PL 00501

Introduction to Basic Problems of Philosophy
Summer 2013
3 Credits

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Office Hours: By appointment, before or after class
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Schedule (class times and day(s)): T/TH 6:15-9:15pm
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Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a worldview that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the problems and procedures of the Western philosophical tradition. Examines selected works of such key thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Descartes, Locke and Rousseau.

Course Objectives

1. The student will learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
2. The student will acquire an interest in learning more by asking his/her own questions and seeking answers. The course itself is organized around basic,
perennial questions asked in philosophy.

3. The student will develop skills in expressing himself/herself orally and in writing. Each class will include a discussion/presentation component and the exams will consist of written essays.

4. The student will demonstrate competence across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in philosophy.

5. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to philosophy as demonstrated by the last part of the course.

Grading

(1) Class preparedness & active participation (20% of the final grade): that is to say, careful reading of the assignments, and prepared questions and comments for class discussion.

(2) One written mid-term exam (40% of the final grade) consisting of one short essay question and some short answer questions.

(3) One written final exam (40% of the final grade) consisting of one short essay question and some short answer questions.

\textit{Summer Grading System}

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C-. (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D-. (0.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their summer grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

\textit{Text(s)/Readings (Required)}


2) Plato, \textit{Five Dialogues} (Indianapolis: Hackett)
Text(s)/Readings (Recommended)

1) Plato, The Republic (Oxford University Press)
2) Francois Dastur, How Are We to Confront Death? An Introduction to Philosophy (Fordham University Press 2013)
3) Thomas Nagel, What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy (Oxford University Press 1987)

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is
still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the Summer Session Office at 617-552-3800 for consultation.

**Deadlines**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.

**Course Assignments**

On average, it is expected that students will work out of class for a minimum of 2 hours per week for every hour of instructional time, that means a total of roughly 12 hours of homework (reading, preparing questions, watching videos, listening to podcasts, etc.) per week.

Students are expected to complete the following out of class course assignments:

**Course Syllabus**

**WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?**

T May 14th
Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 1-3 (p. 1-25)
Plato, Apology
Th May 16th

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 4-5 (p. 26-45)

WHAT IS REAL?
T May 21st

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 8-9 (p. 74-100)
Plato, Phaedo
Plato, The Republic – Book IX
Th May 23rd

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 10-11 (p. 101-131)
T May 28th

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 12-13 (p. 132-164)
Dan Zahavi, The Experiential Self: Objections and Clarifications (Journal Article)
T June 4th
1) Mid-term exam in class
2) Discussion session

HOW DO WE KNOW?
Th June 6th

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 14-16 (p. 165-200)
Plato, Meno

T June 11th
Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 17 (p. 201-217)
Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Selection

WHAT OUGHT WE TO DO?
Th June 13th
Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 19-21 (p. 239-277)
Plato, Republic (Selection)

T       June 18th

Fundamentals of Philosophy: Ch. 22-24 (p. 278-315)

Th      June 20th

Final Exam in Class