

Course Required Materials / Text:

Rauhut, Nils Ch. *Ultimate Questions: Thinking About Philosophy*. Third Edition.
Pearson Longman, 2011.

Class Meeting Time and Location

1:00 to 2:20 p.m. T/Th, Building G room 110

Class Dynamics:

Assigned text readings for class meetings should be read in advance for the day assigned.

There will be a **Readings Quiz** for each assignment at the beginning of the class designated for a reading assignment. There will be twenty-six readings quizzes in the Spring 2011 semester. ***No make-ups on readings quizzes will be given***, but you may drop your three lowest quiz grades. True / False questions from readings quizzes will supply material for questions on examinations, so you will want to keep the quizzes to prepare for examinations.

Lectures will be the foundation of class discussion and examination contents. Lectures will seek to inform and to challenge the student to critical consideration and knowledge of the course subject matter.

Class discussion of lectures and readings is welcomed and encouraged. Such discussion should be informed, thoughtful, respectful of the views of others, and open to new (or old) ideas and perspectives. ***Students are not required to endorse any of the personal views of the instructor or of the course text.***

Examinations

Study Guides will be provided prior to each major examination. If you fill out the study guide *substantively and completely* and turn in the study guide prior to the examination, a grade of '60' on the examination is assured. And the use of the study guide can greatly assist you in making a grade higher than 'D' on the examination!

Major Examinations will evidence the student's mastery of the course material. Three non-comprehensive examinations will be given.

Make-up Examinations: Missed examinations, for whatever reason, will result in a grade of '0.' However, as the lowest major exam grade of all students is dropped, if you miss only one major exam, the '0' will be dropped. Additionally, if you miss a second major exam but turn in the study guide (substantively and completely filled out) prior to the next class meeting after the exam date, you may (possibly) receive a '50' for that second missed major exam. Any further missed exams will receive a grade of '0.'

Comprehensive Examination: On the final examination day, in addition to examination #3, a comprehensive examination will also be given. The final examination will be worth 12.5% of your course grade and will consist of matching and definition questions from exams #1 and #2 and #3.

Course Essay:

Each student will turn in a 3-5 page, double-spaced, 12 font essay in response to the topic: "My Personal Philosophy of Life." This essay will be worth 12.5% of your course grade.

- *This is not a research paper and does not require documentation unless you utilize sources or cite material that are not your own creative material / words.
- *Essays will be evaluated on the basis of the thoughtfulness (in both description and analysis) and course-interaction (responding to some of the issues / topics covered in the course) evidenced by the essay.
- *see "Sample Student Essay" at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten
- * Essays are due Class #28 = May 3

Attendance Policy!!!:

There are 30 class dates in the Spring 2011 semester. *There are no 'excused absences,'* but you may miss up to THREE classes (for whatever reasons) without any special penalty.

Each class missed AFTER THREE classes will result in THREE points being deducted from your final course average. *You* are expected to attend at least twenty-two **complete** classes. MORE THAN EIGHT class absences ordinarily *requires that you drop the course* (if occurring before the official Drop / Withdrawal Deadline on April 11 - or *receive an 'F'* for the course. Students should be on time for, and attentive-participative, during each class session.

- *If you arrive late for a class (= after readings quiz has been taken up), inform me of your presence at the end of class - otherwise you will have been counted absent.
- *Students arriving more than twenty minutes late for class will be accorded ½ absence. (After three missed classes, each ½ absence will result in a 1.5 -point deduction from your final course average / grade)
- *Students 'sleeping' (head down on desk, etc.), ***web-surfing, text-messaging***, etc. during class *or using class time for any purpose other than philosophy education* will be counted as absent. ('Attendance' is more than your mere physical presence!)
- *Please tell me prior to class if you will need to leave any class early. I know that this is sometimes necessary, but leaving class early *for any reason* will count as 1/2 absence.

Cell Phones and Laptops!!!

Unless there is a special need that you communicate to me prior to the beginning of class, all cell phones must be silenced, put away and unused during class.

- *Using cell phones in class text-messaging, web surfing, etc. will result in the student being ***counted as absent*** for the class.
- *Students ***leaving the classroom to take / make a phone call*** will be ***counted as absent***.
- *Students ***staring into their laps with both hands below the table*** will be regarded as text-messaging and will be ***counted absent***.

Laptop computers may be used *for note-taking purposes only*. Laptops may only be used by students sitting in the *front two rows* of the classroom. As there is usually enough lecture content to keep you busily typing during class, students not doing so will be presumed to be using their laptops for others purposes than note taking and *will be counted as absent* for that class.

