Professor David W. Goldberg
Office: Patterson 319
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Meeting Times: 12:50-1:50 MWF
Meeting Room: Patterson 106
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Course Description:

Philosophy stands as one of the oldest academic disciplines, with over a 2600-year history whose impact on society cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, modernity tends to consider Philosophy as an impractical field of study and plays down the importance that this discipline has had, and continues to have. To the contrary, this course will illustrate the influence that philosophic thought has had, and still does, on the development of Western civilization. From its early beginnings in the Greek city/states that dotted the Aegean, to contemporary postmodernism, we will examine the philosophical thought of a number of influential philosophers, focusing on their conceptualized view of reality, and the impact they have had on our society.

Concentration will be on four significant Western philosophers: Socrates (as presented by his student Plato), Descartes, Hume and Nietzsche. The aim of our examination will be primarily to understand the philosophic thought of these influential philosophers, and secondly the historical importance that their particular philosophy had on the development of Western culture.

Thematically we will examine issues as diverse as the philosophical foundations for justice; epistemological questions about reality and what we can know, as well as how we know; the philosophical grounds for moral decision making; and the question of what it is to be human. By the end of the class students should expect to be cognizant of the historical development of Western philosophic thought and be able to express the importance and impact that the philosophers that we have studied have had on this development.

Classes will consist of lectures and discussions on the selected texts. Students are encouraged to interrupt the lecture at any time to pursue questions relevant to the material under discussion. I believe that education works best when a dialogue is established, hence discussion will be encouraged. As the material being read is undoubtedly new to many students I would recommend three procedures to facilitate comprehension and involvement: first, and I cannot stress this enough, keep abreast with the reading assignments as this will enable a more lively participation in class discussions and easier comprehension of the philosophic thought; second, a single surface reading will not be sufficient to grasp the material so be prepared to read a piece two or more times; and finally take notes as you go over the assigned readings, notes that clarify the material and include any questions that you might have.
Required Texts:


Course Expectations:

1. Assignments:

   First, as indicated above, keep abreast with the reading assignments, and when homework is assigned it is to your advantage to complete the task. Classroom discussion will be more vibrant and lively if everybody arrives having completed that day’s assignment.

2. Attendance:

   Consistency of attendance is central to the educational process and my experience in the past has shown that students who attend on a regular basis do much better than those who do not. In my older age I have become jaded by attendance policies and consider it your job as an adult learner to avoid missing classes, but let it be known that though I have decided to have no policy, your absences will be noticed and will indirectly affect your grade.

3. Exams and paper:

   Grading will be accomplished via essay exams, and a research paper. At the conclusion of each philosopher that we discuss, there will be an essay exam, each exam counting for 15% of your final grade. Your research paper, 40% of your grade, will be a philosophical examination of a topic relating to the authors discussed during the course of the class. I will supply two topics for each author and you will select from those choices. Deadline dates are set for a reason, so extensions on assignments will only be given under extreme circumstances and must be approved by me in advance.

   Academic integrity is an issue that I take very seriously. Philosophy papers often rely on other sources for information and substantiation of a position; hence you must be very careful to properly cite your use of a passage or thought derived from someone else. For information on plagiarism see the College Catalogue, or a good writing guidebook such as Diana Hacker’s Rules for Writers. Also, remember that the Internet has made it both easy to find information, as well as to check for sources. Do not think that because you found information at some obscure WEB site that there is no need to reference the material. One final point, your papers will be submitted to turnitin.com.
4. **Grading:**

Your final grade will be determined according to the follow:

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<table>
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<tr>
<td>4 essay exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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5. **Classroom expectations:**

First, it is desirable that a certain demeanor be maintained in the classroom. Please refrain from holding conversations during the class with other members of the course. This is disturbing for both your fellow students and myself, and distracts from the academic environment. If you have a question about the material ask me, not your classmate, as chances are others will also have the same issue.

Use of cell-phones and computers in class will not be allowed. As I have aged I have become increasingly curmudgeonly in regards to this, as these devices tend to be a disturbance and distraction not only to the user, but also to the entire class. So, all cell-phones **must be turned off** during class, and note taking must be in the old-fashioned manner.

Office hours: My office is Patterson 319 and I will have office hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30-11:30 or by appointment. I can also be reached via e-mail at goldbedw@westminster.edu and my phone extension is 7153. If you are having any difficulty or would just like to converse on philosophical issues please feel free to contact me.
# Tentative Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 1     | Just what is philosophy?  
*The Clouds* |
| 2     | The *elenchus* and *eidos.*  
*Euthyphro* |
| 3     | A defense of one’s actions  
*Apology* |
| 4     | A reason not to escape the sentence.  
*Crito* |
| 5     | Philosophy, a search for death  
*Phaedo*  
**Plato Exam** |
| 6     | Descartes confronts the tradition of Aristotle, or “What, am I dreaming?”  
*Meditations* 1 & 2.  
**Descartes Exam** |
| 7     | A proof for the existence of God, and the reason for error.  
*Meditations* 3 & 4.  
**Descartes Exam** |
| 8     | Matter is resurrected from the realm of dreams.  
*Meditations* 5 & 6.  
**Hume Exam** |
| 9     | A Scottish attack on the Rationalists:  
*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Chap. I-IV  
**Hume Exam** |
| 10    | Hume: The *death-blow to episteme.*  
*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Chap. V-VIII  
**Hume Exam** |
| 11    |  
**Research Paper due**  
**Nietzsche Exam** |
| 12    | A genealogical perspective  
*Nietzsche*  
*History of an Error* |
| 13    | The *death of god*  
*Nietzsche*  
*The Madman*  
**Research Paper due** |
| 14    | A *Dionysian Telos*  
*Nietzsche*  
*The Übermensch*  
**Nietzsche Exam** |
| 15    | Wrap up  
**Nietzsche Exam** |