AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
Undergraduate Division of Religion and Philosophy
Course Instruction Plan

Course Information
Phil 495 Seminar in Philosophy: Latin American Philosophy 3 Units
Monday 4:20 – 7:20 pm, says Duke 127 but is Duke 204 Fall 2009
Final Exam: Mon. Dec. 14th, 4:45-6:45 pm

Instructor Information
Teri Merrick, Associate Professor tmerrick@apu.edu
Office: Duke 240 (626) 815 – 6000 ext. 5614
Hours: MW 10:30 – 12:30 & by appt.

University Mission and Purpose
Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs of higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Desired Faith Integration Outcome
All students will demonstrate increased confidence in the compatibility of sincere Christian faith and robust philosophical reflection, growing into a greater awareness of the intellectual depth, strength, and coherence that is possible for construction of a comprehensive Christian worldview.

Desired Student Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
- formulate philosophical questions with precision and clarity
- articulate the structure of a philosopher’s position or philosophical text and assess its strengths and weaknesses
- identify and critique key figures and themes in the history of philosophy and the perspectives of those marginalized by this history
- manifest skills enabling them to be strong candidates for a graduate program in philosophy

Course Description
Students are assisted in relating philosophical insights to current moral, political, religious and social issues. Each seminar offers an area of emphasis for study, such as values or the future. May be repeated for credit with departmental approval. This semester’s seminar focuses on the philosophical contributions of Latin American thinkers from the onset of European colonization to the turn of the 21st century. To study philosophy is to reflect on such all-important questions as: ‘What is the truth and how can we know it?’; ‘When is a life a distinctly human life?’ and ‘What is the just society and can we build it?’ The Socratic method of philosophy rests on the hope that one gets closer to answering these questions by an honest and carefully reasoned exchange with other wisdom seekers. This course aims to insure that our circle of philosophical interlocutors is inclusive enough to warrant this hope.

Assignments Designed to Assess Outcomes & IDEA Objectives
- Exams measure understanding of the questions posed and answers proposed by key figures in the history of philosophy and those marginalized by this history. Exams also measure ability to articulate and evaluate the arguments advanced by these figures. IDEA Objectives: Gaining factual knowledge; Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- Reflections, papers and in-class discussion measure student’s ability to formulate philosophic questions with precision and clarity and develop their own thesis on the issue at hand. IDEA Objectives: Developing skill in written & oral expression; Developing clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values
- Final paper measures ability to manifest skills enabling them to be strong candidates for a graduate program in philosophy. IDEA Objectives: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view; Developing clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values
Required Texts

- Other required readings available in class or online (see course schedule).

Course Requirements

**Participation (10%)** – This course will be conducted in a seminar format, which means that students will bear a significant burden for the in-class discussion of the texts and the issues they raise. To encourage us all to share the load, students must bring a hard copy of the day’s reading and attendance will involve students turning in a 3x5 card with at least one question or point of critique on that day’s assigned reading. Instructor will also provide questions intended to help focus and prompt students’ reflection on the texts (see reflection assignment below). However, the content of the 3x5 card should demonstrate student’s original contribution towards enriching class discussion.

**Reflections (10%)** – This assignment is designed to encourage your own, no pressure engagement of the material and to facilitate in-class discussion. Reflections are one-page critiques of the assigned reading to be written prior to discussing the material in class. Specific questions to prompt your thinking through the material will be made available. In general, however, students will be expected to state the primary thesis under consideration, summarize arguments supporting or refuting that thesis, present their own critique of arguments and thesis. Reflections are graded on a credit/no-credit basis. To receive credit, each entry must demonstrate that you have read the text and attempted to critically evaluate the issues at hand. Each reflection is worth 10 points. So, to obtain the maximum value (100%) for this portion of your course grade, you must receive credit for ten reflections.

**Two Take-Home Exams (20% each)** - The format will be long answers (two-three paragraphs) to questions covering the assigned readings and class discussions. Questions may include those similar to student and instructor reflection prompts. This then supplies another reason to come to class prepared to engage in a rigorous discussion of those questions.

**One 4-6 pp. critical analysis paper (15%)** – For this paper, you will focus on one, narrowly circumscribed line of argumentation presented in one of the readings. Prior to the deadline, instructor will suggest a list of potential paper topics. Papers must contain a thorough exposition of the author’s argument and your own detailed analysis. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate your own critical engagement with an issue and position considered in the course readings. Thus no outside source need be nor should be cited or consulted.

**One final 8-10 pp. fully documented, thesis oriented essay (25%)** – The aim of this paper is to expand your previous critique and defend your own narrowly defined thesis on one of issues or arguments presented in the course. Here you should incorporate secondary literature not explicitly covered in the course. However, as with all philosophical essays, the emphasis should be on developing your own unique argumentative or interpretive contribution to the ongoing dialectic. Besides presenting a cogent grasp of the issue and a well-defended, original response, papers should demonstrate all the usual writing virtues such as clarity, smooth transitions, points that build on one another in a logically coherent fashion, lack of grammatical or typographical errors, and appropriate citations of all sources used in developing paper. For more information on my grading criteria, see grading rubric posted on http://groups.apu.edu/theophil. And for information on how to cite references, see http://libweb.apu.ac.uk/subjects/reference/citation.php
**Course and University Policies & Procedures**

1. **Attendance:** Absences will only be excused for personal illness, death in the immediate family, or required attendance at another college related event and only if the student notifies the professor before class. No absences will be excused after the fact. Any work that will be missed must be turned in prior to absence if at all possible.

2. **Grading:** Your grade will be determined by multiplying your raw score by the percentages allocated according to “Course Requirements” section above and then adding the scores together.

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   A grading rubric is available online indicating how grades for the content and structure of the paper and essay questions will be determined. Late papers cannot be turned in without a valid excuse (see above) and, even with such an excuse, will be docked a third of a grade for every late day. For example, a ‘B+’ paper will automatically drop to a ‘B’ the day after it is due.

3. **APU’s Final Exam Policy:** “No final examination shall be given to individual students BEFORE the regularly scheduled time. No exception can be made to this rule without approval of the instructor, the department chair, and the Dean of the School of Theology.”

4. **Academic Integrity Policy:** The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

5. **Expectations for this course regarding academic integrity in this class:**
   - Expectations are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy available on http://www.apu.edu/provost/facultyResources/integrity/
   - Note especially III.B. Any paraphrasing of ideas or arguments obtained others, including fellow students and online sources, must be fully acknowledged and cited.
   - An assignment that consists primarily of paraphrases or quotes from other sources, even if properly cited, will result in a very low grade since it is the student’s attempt to express their own ideas and unique perspective that is of to this instructor. Evidence of the unacknowledged use of another’s work will result in a zero for that assignment and a report of the violation to the Office of the Provost.
   - Information regarding MLA style citations can be found on http://libweb.apu.ac.uk/subjects/reference/citation.php
   - Your instructor will make it clear those assignments where collaboration is permitted and encouraged. On those assignments, any student’s contribution should be acknowledged and there should be a good faith effort for each collaborator to make an equal contribution.
   - The student is responsible to discuss any questions concerning academic integrity with the instructor prior to turning in the assignment.

6. **Consequences for violations of academic integrity in this class:** Consequences are consistent with those outlined in the academic integrity policy.