

w. 98

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
Department of Arts, Education And Commerce

COURSE PH1020 Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality, 3 credits,
University Transfer.

TRANSFER U. of A. Phil 102; U. of C. Phil 201; U. of L. Phil 1000

INSTRUCTOR John O. Langenbach

LOCATION **Office:** #C401 **Ph:** 539-2992
Home: 9533 Wedgewood Dr. S., G.P. **Ph:** 532-8413

OFFICE HOURS 10:00 MWF other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the classical problems of philosophy through study and critical discussion of selected philosophical classics and contemporary works. Emphasis will be placed on questions of the nature and extent of human knowledge and classic problems about the nature of reality.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce students to some of the most important ideas underlying Western thought in the areas of epistemology and metaphysics;
2. Improve student's ability to read and write analytically;
3. Improve student's ability to present strong argument; and
4. Encourage student's interest in original and creative thought.

TEXTS

Kolak & Martin, *The Experience of Philosophy*, Wadsworth, 3rd ed.

GRADING CRITERIA

1. Written work will be graded on the 1-9 stanine basis.
2. Assignments will be graded on content and quality of expression.
3. Course grades will be determined by averaging grades on all written assignments.

Grading System

9	A+	} 90-100	Excellent	3	D+	} 45-49	Fail
8.5	A						
8	A-						
7	B+	} 72-79	Good	2	F	} 26-24	
6.5	B						
6	B-						
5	C+	} 57-64	Pass	1	F	} 0-25	
4.5	C						
4	C-						

ASSIGNMENTS

1. You will be responsible for reading each article assigned and to be prepared to discuss salient points in class.
2. One essay of 2,000 words in length 50%
3. One, one-hour exam 20%
4. One two-hour exam 30%

REWRITES

You will be allowed to rewrite your ESSAY if, and only if:

- a. Your work is handed in on the proper due date;
- b. You have been regularly attending class;
- c. You have followed the Essay Protocol, below.

The rewrite privilege is offered because:

- a. I wish you to do as well as you possibly can in my class;
- b. Rewriting your work is by far the best way for you to learn to write well; and
- c. Few of you have written on topics you find in this course and it is not fair to give you a poor grade because you did not know what is expected of you.

A HAPPY POSTSCRIPT

Because of the rewrite privileges, no student who completed this course last semester failed. In PH 1010 the average grade was 6.8, after rewrites. Let's see if we can beat that this semester. If you run into difficulty, see me! Don't give up. Whatever problems you may have can surely be worked out. Good Luck!

ESSAY PROTOCOL

The writing of your essay will be a team effort. The class will be divided into teams of three students each. The purpose of the team is to help each to write a fine essay.

You will write three drafts of your essay. The first two drafts will be critiqued by your team members. The third draft will be handed in for my reading. In some cases I will ask for all three drafts to be handed in. Any student who is unable to provide all three drafts will not be allowed rewrite privileges.

Each team member will be assigned a different topic on which to write.

See the Daily Schedule for important dates in the process of writing your essay.

DEPARTMENT

In the early 1950's, Clark Kerr, Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, one of the finest universities in the world, announced that the only purpose of a university is to turn out products for use by business and industry. That simple, and by today's standards, innocuous statement, caused a near student riot. We did not identify ourselves as "products" and many, and perhaps most, did not see a university education as essentially career training. Though possible careers might be attached to a university degree, the primary focus was on gaining enlightenment or wisdom, which had been the primary purpose of all university education from the days of Plato's and Aristotle's Academy and Lyceum to nearly the present day. Times, how they have changed.

Today, an extremely small minority of students are here for enlightenment. Virtually all want a degree so they can get a better, higher paying job than those who attempt to enter the work force out of high school. Given that this is our students' primary focus, it behooves us, as instructors, to train you with that in mind. Accordingly, there will be a number of expectations for this course which are consistent with and expected of anyone involved in a professional career.

