Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 100-BK
Spring Term, 2016

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Course Description:
Philosophy can be introduced by its history, or by its main questions. We’ll do both. We’ll look at philosophy’s history as well as its questions.

Texts:
- MAIN TEXTS
  Karen Armstrong, *A Brief History of Myth*
  Richard Osborne, *Philosophy For Beginners*

- ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY
  Reginald E. Allen (editor), *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle*

- INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
  Walpola Rahula, *What The Buddha Taught*

Supplementary Handouts From:
- LOGIC
  Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*
  Louis Pojman, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*

- PAN-GREEK IDEAS
  Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, *Oration On The Dignity Of Man*
  Mott T. Greene, *Natural Knowledge in Preclassical Antiquity*

- MODERN PHILOSOPHY
  Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations*
  Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*
  Charles Taylor, *Sources of Self*
  Rius, *Marx For Beginners*

- INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
  *Upanishads*
  *Bhagavad-Gita*

- CHINESE PHILOSOPHY
  Confucius, *Analects*
  Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*
Course Objectives:

1. Answer “What is philosophy?”
2. Introduce logic and its fallacies
3. Meet some of the world’s greatest philosophers from both the east and west
4. Uncover the agenda underlying our modern, industrial culture
5. Self-knowledge… a project that will hopefully continue long after the course is done

Course Overview:

If we’re like fish in the ocean unaware of the water we swim in, then philosophy is like a fish trying to see that water and why he’s there. You’re doing philosophy when you try to understand yourself and your place in the universe using reason (not relying solely on accepted beliefs).

Philosophy is one of the few subjects where you don’t have to know all the answers. Philosophy is more about asking the right questions. If we can ask the right question, usually the answer is embedded in the question. But questions help us become more aware.

Now, philosophy isn’t separate from its historical context. They go hand-in-hand. A piece has meaning only when it’s seen as part of the whole. A lot of philosophy is done by looking at it without context. That’s not how we’re going to do philosophy. We’re looking at context. After all, Hegel once said the study of philosophy is the study of its history.

Speaking of context, this course will be told like a story. We’ll start by looking at the origins of philosophy in myth. Next, we’ll take an excursion and look at the toolbox of philosophy. Against that background, we’ll watch how philosophy tried to answer the unanswerable questions of myth using logic, and how the mode of thinking we’ll call “logos” came to dominate modernity. We’ll end by looking at possible solutions to that problem.

Evaluation & Grading:
Grades are based on four factors:

1. **Quizzes and attendance.** (35%) Think of these as study guides. Take notes on them during class, and you can use them as study guides for the final exam later. The only caveat is you must be present in class in order to get full credit for it.

2. **Philosophy Journal.** (35%) The entry should be between one to two paragraphs long, and spell-checked. Writing is thinking on paper. So, the journal is meant to help you get clearer on the ideas we’ll be discussing in class. Buy a notebook, or you can print out an entry from your computer. I won’t accept email submissions.

3. **Final Exam.** (30%) Puts the pieces together into a big picture.
Attendance: (Can positively or negatively impact your grade)
After 3 absences for personal reasons, your final grade will be lowered by half a grade for the 4th and, again, for the 5th absence. The 6th results in “AF” (Administrative Failure).

Also, no unnecessary coming and going during class. Arrive on time and be in class until the end of the period. 3 tardies/early exits = 1 absence.

Finally, respect your fellow students in class. There will be an atmosphere of tolerance so everyone can express themselves.

Late Work Policy:
A half grade will be deducted for every week the work is passed in past the assigned due date. After two weeks, I won’t accept the work. I also don’t accept work emailed to me. You can use the printers on campus.

Plagiarism Statement:
Cheating is a serious offense. Using ideas or writings of another without crediting the source is plagiarism. So, make sure to give full credit to another when it’s due. Otherwise, a student is referred to the College’s Disciplinary Office. Sanctions include suspension from the course and a failing grade.

Cell Phones and Laptops:
No use of cellphones or texting while in class, unless it’s an emergency. Laptops should be closed.

ADA Syllabus Statement:
Southern Maine Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and employer. For more information, please call 207-741-5798, If you have a disabling condition and wish to request accommodations. In order to have reasonable access to the programs and services offered by SMCC, you must register with the disability services coordinator, Mark Krogman, who can be reached at 741-5629 (TTD 207-741-5667). Further information about services for students with disabilities and the accommodation process is available upon request at this number.
I. Mythos and Logos: What is Philosophy?

