

Suffolk Community College, Selden, New York 11784

PHL 112-101: CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Instructor: Dr. Gertrude Postl
Spring 2016, CRN: 31811
Time: T/R 2:00-3:15 pm
Location: Southampton Bldg. 29

Office: 120 Southampton Building
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Office Hours: M 11:00 - 12:00 am
W 10:00 - 11:00 am
T/R 12:30 - 1:30 pm

COURSE OBJECTIVE

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 Positivism, Ordinary Language Philosophy, Phenomenology and Existentialism, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School, Post-Structuralism, Postmodernism, and Deconstruction, and 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 and twenty-first 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;

TEXTS

- * Richard Kearney, Mara Rainwater (eds.), *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, Routledge, 1996.
- * Handouts and texts online;

REQUIREMENTS

1) ONE MIDTERM (March 29) and ONE FINAL EXAM (May 10)

Exams will consist in brief essay questions and definitions. They will not be accumulative. Make-up exams will be given only under serious circumstances for which evidence will have to be provided.

2) ONE PAPER (due April 26)

Each paper should be at least four pages long, typed, double-spaced, and in the appropriate academic format (name, title, correct quotations, etc). Topics for this paper will be provided on a separate handout. Papers handed in after the due-date will not be accepted.

3) FIVE TEXT REACTION STATEMENTS

Choose five texts from the syllabus and submit a brief response or reaction before the respective text is discussed in class. Each response should be no longer than one page and should be written without consulting outside sources. This response can be an evaluation of the text, a criticism of the text, questions raised in reaction to the text, an attempt to relate the text to one's personal experience, etc. The purpose of these reaction statements is not to demonstrate full comprehension of the text but to show that a text has been read and interacted with.

4) CLASS PARTICIPATION, READING ASSIGNMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

Class participation means to participate in the common effort of discussion in order to complement the reading material and to accomplish the aims stated in the course objectives. 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. It is not enough to read a text; one should also be able to talk about it.

Disruptive or inconsiderate **behavior** (including walking in and out of the classroom during class time) will affect

the grade. **Cell phones have to be switched off during class time, NO TEXTING!!!!**

5) 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 (March 14) without justifiable reason, he/she will receive an "F" for the course. No "W" will be given after the official withdraw-date.

GRADING

<u>Midterm and Final Exam:</u>	40% of the final grade
<u>One Paper:</u>	20% of the final grade
<u>Five Text Reaction Statements:</u>	25% of the final grade
<u>Class Participation:</u>	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.67). 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

- T 1/19: What is philosophy? The areas of philosophy;
 R 1/21: History of Western Philosophy; Introduction to Twentieth Century Philosophy (handout);

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

- T 1/26: Bertrand Russell, from *The Problems of Philosophy* (handout)
 R 1/28: Ludwig Wittgenstein, from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (handout);
 T 2/2: Ludwig Wittgenstein, from *Philosophical Investigations* (handout);
 R 2/4: Wittgenstein continued;

PHENOMENOLOGY AND EXISTENTIALISM

- T 2/9: Edmund Husserl, *The Vienna Lecture* (pp. 3-6; 7-14);

- R 2/11: Martin Heidegger, Anxiety, from *Being and Time* (pp. 23-26; 48-52);
- T 2/16: Husserl, Heidegger continued;
- R 2/18: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Preface to *Phenomenology of Perception* (pp. 77-78; 79-92);
- T 2/23: Merleau-Ponty continued;
- R 2/25: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism* (pp. 62-64; 65- 76);
- T 3/1: No Class (Professional Development Day for Faculty)
- R 3/3: Sartre continued;

CRITICAL THEORY

- T 3/8: Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (pp.194-198; 199-211);
- R 3/10: Herbert Marcuse, Preface to *Eros and Civilization* (pp. 224-226; 227-234);
- M 3/14: **LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH GUARANTEED W**
- T 3/15: Hannah Arendt, Preface to *Between Past and Future* (pp. 275-277; 278-285);
- R 3/17: Critical Theory continued;
- 3/22; 3/24: No Class (Spring Recess)
- T 3/29: **MIDTERM EXAM**

POSTSTRUCTURALISM, POSTMODERNISM, AND DECONSTRUCTION

- R 3/31: Michel Foucault, The Discourse on Language (pp. 336-338; 339-360);
- T 4/5: Roland Barthes, Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France (pp.361-363; 364-377);
- R 4/7: Poststructuralism continued;
- T 4/12: Jean-François Lyotard, Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism? (pp. 425-427; 428-437);
- R 4/14: Postmodernism continued;
- T 4/19: Jacques Derrida, Différence (pp. 438-440; 441-464);
- R 4/21: Deconstruction continued;

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

- T 4/26: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex* (pp.242-253);

PAPER DUE

R 4/28: Beauvoir continued;

T 5/3: Luce Irigaray, from *The Sex Which Is Not One* (pp. 411-412; 413-424);

R 5/5: Irigaray continued;

T 5/10: **FINAL EXAM**