

Course Required Materials / Text:

Rauhut, Nils Ch. *Ultimate Questions: Thinking About Philosophy*. Second Edition. Pearson Longman, 2007.

Class Meeting Time and Location

9:40 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. MTWTh, Building A - Room 207
(11:30 to 11:45 = post-lecture questions)

Class Dynamics:

Assigned RAUHUT 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 16 readings quizzes in the Summer 2010 Second Term. ***No make-ups on readings quizzes will be given***, but you may drop your 3 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 a student fills out the study guide completely and turns in the study guide prior to the examination, you will receive a grade of '60.' But the use of the study guide can greatly assist you in making a grade higher than 'D' on the examination! It is acceptable to collaborate with other students in filling out your study guide, but do not simply copy another student's study guide or allow someone merely to copy your study guide!

Major Examinations will evidence the student's mastery of the course material. Four non-comprehensive examinations will be given. ***No Make-up examinations will be given.*** As the lower of your first three exam grades will be dropped, if you miss either examination #1 or #2 or #3, you will receive a '0' which will be dropped.

Course Essay:

Each student will write a 3-5 page, double-spaced, 12-font essay on the topic:

“My Personal Philosophy”

This essay will be worth 20% 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 and content \/. course-interaction evidenced by the essay.

See a ‘Sample Student Essay’ at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click on the ‘Introduction Resources’ tab)

(Due: Class 20 on August 18)

Attendance Policy:

There are 21 class dates in the Summer 2010 Second Term. *You are required to attend at least **16 complete** classes for course credit.* More than 5 class absences ordinarily requires that you drop the course (if occurring before the official Drop / Withdrawal Deadline) or receive an ‘F’ for the course. You may miss two classes with no special penalty. *Three (3) points will be deducted from your final course average for each of absences 3-4-5.*

*Unless there is a special need that the student communicates to the instructor, all cell phones, pagers, etc. should be turned off / silenced /unused during class.

*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 ‘sleeping’ (head down on desk), texting, web-surfing, etc. or using class time for *any purpose other than philosophy education* will be counted absent.

*Students arriving late to class (after 12:10 p.m.) will be accorded ½ absence.

*Please tell me prior to class if you will need to leave any class early. Leaving class early *for any reason* will count as 1/2 absence.

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	

Your course grade will be determined according to the following:

Readings Quizzes:	20%	
Examination #1:	20% *	*the lowest of these three
Examination #2:	20% *	exam grades will be dropped
Examination #3:	20% *	
Examination #4:	20%	
Course Essay:	20%	

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 instructor reserves the right to give the student a zero for the assignment. In the case of cheating in the course of a quiz/exam, the instructor reserves the right to give the student or students a zero for the quiz/exam.

Your Instructor:

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 A Suite 200 #K, 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:
MTWTh: 9:00 to 9:30 and 11:15 to 11:45 a.m., 2:00 to 2:15 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 (Building A office 220A, 936-271-6157) or Andrea Martin (Building E office 209D, 936-273-7070). They offer personal, academic, and career counseling and can put you in touch with other helpful campus resources.

Webpage:

Please take note of and make use of reading and study resources at:
www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

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!). 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!) 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.
5. 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).

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. 'Intelligent Subjectivity': How Can I Develop 'Reason-Ability'?

Class 1: July 15 / “Welcome Philosophers!” and Course Introduction
“What is 'Philosophy'?”

Class2: July 19 / “What are ‘The Dynamics and Demands of (Philosophical) Understanding’?”
“Who was Socrates – and Why is He an ‘Exemplary Philosopher’?”
Reading Assignment: RAUHUT, 1-13
Readings Quiz #1

Class 3: July 20 / “What Constitutes ‘Reason-Able Thinking’?”

(The Nature and Role of ‘Argument’ and ‘Logic’)

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT, 26-42 and ONLINE:

‘The Constitutional Convention and Christian America’

at www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click the ‘Religion Resources’ tab)

Readings Quiz #2

Class 4: July 21 / “What are Some Common Mistakes in Reasoning (Fallacies)?”

Readings Quiz #3:

Using *at least* four premises, construct your own ‘standard from’ argument for one of the flowing claims:

“Dr. Whitten is incorrect in denying that the United States is a Christian Nation.”

