

FUNDAMENTALS OF PHILOSOPHY

(PHILOSOPHY 2010)

Spring Semester, 2010

- Instructor:*** ***Ray Peace***
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- Office Hours:*** ***2:45-3:10 Tue. and Thurs; and by appointment***
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- Phone:*** ***333-7432 or 333-5949***
- Required text:*** ***Archetypes of Wisdom, by Douglas Soccio, 7th edition***

Welcome to the class. Please keep this sheet and be aware of the information on it, as the semester progresses.

The Course Objectives and Goals are to:

1. Think more critically and carefully about key issues and perspectives based upon our examination of various approaches to philosophy from ancient, modern, and contemporary sources and traditions;
2. Discuss influential approaches to central questions regarding ethics, knowledge, existence, and other areas of philosophy;
3. Apply critical and comparative reasoning principles to a variety of philosophical problems and contexts;
4. Consider the issues of truth and relevance in relation to alternative philosophical paradigms and conflicting philosophical stances;
5. Examine disparate philosophical viewpoints in relation to your own emerging or developing perspectives, with careful regard to their consistency and coherence;
6. Become more insightful regarding the history and development of philosophical thought, concerning key issues, movements, and contributors.

Grading:

Your overall grade will be based primarily on the average of the graded exercises (tests) and papers we will plan to have, plus a special Honors project, research paper, or exam.

There are no “makeup” tests, in case you happen to miss one. Instead, one grade will be “dropped”, when the averages are figured. For example, if we have 6 major grades (tests, papers, etc.), you would add the total points together and divide that total by 5, to figure your average. Your letter grade would be based on a “straight scale” (90 or above is an A, 80-89 is a B, etc.)

You are encouraged to take every test and quiz, and to do all the assignments, thereby giving yourself a better opportunity on your grade. Your attendance is a factor in your grade (see below). Your participation is also a factor in your grade, so you are encouraged to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion. The “final” test usually covers only the materials after the preceding test. There is a penalty for any work that is turned in after the announced due date.

Attendance:

2 points will be added to your average for perfect attendance; 1 point for missing one or two days. After 3 days, 1 point for each day missed will be taken off your total average.

Be punctual, attentive, and courteous, and try to contribute to class discussion. Some of the issues we examine may be controversial for some of us—so be respectful of opinions and viewpoints that may differ from your own.

Make sure cell phones or similar items are turned off prior to classtime, or avoid bringing them to class. Also, make yourself familiar with the VSU attendance policy.

Regarding excuses for absences: for official absences, retain your documented excuses until the announced day near the end of the semester, when you can turn them into the instructor; accordingly, there is no need for e-mails or phone calls from students concerning these prior to that day.

Roll:

Sign your name legibly (do not print). It is your duty to sign the roll each day before you leave the class room. If initially the roll gets by you, remember to sign it before you leave. If you arrive late or leave early, indicate which and the time on the roll sheet.

Assignments:

Check the assignment sheet listing in BlazeView.

Recommended approach to assigned readings:

Read the selection prior to class and be ready to discuss it; after class check back through the selection in conjunction with notes taken in class. It is best to keep up on a daily basis, and to review the notes you take in class the same day they are given, making corrections and adding clarifications. Do not “cram”: it is best to review the notes regularly prior to the exams.

Students with Special Needs:

If you are a student with a documented disability that might require classroom accommodations or modifications, you should contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities (here's a link: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>). The Access Office office is in Farber Hall (former Student Health building). The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty). Also, inform your instructors about this need at the beginning of the semester. .

Other Links: You can access many philosophy-related websites by using this [link to the homepage of the Department of Philosophy at Valdosta State University](#)

Course Evaluations: Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. The online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) evaluation forms can be accessed via BANNER and completed in a period of time to be announced near the end of the semester. You will only complete evaluations online for the classes that are part of the online project; other classes may still require you to complete a scantron form in class. Please take the time to complete this important evaluation during the designated period. If you do not do so, you may not be able to access the final grade for this class until a later time.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (course specific): By the end of the semester,

1. You will be able to understand the distinctions among the various sub-fields of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics as comprising basic branches of the discipline.
2. You will be able to recognize how philosophical inquiry applies to 'real-world' circumstances and to individual reflection on the meaning of life.
3. You will become conversant with the history of philosophy. The course emphasizes Western philosophy in particular, including such significant developments as empiricism, materialism, idealism, rationalism, pragmatism, and existentialism.
4. You will be able to recognize and define different world views, adopting a reasonably viable one and justifying it in a philosophically informed way that emphasizes critical reasoning and argument.
5. You will be able to demonstrate the ability to discuss, in both oral and written discourse, the philosophical issues explored in the course.
6. You will be familiar with what academic philosophy is, and you will understand how it can be applied to daily life as well as specific careers.

Members of the faculty in Philosophy and Religious Studies have verified that these outcomes are in line with the outcomes of the course as it is taught at peer institutions in the State System of Georgia.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Major by enabling students better to

1. Incorporate philosophical positions in oral and written communications.
2. Critically outline and analyze a philosophical question.

Here are the Valdosta State University General Education Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of the society of the United States and its ideals.
2. Students will demonstrate cross-cultural perspectives and knowledge of other societies.
3. Students will use computer and information technology when appropriate.
4. Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening.
5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of scientific and mathematical principles and proficiency in laboratory practices.
6. Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultural heritages in the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences.
7. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written, and visual materials.
8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems.

[And here is a link to those outcomes on the VSU site.](#)

In this course we will emphasize #'s 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8.

