** in the common effort of discussion in order to complement the reading material and to accomplish the aims stated in the course objectives. Absolute unwillingness to participate will result in a lower final grade. "Talking a lot" is not necessarily participation. **Reading assignments** have to be completed **before** class meetings. Disruptive or inconsiderate **behavior** (including walking in and out of the classroom during class time) will affect the grade. Cell phones and beepers have to be switched off during class time.

- 4) ATTENDANCE POLICY

The college defines excessive absence or lateness as more than the equivalent of one week of class meetings during

the semester. In this course, students are allowed **no more than three absences!** Any additional absence will affect the grade. Excessive absence or lateness may lead to failure in the course or removal from the class roster. If a student is late, the time will be added up and will thereby also contribute to the amount of absences. It is **the student's obligation to sign the sign-up sheet.** If a student misses a class due to sickness or other justifiable reasons, **evidence needs to be shown as soon as possible!** In this case the absence will be excused. If a student drops the class **after** the official withdraw-date (Oct. 27) without justifiable reason, he/she will receive an "F" for the course. No "W" will be given after the official withdraw-date.

GRADING

Three Quizzes: 45% of the final grade
Two Paper: 40% of the final grade
Class Participation: 15% of the final grade
 Excessive absence will lower the final grade!

PLAGIARISM

"In writing, students must fully credit the source of any quoted, paraphrased, or summarized passages and any ideas which they have borrowed. Failure to conform to these academic standards is plagiarism and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or serious disciplinary sanctions as outlines in the Code of Conduct" (SCCC Catalog, p.73). Plagiarism of any kind will result in a "0" for the assignment in question and in repeated cases in an "F" for the course.

SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Tu 8/30: What is philosophy? The areas of philosophy; basic philosophical terms;
 Th 9/1: History of Western Philosophy;

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Tu 9/6: Bertrand Russell, from *The Problems of Philosophy*, Chapter 1: Appearance and Reality (pp.53-57);
 Th 9/8: Ludwig Wittgenstein, from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (pp.141-149);
 Tu 9/13: Wittgenstein continued;
 Th 9/15: A.J. Ayer, from *Language, Truth and Logic* (pp.169-177);
 Tu 9/20: No Class (All College Day);
 Th 9/22: **QUIZ 1**
 Ludwig Wittgenstein, from *Philosophical Investigations* (pp.149-162; && 1-47);
 Tu 9/27: J.L. Austin, from *How to Do Things with Words* – Lecture I (pp.288-293);
 Th 2/29: No Class (Rosh Hashanah);
 Tu 10/4: Ordinary Language Philosophy continued;

AMERICAN PRAGMATISM

- Th 10/6: John Dewey, from *The Quest for Certainty* (pp.25-36);
 Tu 10/11: Dewey continued;

PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM

- Th 10/13: **QUIZ 2**
 Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology* (pp.4-12);
 Tu 10/18: Husserl continued;
 Th 10/20: Martin Heidegger, from *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (pp.102-127);
FIRST PAPER DUE!
 Tu 10/25: Heidegger continued;
 Th 10/27: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (pp.225-238);
LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH GUARANTEED W
 Tu 11/1: Sartre continued;
 Th 11/3: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Preface to Phenomenology of Perception* (pp.276-285);
 Tu 11/8: Merleau-Ponty continued;

POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND DECONSTRUCTION

- Th 11/10: **QUIZ 3**
 Michel Foucault, *Truth and Power* (pp.341-342);
 Tu 11/15: Foucault continued;
 Th 11/17: Jacques Derrida, *Signature, Event, Context* (pp.347-357);
 Tu 11/22: Derrida continued;
 Th 11/24: No Class (Thanksgiving Recess);

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

- Tu 11/29: Jürgen Habermas, from *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Lecture XI (pp.411-421);
 Th 12/1: Habermas continued;

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

- Tu 12/6: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex* (pp.242-253);
- Th 12/8: Beauvoir continued;
- Tu 12/13: Luce Irigaray, from *The Sex Which Is Not One* (pp.383-390);
- Th 12/15: Irigaray continued;
SECOND PAPER DUE!
- Tu 12/20: **QUIZ 4**