PHILOSOPHY 101 SECTION T2

INSTRUCTOR: COLENA SESANKER

MEETING TIMES: MWF 1:00-1:50 KTRCC D109 CONTACT INFO: csesanker@trcc.commnet.edu

TEXT: REASON AND RESPONSIBILTY 14th 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 then 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 (subject to further modification)

Aug 27- Sept 5: 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 sept 7.

Sept 10-26: What is free will? Do we have it?

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

Ted Honderich "A defense of Hard Determinism"

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

Walter T. Stace "The Problem of Free Will"

Freedom: Robert Kane "Free Will: An Ancient Dispute, New Themes"

Susan Wolf "the importance of Free Will" (handout)

Assignment: position paper on the topic of Free Will – Sept 28th

Oct 1-10th: Attempts to Prove the Existence of God

Ontological Proof Cosmological Proof Teleological Proof

Assignment: Position Paper on the topic of Proofs of God's Existence-Oct 12th

Oct 15-19th

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" J.L. Mackie "Evil and Omnipotence" (handout)

MIDTERM: MONDAY OCT 22

Oct 24-31st

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- Nov 2nd

Nov 5th-16th

The Real World and our Knowledge of it

(COLLEGE CLOSED MON NOV 12) 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 John Locke The causal theory of perception George Berkeley Of the Principle of Human Knowledge

Skepticism and Pragmatic responses to it

John Pollock Brain in a Vat

G.E. Moore Proof of an External World

(NO CLASS WEEK OF NOV 19-23)

Assignment: In class position paper on Skepticism and the External World- Nov 28

Nov 30-Dec 7 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)

Dec 10-12

TBD

Wrap up/Review/ Possible new topic

Dec 14th: Review Session

FINAL: Monday Dec 17th