

### Course Required Materials / Text:

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

### Class Meeting Time and Location

NOON to 12:53 p.m. MWF – University Center, Room 217

### 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 35 readings quizzes in the Spring 2010 semester.

***No make-ups on readings quizzes will be given***, but you may drop your ***four*** 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 you 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 the course text.***

### Examinations

**Study Guides** will be provided prior to each major examination. If a student fills out the study guide *substantively* and *completely*, and turns 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.  
Four non-comprehensive examinations will be given.

**Make-up Examinations:** My policy is that *no make-up examinations* will be given. 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 (completely filled out) prior to the next class meeting after the exam date, you will receive a '50' for that second missed major exam. Any further missed exams will receive a grade of '0.'

**Comprehensive Examination:** On Class #43 (= May 7), a comprehensive examination will be given. This examination will be worth 10% of your course grade and will consist (only) of previous 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 10% 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.
- \*Essays are due Class #42 = May 5

### Attendance Policy!!!

There are 44 class dates in the Spring 2010 semester. *There are no ‘excused absences,’* but you may miss up to FOUR class meetings (for whatever reasons) without any special penalty.

Each class missed AFTER FOUR classes will result in TWO POINTS being DEDUCTED from your FINAL COURSE GRADE.

MORE THAN ELEVEN class absences *requires that you drop the course* (if occurring before the official Drop / Withdrawal Deadline on November 6) *or receive an ‘F’* for the course.

- \*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!)
- \*Students arriving more than 20 minutes late to class will be accorded ½ absence. (After four complete absences, each half-absence will result in a 1-point deduction from your final course grade.)
- \*If you arrive late for class (after the readings quiz has been taken up) be sure and tell me at the end of class that you were present – otherwise, you might be counted absent.
- \*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, unused and put away** during class.

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

Laptop computers may be used in class *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 other purposes than taking notes 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 you need to drop the course, it is the YOUR 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:          | 20%    |  |
| Examination #1:            | 20% ** |  |
| Examination #2:            | 20% ** | **the lowest of these four<br>exam grades will be 'dropped.' |
| Examination #3:            | 20% ** |  |
| Examination #4:            | 20% ** |  |
| Comprehensive Examination: | 10%    |  |
| Course Essay:              | 10%    |  |

### **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 or students will receive a zero ('0') for the quiz/exam *that cannot be dropped* and counts toward their final 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 E, Suite 209 office E (Samuel.L.Thomas@Lonestar.edu) or professor Karin Branham, Building A, Suite 200, Office B ([karin.branham@Lonestar.edu](mailto:karin.branham@Lonestar.edu)) for qualifications and requirements for the honors contract and credit. If you are a member of the Honors Program already, please 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 A Suite 200 #K, my office phone number is 936.273.7492,  
and my email is mark.w.whitten@lonestar.edu.

'Office Hours': *MWF: 9:55 to 10:15 a.m. and 11:30 to 11:55 a.m.*

- *In the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor faculty area in the University Center*

*T/TH: 11:25 a.m. to 12:55 p.m. .*

- *In my office at LSC-Montgomery*

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 counselor Rachel Phelps (936-271-6157, Building A, Suite 220  
office A) She offers 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 in the focused, sustained, analytical thinking that is so important to intellectual development and academic 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 additional course information and resources, go to**

**[www.lonestar.edu/blogs/mwhitten](http://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 20 / “Welcome Philosophers!” and Course Introduction

Class 2: January 22 / “What is ‘Philosophy’?”

(We will view a video of philosophers’ personal testimonials)

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 1-7

Readings Quiz #1

Class 3: January 25 / Some Benefits of Philosophy Education  
(We will view the short video: "Joshua in a Box")  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 7-13  
Readings Quiz #2

Class 4: January 27 / Socrates: A Reason-Able Person and Paradigm of the  
Philosophical Life  
Reading Assignment: "Socrates: A Philosophical Life"  
(read first three sections) at  
[www.philosophypages.com/hy/2d.htm](http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/2d.htm)  
Readings Quiz #3

Class 5: January 29 / Francis Bacon and 'Mental Idols'  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 16-25  
Readings Quiz #4  
*Receive Lonergan- Novak Handout*

Class 6: February 1 / The Dynamics and Demands of (Philosophical) Understanding  
Reading Assignment: Lonergan - Novak Handout  
Readings Quiz #5  
*Receive Whitten Essay*

Class 7: February 3 / Reason-Able Thinking: The Elements and Functions of  
Philosophical Arguments  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 26-30  
*and Whitten Essay*  
Readings Quiz #6

Class 8: February 5 / Reason-Able Thinking: A Brief Introduction to Logic  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 30-38  
Readings Quiz #7  
*Receive Study Guides for Examination #1*

Class 9: February 8 / Reason-Able Thinking: Common Mistakes in Reasoning (Fallacies)  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 38-42  
Readings Quiz #8

**Class 10: February 10 / EXAMINATION #1**

## **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 11: February 12 / the ‘Standard Analysis of Knowledge’

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 44-49

Readings Quiz # 9

Class 12: February 15 / Theories of Knowledge: Skepticism and Certainty

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 50-61

Readings Quiz #10

Class 13: February 17 / Theories of Knowledge: Empiricism and Rationalism

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 61-82

Readings Quiz #11

Class 14: February 19 / Theories of Knowledge: Kant’s ‘Synthesis’ Epistemology

Reading Assignment: [www.philosophers.co.uk/cafe/phil\\_jul2002.htm](http://www.philosophers.co.uk/cafe/phil_jul2002.htm)

