

PHL 101: Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2008

Dr. Deborah Heikes
334 Morton Hall
824-2335

Office Hours: 2:15-3:45MW
12:30-2:15Tues. & by appt.
Email: heikesd@uah.edu

www.uah.edu/colleges/liberal/philosophy/heikes/101.html

Course Texts:

Required: Online course pack (<http://www.uah.edu/colleges/liberal/philosophy/heikes/101/101F07.pdf>), plus:

Articles on Reserve in the Library

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, selections
Willard Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (also available online)
Thomas Kuhn, "Objectivity, Value Judgments, and Theory Choice"
Philip Kitcher, "Believing Where We Cannot Prove"
Elizabeth Anderson, "Uses of Value Judgments in Science" (also available online)

Course Goals:

(1) To learn what philosophy is. This will involve becoming familiar with some traditional philosophical issues, writings, and argumentative patterns through careful reading, analysis, and discussion.

(2) To become familiar with the content of our readings on these issues. Your reading should be done carefully, critically, and analytically. You should seek to understand each philosopher's claims and his or her reasons for these claims, and you should evaluate those claims and reasons.

(3) To come to terms with conflicting claims and the arguments which support these claims. This will involve your thinking critically about the claims each author makes and your assessing the reasons the author gives in support of his or her position.

(4) To consider your own views on each of the issues we discuss and your reasons for adopting the position that you do. You are encouraged to develop your own independent thoughts about these issues, but you will need to examine why you hold this view. You will need to ask yourself not only what reasons you have for thinking your view is correct but also what makes you think these reasons are good reasons.

Requirements:

- Exams:**
- There will be five exams, including the final. Exams will come at the end of each section of the course.
 - I will drop the lowest grade from your first four exams. The average of your three remaining in class exam grades will be worth 70% of your final grade. The final exam will be 30% of your final grade. In order to pass the course, you must take the final exam.
 - The exams will include some combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The format and date of each exam will be announced in class at least one week prior to the exam date.
 - The last exam will take place during the scheduled time for the final exam, and it may be comprehensive.

Expectations and Assessment:

Philosophy is a discipline that emphasizes clarity of thought and expression. Philosophy also demands reasons for one's conclusions. As a result, the assignments in this course will ask you to demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate philosophical ideas and to formulate arguments for your own philosophical conclusions. This will require you to learn to think critically about the issues and authors we cover.

The exams in this course will consist of some combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions are designed to test your understanding of and ability to explain the central ideas of the theories we discuss. The essay questions will ask you to critically think about those ideas and to defend your own ideas or interpretation of the text. You will be expected to clearly articulate philosophical problems and to critically respond to the arguments given by the philosophers we read. You need not agree with everything you read (in fact, many of the arguments we read will be mutually inconsistent), but you should be able to respond intelligently about why you agree or disagree with the arguments.

Tentative Course Outline: (Due dates for the readings will be announced in class.)

*Unless otherwise stated, all page numbers are from the course pack.

I. Plato: An Introduction to Philosophy (Weeks 1-2)

A. Plato, *Euthyphro* (pp. 2-17)

B. Plato, *Apology* (pp. 18-33)

EXAM

II. The Nature of Justice (Weeks 3-4)

- A. Plato, *The Crito* (pp. 34-43)
- B. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, selections (on reserve)

EXAM

III. Ethical Theories (Weeks 4-7)

- A. John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (pp. 47-57)
- B. Immanuel Kant "Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals" (pp. 58-67)
- C. Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics" (pp. 68-78)

EXAM

IV. Theory of Knowledge (Weeks 8-11)

- A. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (pp. 79-89)
- B. John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding (pp. 90-96)
- C. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 97-104)
- D. W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," selections (on reserve)

EXAM

V. Philosophy of Science (Weeks 12-15)

- A. Thomas Kuhn, *Essential Tension*, selections (on reserve)
- B. Philip Kitcher, *Abusing Science*, selections (on reserve)
- C. Elizabeth Anderson, "Uses of Value Judgments in Science" (on reserve or available online)

FINAL EXAM

Miscellaneous Information:

- **Turn off all beepers, cellular phones, etc. before class.**
- Class attendance and participation is strongly advised. I will not assume that you will come to class with a full understanding of the material, but I do expect you to have informed questions. Reading philosophy can be difficult and quite demanding. Most likely, you will need to read each selection at least twice and to take notes on what you read.
- I **strongly** discourage make-up exams. Excluding extraordinary circumstances, you should make such requests before the day of the exam. Normally, serious illness is the only acceptable rationale. Late papers will also be downgraded.
- Any student who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss class requirements.
- Academic misconduct (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will result in no credit for the assignment in question. Depending on the circumstances, I may also refer cases of academic misconduct to the University Judicial Board. Keep in mind that plagiarism, in general, is using someone else's words or ideas as your own (even if you paraphrase those words or ideas you must credit the original author). For further definition see the *UAH Student Handbook*.
- UAH is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic honesty as defined in the Student Handbook (7.III.A). The instructor reserves the right to utilize electronic means to help prevent plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, as well as additional information about the company, are described at www.uah.edu/library/turnitin.

Extra Credit Option: Coming to class is important to doing well in this course. So, to encourage class attendance, I will offer every student who misses three or fewer classes 2 points on their *final course average*, or four or fewer classes, 1 point on their *final course average*. (I will have a sign in sheet, and will check signatures. If I find that someone has signed in for you on a day you are absent, both you and the person who signed in for you will lose the opportunity for the 2 points and may be subject to university judicial action).

Hints for reading philosophy:

One purpose of this course is to strengthen your ability to understand and evaluate what you read. Since philosophical literature tends to be more dense, and hence more difficult to read, than most other types of literature, you will find that preparing notes will assist you in understanding and evaluating the readings. When preparing notes you should focus on: (1) basic terms and definitions, (2) fundamental thesis(es), (3) evidence, argument, or justification for the view the author is proposing, (4) basic transitions in the exposition (from one theme to another, from argument to conclusion, introductions and summaries). In order to evaluate what you have read and outlined, you may want to record your responses to what you read (questions, comments, evaluation or elaboration of ideas, comparison to other authors). You may also wish to indicate what assumptions the author is making. Keep in mind that the purpose of taking notes is to guide you in mastering the material and critically assessing the author's views.