History of Philosophy

*Phil 26  •  Spring 2015*

Instructor:  Dr. David Corner  
Office:  MND 3014  
Office Hours:  T 12-12:30, 3-3:30; W 1:30-3  
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

Course Materials

*An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy,* Anthony Kenny  
Turning Technologies model QT clicker. (The Turning NXT is compatible.)

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;
- 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></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Clicker Quizzes</th>
<th>Online Quizzes</th>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>600</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructor will be following the Philosophy Department’s grade definitions; for a detailed description of these grading criteria please see http://www.csus.edu/phil/req/grading.htm.

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**In-Class Quizzes (400 points):** Students should expect a quiz to be given each day in class. 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 using a conversion factor, which will be 400 / 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 500 possible clicker points. The conversion factor would be 400/500, or 0.8. Suppose Sally has 450 points (including her bonus). Sally will receive 360 points as her clicker score (450 x 0.8).

It is a requirement of this course that you register your clicker by the end of the first week of classes. If you have not registered your clicker by the end of the second week, you will lose credit for any quizzes you have taken during the first two weeks, and you will not receive credit for any quizzes after that until your clicker is registered.

It is your responsibility to check your clicker scores online to insure that your clicker has been properly registered and you are getting the appropriate credit for your clicker quizzes. Please notify me right away of any problem you encounter in registering your clicker.

**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.

**Online Quizzes:** There will be online quizzes designed to test your mastery of the course material, with an emphasis on material given for online instruction. 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 100 / 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. If there has been no unexpected service interruption, please do not ask me to reopen a quiz.

**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 disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services to Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

**Testing Center:** If you take your final exam in the testing center, please insure that you take it early enough for it to be returned to me by the end of finals week.

**Extra Credit/Participation:** Class participation is strongly encouraged and may earn you extra credit. You may participate by asking or answering questions in the classroom, or by coming to office hours. Normally there will be a 40 point maximum for this extra credit, but this limit may be extended in recognition of outstanding effort or exceptional mastery of the course material. You may also be offered extra credit of up to 15 points for participating in instructor evaluations. 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.

**Withdrawal from the course:** Please be mindful of drop deadlines. After the end of the second week of classes, you will be asked to justify any request to withdraw, and if your explanation is not satisfactory your petition to drop will be denied, resulting in a grade of WU, which counts as an F on your transcript.

**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. Absent emergency 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.

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

**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 discovered 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 review the University’s policies regarding academic dishonesty. The library also maintains a very useful page on plagiarism.
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 for further action.

**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 therefore completely unsatisfactory for scholarly purposes. Students sometimes fail their assignments when they rely on such dubious sources.

I recommend, as a source for background information, the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](http://www.encyclopedia.com). Articles in the IEP, unlike those in Wikipedia, are reviewed for accuracy by people who know something about the subject matter.