Readings Quiz #12

## **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 15: February 22 / Perspectives on Personal Identity

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 113-136

Readings Quiz #13

Class 16: February 24 / Self-Identity: Mind and Body

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 137-154

Readings Quiz #14

Class 17: February 26 / Self-Identity: Body and ‘Mind’

Reading Assignment: Rauhut, pages 154-171

Readings Quiz #15

Class 18: March 1 / Self-Identity: Human Freedom - Hard Determinism, Indeterminism

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 84-95

Readings Quiz #16

*Receive Study Guides for Examination #2*

Class 19: March 3 / Self Identity: Human Freedom – Soft Determinism, Libertarian Freedom  
Reading Assignment: Rauhut 96-111  
Readings Quiz #17

## **Class 20: March 5 / EXAMINATION #2**

### **IV. “What in the World” is Reality? :’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 21: March 8 / Ontology: “Why is ‘Reality’ Important?”  
Reading Assignment: None  
No Readings Quiz  
(We will view an excerpt from the movie:  
“The Thirteenth Floor”)

Class 22: March 10 / Ontology: Basic Issues and Alternatives  
Reading Assignment: “Presocratics” at  
[www.iep.utm.edu/g/greekphi.htm](http://www.iep.utm.edu/g/greekphi.htm)  
Readings Quiz #18

Class 23: March 12 / Ontology: Classical Views - Plato  
Reading Assignment: Read the section ‘The Allegory of the Cave’  
at [www.wsu.edu/~dee/GREECE/ALLEGORY.HTM](http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/GREECE/ALLEGORY.HTM)  
Readings Quiz # 19

### ***March 15-21 = MID-SEMESTER BREAK***

Class 24: March 22 / Ontology: Logical Positivism, ‘Worldviews’  
Reading Assignment: ‘Worldview Diversity’  
(first four sections) at  
[www.teachingaboutreligion.org/WorldviewDiversity/wvdiversity.htm](http://www.teachingaboutreligion.org/WorldviewDiversity/wvdiversity.htm)  
Readings Quiz #20



## **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 25: March 24/ ‘Religion’ and ‘God’

“Does ‘God’ Exist?”

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 173-178

Readings Quiz #21

Class 26: March 26/ Faith and Reason

Reading Assignment: None

No Readings Quiz

Class 27: March 29/ Arguments FOR the Existence of God –

Cosmological Arguments

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 182-186

Readings Quiz #22

Class 28: March 31 / Arguments FOR the Existence of God –

Teleological / Design Arguments

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 187-194

Readings Quiz #23

***April 2-4 = SPRING HOLIDAY***

Class 29: April 5 / Arguments FOR the Existence of God –

Ontological Arguments

“Will and Belief” Arguments (B. Pascal and W. James)

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 195-200, 200-204

Readings Quiz #24

Class 30: April 7 / Arguments AGAINST the Existence of God –

The Problem of Evil and Theodicy

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 204-212

Readings Quiz #25

*Receive Study Guide for Examination #3*

Class 31: April 9 / **EXAMINATION #3**

## **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 32: April 12 / What is ‘Ethics’?

Types of Moral-Ethical Judgments

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 214-216

Readings Quiz # 26

*Receive Whitten Handout*

***April 13 = Last Day to Withdraw and Receive a ‘W’ = April 13***

Class 33: April 14 / “Are ALL of our actions ‘Selfish?’”

-The Challenge and Claims of Psychological Egoism

Reading Assignment: Whitten Handout

Readings Quiz #27

Class 34: April 16 / Is Morality Purely ‘Subjective’ – and not Objective?

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 216-221

Readings Quiz # 28

Class 35: April 19 / Is Morality Completely ‘Relative’ to one’s Culture?—

with no Universal Moral Standards / Principles?

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 221-227

Readings Quiz # 29

Class 36: April 21 / Ethical Egoism

Egoism and Social Contract Theory

Reading Assignment: ONLINE

“Ethical Egoism” at

[www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Ethical-egoism](http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Ethical-egoism)

Readings Quiz #30

Class 37: April 23 / Religion-Based Ethics: Divine Command Theory

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 228-231

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 #31

Class 38: April 26 / Utilitarian Ethical Theory

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 231-240

Readings Quiz #32

Class 39: April 28 / Kantian Theory of Ethics

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 240-248

Readings Quiz #33

Class 40: April 30 / Character-Virtue Ethics

Reading Assignment: Rauhut 248-255

Readings Quiz #34

Class 41: May 3 / Character Ethics, conclusion

Reading Assignment: None

No Readings Quiz

**Class 42: May 5 / Political Philosophy**

Reading Assignment: TBA

Readings Quiz #35

**COURSE ESSAYS DUE**

**Class 43 : May 7 / COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

= Selected Questions from Exams #1, #2 and #3

**Class 44: May 10 / NOON to 1:50 p.m.**

**EXAMINATION #4**