Week 1 - Introduction
8/30: Class Overview and A Psychological Test
9/1: What is Philosophy: Two Definitions (Etymological and Comparative)
   • **READING:** Armstrong 1-11, Osborne 1-3
   • **JOURNAL 1:** Psychological Test

Week 2 - What Is Philosophy?
9/6: What is Philosophy Cont’d: A Third Definition (Historical)
9/8: Mythos and Logos: Two Modes of Thinking
   • **READING:** Armstrong 12-57, Osborne 4
   • **JOURNAL 2:** Right Brain Exercise

Week 3 - What Is Philosophy? Cont’d
9/13: Mythos and Logos in the Hunter-Gatherer Era and in the Agricultural Era
9/15: Mythos and Logos in the First Civilizations, and a Crisis in Mythos
   • **READING:** Armstrong 58-103.

II. Logos and Mythos: Philosophy’s ToolBox

Week 4 - Logic: Philosophy’s Main Tool
9/20: What is Logic: Wittgenstein and Plato and Inductive Logic
9/22: Deductive Logic, Aquinas’s Argument, Ockham’s Razor
   • **READING:** Logic Packet
   • **JOURNAL 3:** A Logical Fallacy, Allen 270-2, Osborne 50-1 and 54

Week 5 - Other Tools of Thinking
9/27: Logical Fallacies
9/29: Creative Thinking, Intuition and Feeling
   • **READING:** Logic Packet, cont’d
III. Logos Splits from Mythos: The Story of Philosophy

A. Ancient Greek Philosophy

Week 6 - The Story of Philosophy: Ancient Greece
10/4: Pan-Greek ideas—Non-Authority and Humanism
10/6: Thales, Xenophanes, Pythagoras, and Heraclitus
   • **READING:** Greene, Sartre, Allen 27-34 and 35-45, Osborne 5-8 and 156-60

Week 7 - The Story of Philosophy: Ancient Greece
10/13: Parmenides and Reaction to Parmenides
10/15: Socrates and Plato
   • **READING:** Allen, 74-97 and Osborne 6-11

Week 8 - The Story of Philosophy: Ancient Greece
10/18: Plato and Aristotle
10/20: Stoicism and Epicureanism
   • **READING:** Allen 224-232, 247-50, 384-408, Osborne 11-20, and Taylor

B. Indian Philosophy

Week 9 - The Story of Philosophy: India
10/25: Pan-Indian Ideas—Inclusivism and Rebirth
10/27: Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita
   • **READING:** Hinduism Packet

Week 10 - The Story of Philosophy: India
11/1: Buddha—Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, part 1
11/3: Buddha—Eightfold Path, part 2
   • **READING:** Rahula, 1-66

C. Chinese Philosophy

Week 11 - The Story of Philosophy: China
11/8: Pan-Chinese Ideas—Yin-Yang
11/10: Confucius and Tao Te Ching
   • **READING:** Chinese Philosophy Packet
D. Medieval Philosophy

Week 12 - The Story of Philosophy: Medieval
11/14: The Post-Axial Age—Mythos Rationalized
11/16: St. Augustine—Mythos Internalized (in the West)
   • **READING:** Armstrong 104-118, Osborne 21-55, and Taylor

E. Modern Philosophy

Week 13 - The Story of Philosophy: The Rise of Capitalism
11/21: Hegel vs. Marx on History
11/23: **NO CLASS:** Thanksgiving Recess
   • **READING:** Marx packet, Armstrong 119-150, and Osborne 108-113

Week 14 - The Story of Philosophy: Renaissance and Modernity
11/29: Money and Marx on Capitalism
12/1: Modernity—Montaigne vs. Descartes; Descartes Builds on St. Augustine
   • **READING:** Toulmin, Taylor, and Osborne 118-124, 56-65, 70-5
   • **JOURNAL 4:** Money Assignment

Week 15 - The Story of Philosophy: Modernity
12/6: 1660-1720—Hobbes, Newton, The Modern Agenda; Rationalism and Empiricism
12/8: 1720-1800—Enlightenment, Progress, and Kant
   • **READING:** Toulmin and Osborne 66-9, 76-106

IV. Mending the Split between Logos and Mythos?

Week 16 - The Story of Philosophy: Postmodernity?
12/13: 1789-today—Dismantling Rationalism
12/15: Kant on The Beautiful
   • **READING:** Toulmin, Osborne 106-7 and 114-155
   • **TAKE-HOME EXAM**