““Barack Obama is / is not doing a good job as President.”

“Capital Punishment (the death penalty) should /should not be outlawed.”

“Human beings do / do not possess free will.”

Class 5: July 22 / EXAMINATION #1 (9:40 to 10:40 a.m.)

/ ‘What is ‘Knowledge’?’-The ‘Standard Analysis of Knowledge’

(from 10:40 to 11:30)

II. “What is Knowledge - and 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 6: July 26 / “How do we gain knowledge?” - Rationalism (Rene Descartes)

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 54-61, 73-77

Readings Quiz # 4

Class 7: July 27 / “How do we gain knowledge?” - Empiricism (David Hume)

and Kant’s ‘Synthesis’ Theory

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 61-73 and ONLINE:

“Basic Elements of Kant’s Epistemology” at

www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten

(click the ‘Metaphysics / Epistemology’ tab)

Readings Quiz #5

III. “Self-Identity: Who-What Do You Think You Are?” - ‘Philosophical Anthropology’

“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 8: June 28 / What are some theories / accounts of personal identity?”

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 113-135

Readings Quiz #6

Class 9: July 29 / Self-Identity: “What is ‘Mind’ and ‘Body’ / Matter?”

Reading Assignment: RUAHUT 137-170

Readings Quiz #7 (open book! – but prepare / highlight!)

Class 10: August 2 / “Do You Possess ‘Free Will’?”

- Freedom and Determinism

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 84-111

Readings Quiz #8

IV. “What is ‘Real’?” : ‘Metaphysics / Ontology’

“[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 11: August 3 / Examination #2 (9:40 to 10:40 a.m.)

/ “What is ‘Real-ity’?”

/

- ‘Basic Issues and Options in Metaphysics’ and ‘the Pre-Socratic Philosophers’ (10:40 to 11:30 a.m.)

Class 12: July 29 / What was Plato’s Metaphysic / Worldview?”

‘Footnotes to Plato’ - Some Major Metaphysical Perspectives

Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Spinoza, Comte; ‘the Vienna Circle’

Reading Assignment: ONLINE:

‘Worldviews’

at www.teachingaboutreligion.org/WorldviewDiversity/wvdiversity.htm

“The Allegory of the Cave”

at www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html

Readings Quiz #9

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 13: July 30 / “What does one mean by ‘Religion’ and ‘God’?”

“God’s existence – What are the options?”

“How do ‘Faith’ and ‘Reason’ relate to one another?”

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 173-177

Readings Quiz #10

Class 14: August 3 / “What are some arguments FOR the existence of God?”

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 178-204

Readings Quiz #11

Class 15: August 4 / “What are some arguments AGAINST the Existence of God

- The Problem of Evil and the failure (?) of ‘Theodicy’

- The ‘Evidentialist Objection’ to Belief in God

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 204-212

Readings Quiz #12

VI. “What Should One 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 16: August 11 / EXAMINATION #3 (9:40 to 10:40 a.m.)

/ “What is ‘Ethics’?” and “Why be Ethical?” (10:40 to 11:30)

Types of Moral-Ethical Judgments

Class 17: August 12 / “Are all moral judgments ‘relative’?” / Cultural-Ethical Relativism

“Are one’s actions always ‘selfish’?” / Psychological Egoism

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 214-228

Readings Quiz # 13

Class 18: August 16 / “Is right / wrong a matter of what is good for ME?” - Ethical Egoism
“Is right / wrong a matter of ‘Gods’ will’?” - Divine Command Theory
Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 228-231

and

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 #14

Class 19: August 17 / “Is right / wrong a matter of good (social) consequences?”
- Utilitarian Ethics
“Is right / wrong a matter of inherently good motives / actions?”
- Kantian Ethics

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 231-248

Readings Quiz #15

Class 20: August 18 / “Is right / wrong action grounded in ‘good character’?”
- Character / Virtue Ethics

Reading Assignment: RAUHUT 248-255

Readings Quiz #16

COURSE ESSAYS DUE

Class 21: August 19 / Study Period (9:40 to 10:00 a.m.)

EXAMINATION #4 (10:00 to 11:40)