Professor: MS Abare

Students can e-mail me at any time at: jamaicaabare@gmail.com. Students can also call my cell phone: 626-390-2715. I will be available to meet with before or after class or at a scheduled appointment upon request.

Course Description

No Prerequisites required.

This course helps students understand the world better by studying significant interpretations of the self, world, and God that have been offered by thinkers past and present. The major concerns of philosophy are addressed within their historical context. Meets general studies core requirements

Course Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to identify the major philosophical issues throughout time (Accomplished via Text Reading, Class Lecture/Discussion, Tests, homework assignments)

- Students will be able to name and express the major philosophers’ ideas and judge their application to Christian faith. (homework assignments, Class Discussion)

- Students will be able to compare the different philosophers with their historical contexts. (Text Reading, Lecture, Assignment # 2)
--Students will be able to construct and critique the arguments presented by the philosophers discussed in class. (*Class Discussion/Lecture/ homework assignments Assignment#1*).

--Students will be challenged to integrate the wisdom of the philosophers into their own journeys of faith. (*Prayer Projects, Jesus Journal*)

**Required Course Texts**


**Grading Plan and Policies**

Each of the assignments given will have an accompanying rubric that outlines the criteria upon which the grade will be based, so that students will know how their work is being evaluated. Attendance and participation will be evaluated together; I will measure this category based upon the number of classes students participate in through student interaction and quizzes. Students will be allowed two unexcused absence without any effect on their grade, but each additional absence will incur a loss of 1 point (being late or leaving early twice counts as 1 absence and **2 weeks worth of absences results in automatic failure of the class**). There will be an allowance for one late assignment or one makeup test (with the exception of the final exam which must be completed during the time prescribed by the University). My evaluation of student’s work should not be thought of as a measurement of self-worth, but rather an opportunity for feedback that measures student learning and my teaching

**Grading scale**

A 94-100%  A- 90-93
B+ 87-89  B 84-86%, B-80-83%
C+ 77-79%  c 74-76% C- 73-70%

**Grade breakdown**
Assignment # 25 points (see attached sheet)
Midterm 50 points (see class schedule)
Assignment #2 25 points (see attached sheet)
Final Exam 50 points (see class schedule)
Journal 8 points (see blackboard)
Reading/ Posts 20 points (see blackboard and class announcements)
Quizzes/Attendance 12 (random quizzes based on the previous class/readings that cannot be made up)
Participation: 10 points (see course philosophy)

Total points 200

Course Expectations and Assistance
- Students are expected to maintain an attitude of respect, demonstrating Christ-like love and humility in all class interactions. There is no allowance for any sort of cheating, including plagiarism and any collaboration outside of the specified guidelines of each assignment.
- Expectations are and consequences are consistent with those outlines in the academic integrity policy available at:
  http://www.apu.edu/registrar/undergraduate/policies/integrity/
- Note that all ideas including those from fellow students or online resources must be properly cited, though an assignment that consists primarily of paraphrases or quotes will receive a low grade as the intent of assignments is for students to express their own ideas and unique perspective.
- Information regarding MLA style citations can be found at:
  http://libweb.apu.ac.uk/subjects/reference/citation.php
- Students with disabilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that might be necessary to ensure your full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.
-All students are expected to succeed in this class and are encouraged to enter into a robust engagement with the issues and information that arise in the course.

Rough Course Schedule (exact pages and questions are to be announced)
(all reading assignments are to be completed by the class period)
http://groups.apu.edu/theophil/


Ancient philosophy

Week One- Introducing Philosophy

Week Two- Plato

Week Three- Aristotle, Logic

Medieval philosophy

Week Four- Augustine, The Problem of Evil

Week Five- Arguments for God’s Existence

Week Six- Religious experience

Modern Philosophy

Week Seven- Descartes, Rationalism vs Empiricism

Week Eight –: Kant, Ethical theories-

Week Nine- midterm

Week Ten- Truth

Contemporary Philosophy

Week Eleven- Existentialist Philosophy: Sartre

Week Twelve- Materialist Philosophy I, II , The Self/Mind, Body

Week Thirteen- Free Agency,

Week Fourteen- Ethical Relativism, Pluralism- Current Debates

Week Fifteen Final Exam

IMPORTANT DATES:

Jan 13 Last day to Add/Drop

Apr 4-13 Easter Break

May 4-8 Final Exams
**Class Structure and Philosophy**

My role in this class is not primarily to be a source of knowledge filling up empty minds, but rather to be a facilitator of students learning by engaging them with the topics. Although I will cover material in class that is not in the text, the class period will be used primarily to process the information that students have been exposed to previously in their readings. Each class will address a philosophical issue and the time in class will be divided roughly into two sections, beginning with an introduction of the topic followed by class and group discussion. This means that in order for you to get full credit for your posts and participation you should come to class prepared to discuss the main points of the reading, and give your analysis as reflected in your posts. Your posts and participation will be graded according to the quality of your in class discussion of the material, the quality of your written posts, and your attendance.

GOOTRAS- Stand for Get- Out- Of- The- Room- Activities. Every so often I will have certain activities that you will do as an individual or small group. The main point of the activity is to refocus your minds outside of the classroom on some aspect of what we are learning.
Assignment #1

Identifying and evaluating a philosophical argument

What: Identify, analyze, and then evaluate one of the arguments given in the readings for this class. By identify I mean that I’d like you to identify the premises and the conclusions of the argument by picking out the argument in standard form (9 points). By analyze I mean that I’d like you to put the premises and the conclusions in your own words and determine the type of argument given and the reason for your classification (look at your logic handout given in class) (9 points). By evaluate I mean that I’d like you to assess whether there are any fallacies or general weaknesses in the argument and finish by writing at least a paragraph assessing the argument’s effectiveness in terms of the reading as a whole and in terms of your faith (7 points).

