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PHILOSOPHY 101  
SECTION T2

INSTRUCTOR: COLENA SESANKER  
MEETING TIMES: MWF 1:00-1:50 KTRCC D107  
CONTACT INFO: csesanker@trcc.commnet.edu

TEXT: REASON AND RESPONSIBILITY 15<sup>th</sup> edition Feinberg & Shafer-Landau, ISBN# 9780495094920 +  
VARIOUS PROVIDED TEXTS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed as an introduction to various problems and methods of western analytic philosophy. We will apply these methods of evaluation to the following topics: The problem of evil, the rationality of belief in God, the problem of free will, the relationship between the mind and the brain, the possibility of perception of and genuine knowledge of the External World, causation and questions of selfhood and personal identity. Many of these questions will be familiar to you and the conclusions reached in this class will, most likely, further evolve after the end of the term.

OBJECTIVES:

To further refine of your own world view.  
To evaluate standard formulations of philosophical problems and some answers to these puzzles posed by historical thinkers.  
Most importantly, to master a method of approaching such problems which, ultimately, will make you a more precise and critical thinker.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

5 in-class position papers (10% each), participation including sporadic quizzes and written responses (5%), Midterm Exam (20%), Final exam (25%)

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:

If there are special circumstances which make it necessary for a student to make up an assignment at a time other than the date scheduled, please be sure to contact me by email or in person *before* the missed assignment so that special arrangements can be made. Make-up writing assignments must be completed within a week of the originally scheduled date. A doctor's note or excuse of equivalent importance must be provided in order to be allowed a make-up exam.

SCHEDULE (further modification likely)

Jan 24- Feb 7: **Introduction: What is Philosophy? & Problem of Induction**  
**An introduction to the problems and methods of Western Philosophy, Introduction to Arguments**  
Handout

**What is Causation?**

Wesley Salmon "An Encounter with David Hume"

*\*Assignment: in class position paper on topic of causation [10%]- fri Feb 7<sup>th</sup> .*

Feb 10-21: **\*\*[No classes Mon Feb 17<sup>th</sup>]\*\* What is free will? Do we have it?**

**Determinism and Free Will:** Paul Holbach "The Illusion of Free Will"

**Compatibilism:** A.J. Ayer "Freedom and Necessity"

**Freedom:** Robert Kane "Free Will: An Ancient Dispute, New Themes"  
Susan Wolf "Sanity and the Metaphysics of responsibility"

*Assignment: position paper on the topic of Free Will – Mon Feb 24<sup>th</sup>*

Feb 26-Mar 7: **Attempts to Prove the Existence of God**

**Ontological Proof** Anselm of Canterbury: The Ontological Argument

**Cosmological Proof** Samuel Clarke: A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument

**Teleological Proof** William Paley: The Argument from Design

*Assignment: Position Paper on the topic of Proofs of God's Existence-March 10<sup>th</sup>*

Mar 12:

Midterm Review

**MIDTERM: Friday March 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**\*\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*\***

Mar 24- 28<sup>th</sup>:

**Attempt to Disprove the Existence of God: The Problem of Evil**  
**Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of God?/ Is the Judeo-Christian conception of goodness coherent?**  
Fyodor Dostoevsky "Rebellion"  
B.C. Johnson "God and the Problem of Evil"  
Richard Swinburne "Why God Allows Evil"

March 31<sup>st</sup>- April 4<sup>th</sup>

**Is belief in God intellectually responsible?**

W.K. Clifford "The Ethics of Belief"  
William James "The Will To Believe"

*Assignment: Position paper on the Ethics of belief in God- April 7<sup>th</sup>*

April 9<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup>

(No classes April 18<sup>th</sup> )

**The Real World and our Knowledge of it**

What is knowledge? What can we know about the world around us? How do we know it? What then?

Rene Descartes Meditations on first Philosophy. Meditations 1-3  
John Locke The causal theory of perception  
George Berkeley Of the Principle of Human Knowledge

April 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>

**Skepticism and Pragmatic responses to it**

John Pollock Brain in a Vat  
G.E. Moore Proof of an External World

*Assignment: In class position paper on Skepticism and the External World- April 28<sup>th</sup>*

April 30<sup>th</sup>- May 9<sup>th</sup>

**Comparing Eastern and Western conceptions of self...**

Who/what are we, really? How do we continue to be the same person over time?  
What does that mean for the way we ought to live our lives?  
Descartes' Meditations p. 149-152; 173  
Excerpts from the Dhammapada, The Upanishads, Chuang Tzu  
**(Handouts)**

May 12 & 14<sup>th</sup>

TBD

Wrap up/Review/ Possible new topic

May 16<sup>th</sup> :

Review Session

**FINAL: Mon May 19<sup>th</sup>**