On Dropping the Course:

Students who consider dropping the course due to excessive absences or low grades should consult with the instructor first! Mitigating circumstances and potential *may* be considered if the student is having difficulty fulfilling attendance and grade requirements of the course. *If the student does need to drop the course, it is the STUDENT 'S responsibility to do so officially.*

Determination of Course Grade:

Grades will be assigned on a scale of:

90 to 100	A
80 to 89	B
70 to 79	C
60 to 69	D
Below 60	F

Your course grade will be determined according to the following:

Readings Quizzes:	25%	
Examination #1:	25% **	
Examination #2:	25% **	**the lowest of these three exam grades will be 'dropped.'
Examination #3:	25% **	
Comprehensive Examination :	12.5%	
Semester Essay:	12.5%	

Plagiarism and Cheating

In the case of plagiarism (claiming that words and ideas of others are your own and/or not indicating the source of ideas), the student will receive a zero ('0') for the assignment. In the case of cheating in the course of a quiz/exam, the student will receive a zero ('0') for the quiz/exam. Any such penalty grade cannot be dropped and will count toward the student's course grade.

Honors Credit Course:

Qualifying students may take this course for honors credit. If you are not already a member of the Montgomery College Honors Program, see Sam Thomas, Building G, Suite 220 Office G (Samuel.L.Thomas@Lonestar.edu) or Karin Branham, Building G, Suite 121 office H (Karin.Branham@Lonestar.edu)) for qualifications and requirements for the honors contract and credit. If you are a member of the Honors Program already, then set up an appointment to discuss the requirements for honors credit for this course.

Your Professor:

Mark Weldon Whitten, 'Professor' of Philosophy and Religion

B.A. Baylor University (*magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa)
M.Div. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Ph.D. Baylor University

My office is located in Building G Suite 221 Office C,
my office phone number is 936.273.7492,
and my email is mark.w.whitten@lonestar.edu.

'Office Hours': You may 'drop by' without an appointment during official office hours:

MWF: 9:55 to 10:30 and 11:30 to 11:55 a.m. T/TH: 11:25 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

You may also call to set up an appointment during these hours -- or for some other mutually agreeable time if an appointment during official office hours is not possible.

Counseling

If you find yourself in any kind of academic or personal 'distress' during the semester, please see BELS Division counselors Rachel Phelps (936-271-6157, Building G Suite 220 Office C) or Angela Martin (936-273-7070, Building G, Suite 120 office G. They offer personal, academic, and career counseling and can put you in touch with other helpful campus resources.

Some Observations on Student Success:

1. Montgomery College and your professor are committed to doing our best to facilitate your academic success. There are many sources of aid in your educational quest, beginning with your professor and also available through the Learning Center and other Montgomery College programs. If you need help in your learning, seek and ask!
2. *But YOU*, the student, are fundamentally and ultimately responsible for your own learning.
It is vitally important that you take responsibility for your learning!
Not only will this promote your success now as a student, but it will serve to develop the personal responsibility and self-discipline that is necessary for success in your future career and in every aspect of life.
3. Becoming educated / learning is work -- *often hard work* -- and it may be helpful to regard being a student as your 'job' (or another job in addition to your 'real job'), requiring all of the commitment, effort, and discipline that it takes to be successful in a job.
4. So, *attend class* whenever possible and as required. Pay attention, be an 'active listener,' and participate in class. Take good class notes and *study adequately for examinations*. Collaborate with your fellow students in studying for examinations (study groups can be very helpful!).

5. *Take good care of yourself* physically and psychologically-emotionally (get adequate rest, especially the night before an examination!). Give yourself time to do your best work on papers and projects (don't procrastinate!)
6. *Keep up with your work* – don't start 'sliding' through the semester and find yourself at the end of the semester not having the materials, information, or time to do well on final exams, papers, and projects.
7. *Be aware of how the new communication technologies (computers and cell phones – Web-surfing, texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are affecting you. Not only do many students spend a great deal of **time** using these technologies, but the **mental habits** (and brain structuring) which they utilize and reinforce may actually undermine your ability to engage on the focused, sustained, analytical thinking that is so important to intellectual development and academic / career success.*
8. Finally, *believe in yourself* – that you can succeed and even excel as a student – and do your best. Then take satisfaction in whatever you accomplish, for it will be your best (and YOUR BEST is all anyone can expect).

