University of West Florida

Summer 2013

Introduction to Philosophy
Online Course
PHI 2010
Garrett Howard

Philosophy on line

Plugged in and wireless...

Free your mind!
University of West Florida
Summer 2013
Introduction to Philosophy
Online Course
PHI 2010

Instructor: Garrett Howard
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Office Hours: Monday: 9-10 and 2:30-3:30 and Wednesday: 9-10 and 2:30 – 5:30
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TEXT BOOK: THERE IS NO TEXT BOOK FOR THIS COURSE!!!! All required readings will be made available in the form of Adobe Acrobat documents on the course’s E Learning page. YAY! You have easily saved 100 bucks in text book costs!

Course Description:
This course will provide an introduction to Philosophy through an examination of Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics and the human condition.

Course Format: This course is entirely via the internet. From the course home page you will access all links for: assignments, chat sessions, discussion boards; and links to additional course material content and resources. The instructional modules, discussion boards and Essay Exams are designed to allow students to devise a schedule and a pace of study that will fit their personal schedule within a weekly time frame.

Discussion boards: This feature allows students to interact and share thoughts, questions and ideas in regard to the assigned reading materials and essay assignments. The primary goal of the discussion boards is to assist the student in building a basic understanding of the philosophical questions, concepts, problems and arguments encountered in the assigned readings and lecture material. In turn, this will provide the student with the knowledge and tools needed to engage in the essay exams.
Yes, that’s me… in my office… I’m the guy next to Gollum.

On Philosophy:
“While philosophy may diminish our feelings of certainty as to what things are, it greatly increases our knowledge as to what they may be; it removes the somewhat arrogant dogmatism of those who have never traveled into the region of liberating doubt, and it keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar light.” ----Bertrand Russell

This course hopes to encourage a sense of wonder with respect to life, truth and existence; and together we can share that journey known as philosophy.
---Garrett Howard
Week # 1

An Introduction to Online Instruction

Important Course Information & Online orientation.

In the first week of the semester, we will take the time to become acquainted with the course web site and online instruction.
In this portion of the course, we will discover that doing philosophy begins with the art of asking questions about life and the world...
In this section, students will be encouraged to ask fundamental questions about the nature of human knowledge. How do we know when something is real or true? How can we be certain about the things we think to be true? In addition, questions posed by the philosopher,

**Discussion Board 1**
Issues and questions regarding the nature of existence and reality will be raised. What is real? Many philosophical questions regarding the nature of reality will be focused on a discussion of Brian Greene’s series, the Fabric of the Cosmos.

**Discussion Board 2**

**Essay Exam on Epistemology and metaphysics is assigned**
Questions regarding the nature of mind will be raised. What is a mind? What is consciousness? What are the metaphysical foundations of mind?
Discussion Board 3
Personal Identity

Philosophical issues and questions regarding the nature of self identity will be raised.
What does it mean for a person to say: “I know myself”?  
How does a person build and maintain a notion of self identity?  
Is the self composed of a substance that endures over time?  
Can we really know who we are?  
Is the self real?  
Is our notion of self identity a fictional construct?

Discussion Board 4
Grades: The grade in this course is determined on the basis of discussion board participation, and essay exams.

(1) Discussion Boards 1, 2, 3 and 4: 600 points

(2) Essay Exam: Epistemology and Metaphysics
   Will be assigned: TBA
   Due date: TBA
   200 points

(3) Essay Exam: Philosophy of Mind and Personal Identity
   Will be assigned: TBA
   Due Date: TBA
   200 points

(4) Course points total: 1000 points
Grade Scale:  
A  95-100  
A-  90-94  
B+  88-89  
B   80-87  
B-  78-79  
C+  76-77  
C   70-75  
C-  68-69  
D+  66-67  
D   60-65  
F   00-59

**Discussion Board Participation:** Your activity on the discussion boards is what determines your participation grade. There will be on-going discussion associated with every subject area. You are expected to read the appropriate material in the text, and answer each question on the discussion board associated with that material. The minimum expectations for any subject area are: answer each question posed, read the responses of other students, post a response to at least one other student, engage in rational discourse. The discussion boards are a tool for enhancing the knowledge of all by inviting every student to share their insights. Students should feel free to ask questions about concepts you may not understand. All postings should be respectful in tone and rational in content.

**Essay Exams:**

**Grading Criteria for the essay Exams**

**Form:**

(1) Unity of thought and Coherence of Expression.  
(2) Sentence and paragraph variety, grammar and spelling.

**Content:**

(1) **Reporting** is a concise demonstration of your acquaintance with the material. (Minimum requirement for a “C”).  
(2) **Analysis** is the ability to compare, contrast, or critically evaluate the material. (Minimum requirement for a “B”).  
(3) **Synthesis** is a demonstration of your ability to adequately develop your thesis (or main idea), and to reach a sound conclusion. (Minimum requirement for an “A”).

**EMAIL:** I check my e-mail daily, Monday thru Friday, and will respond within 48 hours.

**To find the Withdrawal deadline** from an individual course or all courses for term; automatic grade of "W", please check the University’s academic calendar.