History of Philosophy

Phil 26 • Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. David Corner
Office: MND 3014
Office Hours: M 3:00-3:30, T 12:15-1:30, W 11:00-11:45
Office Phone: 278-6970
Voicemail: 572-6474
Philosophy Department: 278-6424; 278-5364 (fax)
Email: dcorner@csus.edu
Web: http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/cornerd

Texts

An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy, Anthony Kenny
Additional readings will be available online

Course Description

Introduction to the history of philosophy, emphasizing such themes as the foundations of knowledge, the nature of reality, the basis of a good life and a just society, the existence of God, and the nature of self, and tracing the development of these themes from antiquity to the modern period. This course satisfies GE Area C1: World Civilizations.

This course will have the following emphasis:

From Antiquity

• Philosophical concerns raised in the Greek and Near Eastern cultural regions in the 6th to 4th centuries BCE, when mythological worldviews began to lose their authority.
• Responses and arguments of the early Greeks to the newly-raised cosmological and religious questions
• Plato’s philosophical arguments regarding knowledge and morality;
• Aristotle’s ‘new scientific method’ as the proper method of answering philosophical questions, particularly in regard to his system of physics, and his ethics.

From the Modern Period

• The need for a new, post-Aristotelian philosophy in light of the New Science. We will take an especially close look at Descartes in this regard.
• The inquiry into the possibility of knowledge— and particularly, knowledge of the external world— emphasizing the efforts of Descartes, Hume, and Kant

Course Objectives

Students will be expected to:

• Understand how philosophical questions about the nature of the mind, the existence of a divine being, and the trustworthiness of human perception are answered, and
those answers criticized and defended by a representative sample of important Western philosophers;
• State clearly the claims made by those philosophers and distinguish them from each other;
• Develop an appreciation for the ways in which the answers to philosophical questions influence, and are influenced by, the historical situation;
• Grasp the philosophers’ arguments for their claims, and the methods of philosophical argumentation generally;
• Maintain and defend with reasons a variety of one’s own claims concerning facets of each philosopher’s position.

This course satisfies GE area C1; requirements for this area are given at:
http://www.csus.edu/acaf/Portfolios/GE/geareaC1.stm

COURSE GRADE
A basic requirement for passing this course is that the student make an evident attempt to complete all of the assignments listed below. Assuming this requirement is met, the following cutoff scheme represents the maximum course total required for each letter grade. Target scores for the individual assignments are also provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Clicker</th>
<th>Online Quizzes</th>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Final</th>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<td>200</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The instructor will be following the Philosophy Department’s grade definitions; for a detailed description of these grading criteria please see

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS
Students taking the course under the Conventional Option:

In-Class Quizzes (300 points): Students should expect a quiz to be given each day in class. (There may be rare exceptions.) Quiz questions will normally be interspersed with the lecture and responses will be given via clicker. Some questions may cover a reading assignment and some may be review of a previous lecture; others may deal with online instruction. Some questions may be aimed at polling the class regarding their philosophical views; for these, no answer will be scored as incorrect.

It is your responsibility to insure that you have a working clicker- your own- with you in class. There will be no makeups for quizzes missed either as a result of absence or a
missing or malfunctioning clicker. In order to accommodate such problems, I will add a bonus equal to 15% of the total possible clicker points. This bonus will not allow your clicker score to exceed the maximum possible number of correct in-class clicks - i.e. it will not work to give you extra credit.

I will convert clicker points to course points by using a conversion factor, which will be 300 / the total possible clicker points. Your course points will then be calculated by multiplying your clicker total by this conversion factor. For example: Suppose there are 160 possible clicker points. This means each student will receive a 24 point clicker bonus (160 x 0.15). The conversion factor will be 300/160, or 1.875. Suppose Sally earns 150 clicker points (including her 24 point bonus). I multiply Sally's score of 150 by 1.875, which gives her 281 course points.

It is a requirement of this course that you register your clicker by the end of the first week of classes. You cannot get credit for your in-class quizzes or exams if you do not register your clicker. Should there be any unregistered clickers at the end of the semester, I will delete their scores.

**Exams** will consist of 20-30 multiple choice questions, and two short answer questions - responses to the latter should be about one page in length (no more). The final will not be cumulative. All writing will involve the critical appraisal of philosophical argumentation, and will be evaluated for proper handling of philosophical concepts presented in the course as well as for mastery of the course material. For an explanation of what is involved in philosophical writing, see the Philosophy Department's writing guidelines at [http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/writing.htm](http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/writing.htm).

**Online Quizzes:** There will be online quizzes designed to test your mastery of the course material and prepare you for your exams. You will be allowed to retake each quiz just once; SacCT will record your latest score. If your final score is not your best, I won't correct this.

Please be sure that you have received credit for each quiz before the quiz closes. Leave yourself enough time so that, if your quiz scores are not being recorded, you can get assistance from the SacCT help desk. I will not reopen quizzes or add quiz credit retroactively to students who complain, after the quiz has closed, that they did not receive proper credit.

To calculate your course grade, I will create a conversion factor for your online quiz points as outlined above for the clicker quizzes: The conversion factor in this case will be 200 / the total possible online quiz points.

Once a quiz has closed, it will not be reopened unless there are documented problems with SacCT (i.e. on the University side) during the last 24 hours before the quiz closes. Please note that this is very rare. If you encounter difficulties, please check the log of service interruptions at [http://www.csus.edu/webct/serverstatus.stm](http://www.csus.edu/webct/serverstatus.stm). If there has been no unexpected service interruption, please do not ask me to reopen a quiz.