For further information and course
resources, see
www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

“At the root of the fundamental acts of human life lies the making of intelligent decisions. The ancient name for making such decisions well is wisdom. Philosophy is love of wisdom. It is the study of intelligent subjectivity.” (Michael Novak)

I. 'Examined Living': How Can I Develop 'Reason-Ability'?

Class 1: January 18 / “Welcome Philosophers!” and Course Introduction

Class 2: January 20 / “What is Philosophy?”

Some Benefits of Philosophy Education

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 1-12

Readings Quiz #1

Class 3: January 25 / Socrates: A Reason-Able Person and Paradigm of the
Philosophical Life

Reading Assignment: "Socrates: A Philosophical Life"
(first three sections) at

www.philosophypages.com/hy/2d.htm

Readings Quiz #2

Class 4: January 27 / Dynamics and Demands of (Philosophical) Understanding
Francis Bacon's 'Mental Idols'

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 15-24 and

"Dynamics and Demands of Human Understanding"

at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click on 'Introduction Resources' tab, then click on link)

Readings Quiz #3

Class 5: February 1 / Reasonable Thinking: The Elements and Functions of
Philosophical Arguments

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 25-29 and

"The Constitutional Convention and Christian America"

at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click on 'Religion Resources' tab, then click on link)

Readings Quiz #4

Class 6: February 3 / A Brief Introduction to Logic

Some Common Mistakes in Reasoning (Fallacies)

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 30-38, 40

Readings Quiz #5

II. What is Knowledge? (How Do We Obtain It?): 'Epistemology'

"Most people go through life with a whole world of beliefs that have no sort of rational justification. One person's world of beliefs is apt to be incompatible with another person's, so that they both cannot be right. People's opinions are mainly designed to make them feel comfortable; truth for most people is a secondary consideration. Mistaken beliefs do not, as a rule, enable you to achieve good purposes. If your means are to be adequate to your ends, you must have knowledge, not merely superstition or prejudice." (Bertrand Russell)

Class 7: February 8 / the 'Standard Analysis of Knowledge'

Theories of Knowledge, Skepticism and Certainty

The Nature and Role of Philosophical 'Convictions'

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 48-57 and "Philosophy and 'Convictions'"

at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click on 'Introduction Resources' tab, then click on link)

Readings Quiz # 6

Class 8: February 10 / Theories of Knowledge: Empiricism and Rationalism

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 57-60 and 67-72

Readings Quiz #7

Class 9: February 15 / Theories of Knowledge: Kant's 'Synthesis' Epistemology
Reading Assignment: "A Brief Summary of Kant's Epistemology"
at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten
(click on 'Metaphysics / Epistemology' tab, then go to link)
Readings Quiz #8

February 17 = NO CLASS / LSC Conference Day / NO CLASS = February 17

III. "Self Identity" ("Know Thyself") - Who / What Do You Think You Are?

"The primary task of philosophy is to lead its students to knowledge of themselves as subjects. The primary imperative in philosophy is not "Construct a consistent system." The primary imperative is "Know thyself." Philosophy is more fully conscious living." (Michael Novak)

Class 10: February 22 / Perspectives on Personal Identity
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 104-124
Readings Quiz #9

Class 11: February 24 / Self-Identity: Mind and Body
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 126-154**
Readings Quiz #10
(**open-book quiz)

Class 12: March 1/ EXAMINATION #1

Class 13: March 3 / Self-Identity: Human Freedom - Hard Determinism, Soft Determinism
and Libertarianism
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 77-101**
Readings Quiz #11 (**open-book quiz)

IV. "What in the World" is Reality? (Real Knowing) : 'Metaphysics'

"[Metaphysical] World views are the most fundamental interpretive frameworks we use to understand reality. A world view marks out various orders of reality and illusion, it gives some sense of what is reasonable and irrational, it orients action by defining the concepts in terms of which we discern what is good and bad, it provides the framework within which we have some sense of what might be hoped for and what is unrealistic to expect. . . . A world view may be largely unarticulated; indeed, what distinguishes a world view philosophically is often what goes without saying, what is so basic that it is simply assumed and never questioned."
(Warren Nord)

Class 14: March 8 / Ontology: “Why is ‘Reality’ Important?”

Reading Assignment: Read the section “The Allegory of the Cave”
at www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.htm
(stop reading at “[Glaucón] I agree, he said, as far as I
am able to understand you.”)

