Introduction to Philosophy
MWF 10-11:05  MI 209

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Course Description
At some time or another, everyone wonders about the answers to certain puzzling questions: What is the meaning of existence? What is the best way to live? What defines our ethical responsibilities? Are we free, or are our actions determined by things outside our control? What are the limits of knowledge, and what is the nature of reality? Does God exist, and if so, why is there any evil in the world? In this course, we will read the works of various philosophers in the Western tradition and discuss the questions they raise, the answers they propose, and the arguments they use to justify their conclusions. Reflecting on their ways of thinking will help us to clarify our own ideas and to find out if they stand up to scrutiny.

Objectives
This course will be introductory in two senses: it will acquaint you with some of the perennial problems of philosophy and it will guide you through the activity of philosophical questioning. If you participate fully, you will not only be learning about philosophy, but doing philosophy.

What can you expect to learn in this course?
- How to read works of philosophy, understand philosophical concepts, and support your own answers to philosophical questions
- How to engage in philosophical discussion and debate
- How to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments, i.e., critical thinking and writing skills

Texts
Five Dialogues, Plato 9780872206335
They Say/I Say, 3rd edition, Graff and Birkenstein, eds. 9780393933611
Other articles available on Moodle

Assignments and Grading
Essays 80%
Weekly responses 10%
Contributions to discussion 10%

The main assignments are five take-home essays. The first three will each be 2-3 pages (500-750 words) long and worth 15% of your grade each, and the last two will each be 4-6 pages (1000-1500) long and worth 20% of your grade each. Essay assignments will be posted on Moodle one week before they are due. I encourage you to visit me outside of class to discuss your ideas and get feedback at any stage of the writing process. All essays should be posted to Moodle (https://moodle1617.beloit.edu/) by 5 pm on the day they are due. Late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade per 24 hours. No essays will be accepted more than 72 hours late.

Another 10% of your grade will be based on your weekly reading responses, to be posted on Moodle in advance of our discussion of each reading assignment. Reading responses should be at least 250 words long. I will post a prompt for each response at least 24 hours before class time, and you will have two or three chances each week to write a response. For full credit, response must be posted on Moodle no later than midnight the night before the text will be discussed in class. A response posted after that but before the end of the week will receive half credit. Otherwise, no make-up responses will be allowed.

Finally, 10% of your grade will be determined by the quality of your contributions to discussion. You will have opportunities every class to ask questions, raise objections, and test your understanding of the material and your own views with your classmates. My aim is for universal participation in discussion.
How can you succeed in this course?

- Do all the readings before class – this is the most basic requirement of the course: read every assignment carefully, take notes, and come to class with questions
- Be active in discussion – good discussions require broad participation, and participating in class discussion will deepen your learning
- Put time and energy into your writing – weekly reading responses help you process the material, and essays give you the opportunity both to demonstrate and to develop your understanding; good writing habits make writing less stressful and more enjoyable
- Communicate with me – in addition to raising questions in class, talk to me outside of class about whatever is on your mind; please let me know if you’re having problems so I can offer my help

Writing
One focal point of this course is the development of your critical thinking and writing skills. We will use They Say/I Say as a basis for in-class writing exercises, and each essay assignments will give you the chance to practice the “moves” discussed by the authors. During the first half of the semester, we will do writing exercises on Wednesdays; in the second half we will spend several Fridays on revision. As you work on the essays for this course, I encourage you to visit the Writing Center for assistance. It is open Sun.-Thurs., 3-10 pm, and you can make an appointment by calling 363-2162.

Attendance and Conduct
Attendance is mandatory. When you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out about the material that was covered and any assignments that were made or changed. I will excuse up to five absences with no questions asked, but each absence over five will reduce your final grade by one-third of a letter (that is, by a + or -). Ten or more absences will result in failing the course. If you arrive late to class, every three times will count as an absence. I will also penalize distracting behavior in class such as texting, talking, or sleeping. Disrupting class in these ways or others will lower your final grade according to my discretion. No laptops or other electronic devices may be used in class without prior permission.

Academic Honesty
Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s words or ideas as your own in a piece of writing. Any written work that is plagiarized will receive a zero and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students in accordance with Beloit’s academic honesty policy (www.beloit.edu/studentaffairs/policiesandhandbooks/). To avoid plagiarism, use quotation marks and cite your source for all direct quotations. Include a bibliographic reference for any source that you use, whether print or online (with the exception of Five Dialogues or First Philosophy, for which you may use in-text citations). The Writing Center website (www.beloit.edu/writingcenter/) has lots of good advice about writing with sources. If you have any questions about using and citing sources in your writing, feel free to ask me.