Why: This assignment is intended to give students the opportunity to apply their reasoning abilities to arguments (see teaching goals and learning objectives) made by the philosophers that are being examined in class. It is also intended to give students a precise understanding of what the philosophers are arguing. Finally this assignment is intended to give students the opportunity to use their critical reasoning and philosophical logic to determine the strength of the argument.

When: It must be handed in for peer review or points will be deducted. Two week after it has been reviewed by your peers and/or me, your final argument analysis will be due. You have a total of four weeks from today, after which you will incur a loss of points (or use of your 1 free late assignment allowance).
Assignment #2

“Gradually it has become clear to me that every philosophy up to the present has been the personal confession of its author and a form of involuntary personal memoir” - Magnus*

Task
Philosophers don’t just come up with these grand ideas by a fire in a nightgown by themselves (or so maybe Descartes did), but rather they are influenced by their particular historical surroundings. Discovering what factors may have influenced a philosopher’s thoughts will help you better understand and critique them. Your task now is to relate one of the philosophers that we have covered in class to their unique historical context. This relationship can be described in terms of the historical events, political and economic setting, or atmosphere that influenced the thinker you choose. It can also be described in terms of the way the philosopher used preceding philosopher's ideas. You can approach the topic by showing the ways the philosopher reflected and/or reacted to their context.

Requirements
- This paper must be at least four pages, be proof read for spelling and grammar mistakes, and cite 4 sources in the paper and bibliography, (one can be your text and you may only have up to two internet sources. (5)
- The paper must be clearly organized by following the thesis that clearly indicates the significance of two or more contextual factors you discuss in your paper and how they impact the philosophers ideas. (5)
- The paper must describe the historical context in depth (give examples). (5)
- The paper must show how the philosopher’s context influenced their ideas (cite particular ideas). (5)
- The paper must contain at least one paragraph in which you critique the philosopher’s ideas from a Christian perspective. (5)

Grading
As stated in the syllabus, there are twenty five points available for this assignment. The criteria upon which the papers are graded, and the weight of each criteria are listed above after each requirement. You are welcome and encouraged to consult with me, and/or your peers about your paper at any time.

Due Date: There will be no extensions for this assignment other than the option given in the syllabus of this being your one late assignment.

**Homework Grading criteria:** All homework assignments should be around a page in length, and should reflect a critical engagement with the text by using quotes and paraphrases from the text. Work that does not meet this criteria will be handed back to students with feedback. I recognize that the readings in this class are difficult as they are actual philosophy texts, and so while your understanding may not be perfect, if your homework reflects an attempt to understand and engage with the material you do understand I will give you full credit.

**Jesus Journals:** The intent behind these journals is that they reflect your reaction to the material presented in each chapter of the book “On Jesus”. You should have one entry per chapter, and the entries should be around a page each. The only way you would not receive full credit is either if the entries did not meet the length requirement or, if the content written revealed that you hadn’t read the chapter. Although they are due on the day of the final I will give 2 points extra credit if you choose to turn them in by the midterm.

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**HOMEWORK**

*Subject to revision*

*Due on the date of the class given*

### Ancient Philosophy

1/15 Syllabus Bertrand Russell “The Value of Philosophy” What does Russell think Philosophy’s value is, student info sheet

1/19 Plato, *The Republic* pg 118 Which has more reality the visible or the invisible- why?

1/22 Beginning in Wisdom Prayer Project

1/26 Nicomachean Ethics, How does man become happy according to Aristotle, do you agree?

1/29 Putting on the virtues prayer project

2/3 Read the Logic handout, construct your own argument

2/5 Stoicism

### Medieval Philosophy

2/10 Hick The Problem of Evil 89. What are the “solutions” to the problem of evil and Which “solution” do you think is the best and why.
2/12. Anselm, *Proslogion and Exchange with Gaunilo* How does Anselm prove God’s existence?

2/17 Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* How does Dawkin’s account for Design

2/19 James, *The Will to Believe, What Does James think of the Agnostic’s position?*

**Renaissance Philosophy**

2/24 Epistemology Theories of Knowledge 115

2/26, Rorty Dismantling Truth, Pros and Cons. , assignment 1 due

3/3 Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* Why Did Descartes Doubt, and what did he doubt?

3/10 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, How do we come to know objects, and what do we know about them according to Kant?

**Contemporary Philosophy**

3/19 midterm

3/24 Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism?* –What should we choose, and why according to Sartre

3/26 Putting off Self- Advancement Prayer Project

3/31 Chalmers “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness” pg 230 Why can’t consciousness be reduced to the physical?

4/14 W.T. Stace The Problem of Morals- when are we free according to Stace?

4/16 Benedict, “Cultural Relativism” What are morals according to Benedict, do you agree?

4/21 Hick, “Religious Pluralism and Salvation” Why according to Hick should we reject the perspective that our religion is superior to others, and what perspective should we instead embrace?

4/23 Bertrand Russell “Why I am not A Christian” Which Argument do you find most convincing and what is your response?

4/28 Logic Review assignment # 2 due

4/30 Belief in the Unseen prayer project

5/4-5/8 Final Exams- Jesus Journals due
Student Info Sheet:

Name:

Phone#:

Address:

Email most frequently checked:

List major and reason for your choice:

Career plans:

Year:

Other colleges attended:

Reason for attending APU:

Is there anything about yourself that you would like me to know?

What do you hope to learn from this class?