

PHILOSOPHY: BASIC QUESTIONS

Spring 2007

650:021

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 12:00-1:00

and by appointment

(Feel free to either stop by or phone during office hours.)

email: margaret.holland@uni.edu

(When writing to me, please use your UNI e-mail and include the course title in the subject line.)

Professor Margaret Holland

Office: Baker 146

Office Phone: 273-5975

Department of Philosophy and

Religion - Baker 135

Department phone: 273-6221

Liberal Arts Core:

Philosophy: Basic Questions is one of the courses that constitute the **Liberal Arts Core** curriculum (often referred to on campus as the **LAC**). Traditionally, liberal arts courses provide important basic knowledge and develop necessary intellectual skills, such as reasoning and judgment, as opposed to purely work-related skills. In the Liberal Arts Core, we learn about ourselves and our culture, as well as about those who live in other cultures. The Liberal Arts Core gives students an opportunity to learn to think and communicate clearly; to work cooperatively in teams; to know how to find information and evaluate it; to solve problems; to appreciate the fine arts; to analyze and make arguments; to make ethical decisions, to contribute to civic and political life; to understand religious, social, cultural, and individual differences; to use and evaluate science and technology; to develop a love of life-long learning; and to lead productive lives that are rich and meaningful. The courses in the Liberal Arts Core may not be related directly to students' career goals, rather they seek to help students become educated persons.

Course Description:

Philosophy grows out of the human capacity for critical reflection. As human beings we are capable of reflecting on our beliefs, activities and ways of life. We can ask "Why?" and attempt to explain adequately, or change our beliefs and practices. Philosophy takes as its subject matter, and critically examines, all human activities and beliefs. It asks questions about the fundamental nature of reality, knowledge, goodness and beauty.

Western philosophy began in ancient Greece with thinkers who investigated nature and the physical world. Later thinkers directed their attention to human life and conduct. They then went on to examine questions about the nature of reality, the foundations of knowledge, politics and moral value.

In this course students will have the opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge of the concerns and methods of the best in our philosophical heritage. We will focus on notable themes, as well as points of agreement and disagreement among various thinkers. My hope is that students will complete the course with an understanding of the philosophical tradition, and an appreciation for the activity of critical and reflective thinking.

Texts:

Plato

Apology

Hackett

Crito

John Stuart Mill

On Liberty

Cambridge

Descartes

Meditations on First Philosophy

Hackett

There may be supplementary reading to be purchased or copied.

You can find helpful links on my web pages: www.uni.edu/holland and

www.library.uni.edu/instruction/holland

Requirements:

- (1) Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings, as well as read all assignments. **If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact another student and to get the assignments and class-notes.** You need to make-up missed work before the next class.
- (2) There will be three tests during the term and a final exam. There will be **no make-up tests** unless appropriate documentation of a legitimate reason for missing the test is provided to the instructor. Legitimate reasons for missing a test are limited to things such as: jury duty, accident, illness. All non-emergency requests for make-up tests must be given to the instructor in writing at least two weeks prior to the test date. Emergency requests for make-up tests must be made (either on the phone or through e-mail) no later than the morning of the test. If these requirements are met, the instructor may consider providing a make-up test.
- ** The use of personal electronic devices is prohibited in this class, with the exception of individuals who use them for handicapped purposes or students who have my permission. Please shut off all such devices before coming into the classroom.
- ** Please familiarize yourself with UNI's Academic Ethics Policies. These policies are in the student handbook, and they can be found on-line. Search "academic ethics" on UNI's home page and you will be directed to a number of sites that explain your responsibilities on this matter. UNI's policy states that cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and that an instructor may take further disciplinary action against any student who violates academic ethics. **In accordance with this policy, students who cheat or plagiarize will receive a grade of "F" for the entire course.**

Test Schedule and Grades:

February 1	- 18% of the grade
March 1	- 24% of the grade
April 5	- 28% of the grade
Final exam week	- 30% of the grade

Tests will consist primarily of essay questions and will be comprehensive.

Extra Credit Option:

Each student will be given the opportunity to do work for extra-credit. The extra-credit work will be worth up to five points. In order to do extra-credit work you must select a topic which is appropriate to the subject we are covering, research the topic, write a two page (typed) summary, and present the topic to the class. Appropriate topics include existentialism, Eastern philosophy, women and philosophy, philosophers we are not covering, philosophical views on justice, evil, etc. Topics must be approved by the instructor.

If you would like to do extra-credit work, you must notify the instructor no later than February 8. At that time you must hand in a two hundred word typed description of the topic you have selected. The instructor will assign presentation dates after receiving written descriptions. Reports should be about 10 minutes long. The two page summary will be due two weeks before the report. Points will be deducted for handing-in written summaries late.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodation due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodation through the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The ODS is located in 103 Student Health Center and the phone number is 273.2676 (Voice) or 273.3011 (TTY)