Historical Introduction to Philosophy

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide a historical introduction to Western philosophy. We will read classical texts that deal with topics such as the soul, life and death, God, evil, mind and matter, knowledge. We will think about questions like: Is the soul immortal? Can we prove God exists? And we will see some of what has been done to answer such questions.

The lectures for this course have been recorded by Professor Brian Copenhaver and will be available on the course website. Students will need to follow the lecture and reading schedule outlined below.

II. REQUIRED READING

Students are required to purchase the following readings for the course:

- Plato - *Phaedo*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)
- Anselm - *Proslogion with the Replies of Guanilo and Anselm*, trans. T. Williams (Hackett)

The following readings will be posted to the course website:

- Aristotle - *Metaphysics* 12 (selections)
- Augustine - *Confessions*, chapter 7 (selections)
- Peter Lombard – *Sentences* (selections)
- Peter Abelard - *Yes and No* (selections)
- Thomas Aquinas - *Summa theologica* (selections)
- Thomas Aquinas - *Summa contra gentiles* (selections)

III. INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD CONTACT INFORMATION

Melissa Retkwa
Email: philosophygrad-r@humnet.ucla.edu

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Short Essay 10%
- Weekly Discussion Board Posts 10%
- Weekly Discussion Board Responses 10%
- Section Participation 15%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Paper 35%

**Short Essay** – Students will be required to write a short essay at the beginning of the course. The essay should be no more than two pages (double-spaced, normal font and formatting). The essay topic will be distributed on 8/3, and the essay will be due by 11:59pm on 8/16. Essays should be submitted to turnitin. If an extension is not granted, a late submission will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late.

**Weekly Discussion Board Posts** – Each week starting in week 1 students should post to the discussion board for their section. These posts should have two parts. First, the post should contain a short response to a question assigned by your TA. Second, students should write: (1) a short description of what they take to be the most interesting part of the reading for the week (2) one question
Draft as of 2/22/2020

about the content of the reading they had while doing the reading (3) a possible answer to that question. Posts are due by 11:59pm the day before section. Late posts will not be accepted for credit. Students who complete all 6 posts on time will receive full credit for this portion of the grade.

Weekly Discussion Board Responses – Each week starting in week 2 students should respond to another student's discussion board post from the previous week. Students should choose a post to respond to that has no other response. Responses should include: (1) a different possible answer to the question the original post asks (2) a discussion of which answer seems more plausible and why. Responses are due by 11:59pm the day before section. Late responses will not be accepted for credit. Students who complete all 5 responses on time will receive full credit for this portion of the grade.

Section Participation – Students are expected to attend and participate in the online discussion sections for this course each week. TAs will be assigning section participation grades with this in mind.

Midterm Exam - The midterm exam will have two parts – one consisting of short answer questions and one asking for an essay response. Each short answer question should be answered in about a paragraph. The essay question should be answered in no more than 3 pages (double-spaced, normal font and formatting). Students can use the class texts and lectures when completing the midterm exam. However, collaboration with other students is not permitted. The midterm will be distributed on 8/23 and is due by 11:59pm on 8/30. Midterms should be submitted to turnitin. If an extension is not granted, a late submission will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late.

Final Paper - A 5-6 page final paper is due by 11:59pm on 9/11. Paper topics will be distributed on 8/30. Papers should be submitted to turnitin. If an extension is not granted, a late submission will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late.

V. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be investigated and, as required, reported. Students can refer to the Student Conduct Code for more information about what qualifies as academic dishonesty and what procedures the university has for addressing it.


VI. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310)825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

VII. SCHEDULE

Week 1

Short Essay Topic Distributed 8/3

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION
Reading
Thomas Nagel - What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy

Video Lecture
Talk 1

LESSON 2: PHILOSOPHY AS TRAINING FOR DEATH
Reading
Plato – Phaedo (57a-77e, pages 6-28)

Video Lecture
Talk 2
LESSON 3: PHILOSOPHY AS TRAINING FOR DEATH II
*Reading*
Plato - *Phaedo* (77e-95a, pages 28-46)

*Video Lecture*
Talk 3

LESSON 4: PHILOSOPHY AS TRAINING FOR DEATH III
*Reading*
Plato – *Phaedo* (95a-118a, pages 46-67)

*Video Lecture*
Talk 4

**Week 3**

Short Essay Due 8/16

LESSON 5: GOD AT THE END OF THE ARGUMENT I
*Reading*
Aristotle – *Metaphysics* Book 12 (selections)

*Video Lecture*
Talk 5

LESSON 6: GOD AT THE END OF THE ARGUMENT II
*Reading*
Aristotle - *Metaphysics* Book 12 (selections)

*Video Lecture*
Talk 6

**Week 4**

Midterm Distributed 8/23

LESSON 7: FAITH SEEKS UNDERSTANDING
*Reading*
St. Augustine – *Confessions* (selections)
Peter Abelard – *Yes and No* (sections)
Peter Lombard – *Sentences* (selections)

*Video Lecture*
Talk 7 Part 1
Talk 7 Part 2
Talk 7 Part 3

**Week 5**

Midterm Due 8/30
Final Paper Topics Distributed 8/30

LESSON 8: THAT THAN WHICH NOTHING GREATER CAN BE THOUGHT
*Reading*
Anselm – *Proslogion*
LESSON 9: FIVE WAYS

Reading
Thomas Aquinas – *Summa theologica* (selections)
Thomas Aquinas - *Summa contra gentiles* (selections)

LESSON 10: DOUBTS ABOUT EVERYTHING

Reading
Rene Descartes – *Discourse on Method* (parts 1-4)

Week 6
Final Papers Due 9/11