The following shall not be allowed in class:

1. Gum chewing (You would never attend a business meeting chewing gum. If your boss does, you will soon be his or her boss.)
2. Eating food (Unless I serve it - which is unlikely)
3. Wearing hats (You wouldn't meet a client wearing a hat, unless you are selling hats.)
4. Placing feet on a desk or chair (Self-explanatory)
5. Talking, whispering, passing notes, etc., unless it is part of the class activities (This distracts others.)
6. Working on assignments for other courses (This insults your boss.)
7. Reading something other than the text or notes for this course (This really insults your boss.)
8. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through your comment, audible noise, facial expression, or body language unless you are prepared to debate your position openly in class (Most stopped doing this after junior high.)
9. Absenteeism (You are allowed to miss three class sessions, no questions asked, though I may give you a phone call at home to see if you are in need of my assistance, understanding, encouragement, etc.)
10. Handing in written assignments late (Imagine what your boss would say if you told her that you did not have an important report finished in time to present it to a rich client.)

A FEW NOTES ON PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of these notes is to introduce you to some aspects of what you can expect in a philosophy course. First, unlike the silly G.P.R.C. advertisement, philosophy courses don't **ROCK**. Philosophy, as well as any other course worthy of an academic institution, is too exciting and valuable to fit such a shallow description. Furthermore, your philosophy instructor, as well, I suspect, as any other serious College instructor, is not "cool." I never have been "cool." Instead, I have always managed to have a life. I've never had the time or inclination to be "cool." Does this mean that philosophy classes are boring, a waste of time, drudgery, etc.? It may mean that to "spin-doctors" and junior high-school students, but certainly not to anyone with an ounce of maturity.

I have taught philosophy for more years than you have lived. And, I still consider it the most exciting subject known to humankind. I suspect every instructor who is not brain-dead can say this of his or her area of expertise. I certainly hope so. What makes philosophy exciting are the questions which we wrestle with. To the philosopher, either the professional or the lay person, these questions are those which go to the core of our being. They include the most important questions you will ever face in your life:

- What is the meaning of life?
- How can I be moral?
- Does God exist?
- What is God's nature?
- What is the nature of Being?
- Why is there something rather than nothing?
- How can we know what is finally and ultimately real in the universe?
- Can we explain the myriad of world facts by reference to a single principle?
- Are there parallel worlds?
- Can faith prove anything?
- Can we prove the existence of the devil?
- Who am I?
- Where am I?
- Is time or space real?
- Is death the end?
- Are there absolute truths?
- Are there veridical experiences?
- Are there non-rational truths?
- Does creation conflict with evolution?
- Can science teach us any truths?
- Does the scientific method rest on solid principles?

This list could go on for pages. If you ever concerned yourself with issues like these, and find such thoughts exciting and important to your enlightenment, then you will find philosophy both fun and worthwhile.

COURSE DIFFICULTY

Every philosophy course at G.P.R.C. is of average difficulty to the average student with the average background for academic studies. It is this way by design. Nearly every university course at this college has the same credit weight. Each course should, therefore, demand approximately the same amount of work from you. Any instructor who states that his or her course is worthy of more of your time than the average is behaving unethically. Such an attitude is tantamount to saying that his or her course is of greater value than others, which denigrates some other instructor's work, and by implication may be seen as denigrating that other instructor. Any course can be made so difficult that no person could pass. Also, any course could be made so easy that Rosebud, my son's hedgehog could pass. The secret to good course design is to challenge students without destroying them through impossible or unreasonable demands. All of this notwithstanding, there will be some variations.

Students, as well as humans of every stripe, vary in their native abilities. Some are gifted artists, or writers, or mathematicians, or scientists, or Those with particular gifts will find course work in the areas of their gifts easier than some others might find it. Also, some students come to the College with weak preparation for university studies. These students may have to work especially hard to catch up. (Fortunately, your instructors at this College are more than happy to help you in this endeavor.)

I sincerely hope that you will find your philosophy courses challenging and exciting, and that you come away from the course a bit wiser, and with a sense of accomplishment.