Readings Quiz #12

(We will also view an excerpt from the movie: “The Thirteenth Floor”)

Class 15: March 10 / Ontology: Basic Issues and Alternatives

The Pre-Socratic Philosophers and Plato

Reading Assignment: “Pre-Socratics” at
www.iep.utm.edu/g/greekphi.htm

Readings Quiz #13

March 14-20 / Mid-Semester Break / March 14-20

Class 16: March 22 / Ontology: Aristotle, ‘Logical Positivism’ and ‘Worldviews’

Reading Assignment: Reading Assignment: “What is a ‘Worldview’?”
at

www.teachingaboutreligion.org/WorldviewDiversity/wvdiversity.htm

Readings Quiz #14

V. Does God Exist?: Philosophy of Religion (Philosophical Theology)

“Philosophy of religion is an attempt to discover by rational interpretation of religion and its relation to other types of experience, the truth of religious attitudes and practices. . . . If life’s supreme values are really at stake in religion, it is of the utmost importance that they be rigorously defined and criticized. If our conception of them can be improved, it should be; if they are false, it is essential not to treat error as supreme value.”
(Edgar Sheffield Brightman)

Class 17: March 24 / ‘Religion’ and ‘God’

“Does ‘God’ Exist?”

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 156-160

Readings Quiz #15

Class 18: March 29 / Faith and Reason

Religious Experience and ‘The Principle of Credulity’

Reading Assignment: 161-164

Readings Quiz #16

Class 19: March 31 / Arguments FOR the Existence of God –

Cosmological and Teleological / Design Arguments

Ontological Arguments

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 164-181

Readings Quiz #17

Class 20: April 5 / Arguments FOR the Existence of God –
 “Willed Belief” Arguments / ‘Pascal’s Wager’
Arguments AGAINST the Existence of God –
 ‘The Problem of Evil’
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 181-191
Readings Quiz #18

Class 21: April 7 / EXAMINATION #2

April 11 = Last day to Withdraw and Receive a ‘W’ = April 11

Class 22: April 12/ Arguments AGAINST the Existence of God –
 ‘Defense’ and (the Failures of?) ‘Theodicy’
The ‘Evidentialist / Extraordinary Claims Objection’
 and ‘Ockham’s Razor’
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 192-193 and
 “God’s Existence – Evidentialist Objection”
 at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten
 (click on ‘religion Resources’ tab, then click on link)
Readings Quiz #19

VI. “What Shall I DO?”: Ethics

*“Commitment to normative principles is not a matter of choice; it is inherent in being a functioning human person, and thus in being capable of choice. Commitment to principles of moral criticism is inherent in personhood. Moral education, as education in logic, taps into imperatives inherent in one’s being as a person.”
(E.M. Adams)*

Class 23: April 14 / “What is ‘Ethics’?”
Types of Moral-Ethical Judgments
“Is Morality Purely ‘Subjective’?”
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 197-203
Readings Quiz #20

Class 24: April 19 / “Is Morality Radically ‘Relative’?”
“Are ALL of our Actions ‘Selfish’?”
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 203-207 and
 “Psychological Egoism”
 at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten
 (click on ‘ethics Resources’ tab, then click on link)
Readings Quiz #21`

Class 25: April 21 / Religion-Based Ethics: Divine Command Theory

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 208-210

The Bible

Book of Exodus

chapters 20 & 21

Book of Ephesians

Chapter 5, verses 21 to 25

Chapter 6, verses 1 to 9

Readings Quiz #22

April 22-24 / Spring Holiday / April 22-24

Class 26: April 26 / Ethical Egoism

Utilitarian Ethical Theory

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 211-219 and

“Ethical Egoism” at

www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Ethical-egoism

Readings Quiz #23

Class 27: April 28 / Utilitarianism, concluded

Duty-Based (Kantian) Ethics

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 240-248

Readings Quiz #24

Class 28: May 3 / Character-Virtue Ethics

COURSE

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 225-241

ESSAYS

Readings Quiz #25

DUE

Class 29: May 5 / Political Philosophy

Reading Assignment: Read the first section (“A political spectrum...”) and the later section “Nolan: economic freedom personal freedom”

at www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_spectrum

then take the self-quiz at www.quiz2d.com/quiz

- print out and turn in page 1 (“Description”) for a 100 for Readings Quiz #26

AND

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

(Philosophers matching and definitions from exams #1 and #2)

Class 30: May 12 / 12:30 to 2:20 p.m.

EXAMINATION #3

(possible to drop as lowest grade if no exam has been missed)