I may occasionally give you some rough indication, in class, of when a quiz is likely to open or close. However, please understand that it will always be your responsibility to know, by checking online, precisely when each quiz closes. This information is readily available on SacCT. You are required to check on closing times at least once each week, on the weekend. Many (though not all) quizzes will close on Monday nights, before our Tuesday class session.
There is a Blackboard app for iPhone, and possibly for other platforms as well, that will alert you to new content, which includes the opening of new quizzes.

**Makeup Quizzes:** There are none. This applies to all quizzes, both on line and in-class. If you are using a clicker, please be sure your clicker is functioning properly before each class session; you may want to keep a spare set of batteries with you. You are strongly advised to finish all online quizzes as soon as possible after they open, and in all cases at least 24 hours prior to their closing time, and to insure that you have properly submitted your quiz answers and received credit for them. Problems should be directed to the SacCT service desk at 278-7337.

**Online Instruction:** Some of the instruction for this course may be given online. Students will need to have a reliable way of accessing Blackboard.

**Disability Accommodation:** If you have a documented disability and require accommodation with assignments, exams, or note-taking etc. please see the instructor by the end of the third week of class. Also, be sure to consult with Services for Students with Disabilities in Lassen Hall to see what campus services are available to you.

**Testing Center:** If you take your final exam in the testing center, please insure that it will be returned to the Philosophy Department before I have given my last final and I leave campus for the semester.

**Extra Credit/Participation:** Class participation is strongly encouraged and may earn you extra credit. You may participate by asking or answering questions in the studio classroom, posting to discussion boards on SacCT, or by coming to office hours. Normally there will be a 40 point maximum for extra credit, but this limit may be extended in recognition of outstanding effort or exceptional mastery of the course material. No other form of extra credit will be offered.

**Missed Exams:** If you are going to miss an exam, please contact me soon as possible. Make-ups for missed midterms may be given during the final exam period. There will be a penalty equal to 20% of the points possible on the exam unless you are able to document serious and compelling reasons for missing the exam. There are no exceptions to the requirement for documentation- not even for funerals. Students who miss the final exam, and who do not schedule a makeup with me or arrange to take an incomplete, will receive a grade of WU.

**Withdrawal from the course:** Please be aware of drop deadlines; as the term progresses it becomes harder to withdraw from the course. After the close of online withdrawals, you will be asked to explain to me, my department chair, and the University administration why you did not drop the course before the previous deadline passed, and if your explanation is not satisfactory your petition to drop will be denied, resulting in a grade of “WU” (unauthorized incomplete), which counts as an F on your transcript. If you do not complete the course, but do not formally withdraw from it, you will receive a grade of “WU.”

**Incompletes** will be granted only when circumstances beyond a student's control prevent them from completing the course. Normally there will not be more than a single assignment outstanding; otherwise, withdrawal is the appropriate remedy. Incompletes will not be granted after a student has failed the course for nonattendance. Absent extenuating circumstances, arrangements for an incomplete must be made prior to the end of finals week. In all cases I will have to set up an incomplete contract which you must
accept online at least 48 hours before grades are due. If we are not able to set up an incomplete contract in a timely manner, you will receive a grade of WU.

**Disciplinary Matters**

Disruption of class will not be tolerated. Those who engage in impermissible behaviors risk course penalties, and may be dropped from the class. Impermissible behavior includes, though it is not limited to: Making comments in class without raising your hand to be recognized; talking or passing notes to other students, habitual tardiness or leaving early, texting, doing outside homework or reading during class time, and discourtesy to other students or to the instructor. Be sure that you are well rested enough to be attentive. Please turn off your pager or cell phone before class begins.

**Academic Dishonesty:** This usually involves using unauthorized notes during an exam or plagiarism, which is presenting the work of someone else—whether copied or paraphrased—as one’s own. When material is copied without use of quotation marks, plagiarism is presumed. Please understand that it is not enough simply to reword material you find online to avoid the charge of plagiarism. You are responsible for what you turn in; check to be sure all appropriate citations are included in your paper. Those who permit others to cheat are considered accomplices and thus guilty of plagiarism themselves. If unauthorized notes are found to be accessible to you during an exam, you will be presumed to be using them.

You must not use, or even handle, anyone else’s clicker after the start of lecture. This will be considered cheating.

Please see [http://www.csus.edu/UMANUAL/student/UMA00150.htm](http://www.csus.edu/UMANUAL/student/UMA00150.htm) for the University’s policies regarding academic dishonesty. The library also maintains a very useful page on plagiarism at [http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353](http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353).

Anyone caught cheating will lose credit for the assignment on which they cheated, with no possibility of make-up. The minimum penalty will be 150 points, which is likely to drop the offender 1-2 letter grades in the course. If your clicker is used while you are not in attendance, the penalty will be 150 points against you as well as the person who uses your clicker on your behalf. All cases of cheating will be reported to the Administration.

**Outside Sources:** Students sometimes try to use material from outside sources on their course assignments, when they find that their notes are inadequate—perhaps because they were not attentive during lecture, did not understand the lecture and did not ask for help, did not do the required reading, or were simply absent. If you consult outside sources you should indicate the source of your material in your work. You are strongly advised to check these sources with me, as many (e.g. Wikipedia) are unreliable and not satisfactory for scholarly purposes. Students sometimes fail their assignments when they rely on such dubious sources.

**Laptop Use:** Laptops, tablets, and smart phones may not be used during lecture. Exceptions will be made only to accommodate disability.