

Grande Prairie Regional College
Philosophy 1020 (sections A3 & B3)
Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality

Winter term 2000

Course Instructor: Gary Sedgwick, Office H228

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Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Required Text

Robert Wolff, About Philosophy, 7th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.

Course Description

An introduction to some of the classical philosophical issues of knowledge, religion, science and metaphysics. What is the nature of knowledge and of reality and what role do we as people have? An important limitation of this course to take note of is that it is only an introduction to the 'western philosophical tradition.'

Course Assignments and Marking

Your final grade will be drawn from two papers and a final exam as follows. It is also recommended that you read the Appendix of the course text, "How to Write A Philosophy Paper."

- First Paper, 30% of your final grade
 - due Monday, February 28th for Section B3 (Mondays & Wednesdays)
 - due Tuesday, February 29th for Section A3 (Tuesdays & Thursdays)
- Second Paper, due March 18th, 35% of your final grade
 - due Tuesday, March 28th for Section A3 (Tuesdays & Thursdays)
 - due Wednesday, March 29th for Section B3 (Mondays & Wednesdays)
- Final Examination as scheduled by the College, 35% of your final grade

Further details on the papers and a marking guide are forthcoming. Papers will gladly be accepted before the due date. Please note, course assignments and examinations cannot be accepted/delivered by email.

Course Outline

This class will cover the last four chapters of the text (though not in the same order as presented in the textbook). Course readings will be taken from the text (pages 255 to 423) and may also include reserve readings at the Library and handouts in-class. Topics covered in this course will include:

- What is Philosophy? (And why bother? A brief introduction.)
- Epistemology (What is knowledge? What, if anything, can we know. Opinion and Knowledge.

What are the limits of knowledge?)

- Philosophy of Religion (Faith and Reason, Immortality, Evil and theodicy, infinite/finite God, Proof of God's Existence? If there is/is not a God what are the implications for reality and our place in reality?)
- Philosophy of Science (What is science? Scientific paradigms. Social structure of science. Limits and values of the scientific method. New biology and the meaning of life.)
- Mind and Metaphysics (Status of mind; mind, brain and body. What is reality? The possibility of death. Science and metaphysics. Free will, materialism, determinism.)

A Limited Bibliography

In addition to the following few suggestions please refer to your text pages 453 to 455.

Cahill, Thomas. The Gift of The Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels. Toronto: Doubleday, 1998.

Gould, James A., Ed. Classic Philosophical Questions, 9th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1998.

Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking. 3rd edition. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1990.

Smith, Peter and O.R. Jones. The Philosophy of Mind. New York: Cambridge UP, 1986.

Vanier, Jean. Becoming Human. Toronto: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1998.

There are also numerous philosophy websites available on the internet (some much better than others). Feel free to search and browse through these sites as one way to become more familiar with some of the traditional and current topics of philosophy.

Some philosophers once visited an elder, and after he had offered a prayer he remained silent, braiding cord and paying no attention to them. They besought him, saying, "Say something to us, father," but he held his peace. They said to him, "This is what we came for, to hear you say something and to benefit from it." The old man said to them, "You spend your money to learn how to speak. I left the world to learn how to keep silent." They were filled with amazement on hearing this and went their way edified.