Special Considerations
If you have a disability and need accommodations, contact the Learning Enrichment and Disability Services Office located on the 2nd floor of Pearson (north side) by calling 363-2572 or emailing learning@beloit.edu. For accommodations in this class, please bring me an Access Letter from the Director of that office and then we will discuss how to meet your needs. Contact that office promptly; accommodations are not retroactive. Free peer tutoring is available for most classes. For a tutor, apply by going to Portal, clicking on the Student Life tab, and using the Tutoring Forms (on the left). If you do not seek accommodations but are concerned about your ability to do well in this course for any reason, just make an appointment with me and I’ll be glad to talk with you about it.

Office Hours
My office hours are Mon/Fri 12-1 and Tues 12-2. If these times don’t work for you, please make an appointment. I hope you will use my office hours to ask questions about the material, talk with me about the essays, and share your ideas. I also invite you to come to me with any problems you’re having in this course so we can address them. I want everyone in the class to succeed, and discussions outside of class are often one of the keys to success.
### Calendar

**Week 1**
- **Mon. 1/16**: Introduction
- **Wed. 1/18**: *First Philosophy* (1-14) and *They Say/I Say* (1-15)
- **Fri. 1/20**: Plato, *Euthyphro* (*Five Dialogues*, 1-20)

**Week 2**
- **Mon. 1/23**: Plato, *Apology* (21-44)
- **Wed. 1/25**: Plato, *Phaedo* (*Nine Dialogues*, 93-122) and *They Say/I Say* (163-166, 173-183)
- **Fri. 1/27**: Plato, continued (122-154)

#### The Existence of God (Philosophy of Religion)

**Week 3**
- **Mon. 1/30**: Anselm, *Proslogion* and Gaunilo, *Pro Insipiente* (*First Philosophy*, 15-32)
- **Wed. 2/1**: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (32-42) and *They Say/I Say* (19-41)
- **Fri. 2/3**: Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (43-58); **First essay due (5 pm)**

**Week 4**
- **Mon. 2/6**: Hume, continued (71-82)
- **Wed. 2/8**: Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence” (82-91) and *They Say/I Say* (42-51)
- **Fri. 2/10**: James, “The Will to Believe” (92-109)

#### Knowledge and Perception (Epistemology)

**Week 5**
- **Mon. 2/13**: Descartes, *Meditations* (111-128)
- **Wed. 2/15**: *Meditations*, continued (128-139) and *They Say/I Say* (55-77)
- **Fri. 2/17**: *Meditations*, continued (139-150); **Second essay due (5 pm)**

**Week 6**
- **Mon. 2/20**: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (150-167)
- **Wed. 2/22**: Berkeley, *Three Dialogues* (168-193) and *They Say/I Say* (78-91)
- **Fri. 2/24**: Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (193-214)

**Week 7**
- **Mon. 2/27**: Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (231-246)
- **Wed. 3/1**: Code, “Is the Sex of the Knower Epistemologically Significant?” (246-263) and *They Say/I Say* (92-101)
- **Fri. 3/3**: Code, continued; **Third essay due (5 pm)**

#### Midterm Break 3/4-3/12

#### Free Will and Responsibility (Metaphysics)

**Week 8**
- **Mon. 3/13**: Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (265-279)
- **Wed. 3/15**: James, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” (311-323)
- **Fri. 3/17**: *They Say/I Say* (105-120)

**Week 9**
- **Mon. 3/20**: Rée, *The Illusion of Free Will* (332-348)
- **Wed. 3/22**: Rée, continued
- **Fri. 3/24**: Advising Practicum – no class

**Week 10**
- **Mon. 3/27**: Campbell, *On Selfhood and Godhood* (349-362)
- **Wed. 3/29**: Campbell, continued
- **Fri. 3/31**: *They Say/I Say* (121-138)

**Week 11**
- **Mon. 4/3**: Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity” (363-370)
- **Wed. 4/5**: Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility (Moodle)
- **Fri. 4/7**: *They Say/I Say* (139-159)

#### Moral Theory (Ethics)

**Week 12**
- **Mon. 4/10**: Plato, *Republic* (393-409); **Fourth essay due (5 pm)**
- **Wed. 4/12**: International Symposium
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 4/14</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Nicomachean Ethics</em> (409-428)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
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<td>Mon. 4/17</td>
<td>Aristotle, continued</td>
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<td>Wed. 4/19</td>
<td>Spring Day – no class</td>
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<td>Fri. 4/21</td>
<td>Kant, <em>Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals</em> (428-446)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
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<td>Mon. 4/24</td>
<td>Kant, continued (446-462)</td>
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<td>Wed. 4/26</td>
<td>Mill, <em>Utilitarianism</em> (463-478)</td>
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<td>Fri. 4/28</td>
<td>Mill, continued (478-495)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
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<td>Mon. 5/1</td>
<td>Nietzsche, <em>Beyond Good and Evil</em> (496-507)</td>
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<td>Wed. 5/3</td>
<td>Held, “Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory” (507-525)</td>
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<td><strong>Final</strong></td>
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<td>Sat. 5/6</td>
<td><em>Fifth essay due (12 noon)</em></td>
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