



PHIL 3355 WORLD PHILOSOPHY

Instructor: Professor Dr. Patrick Dua (M.A., Dr. phil.)

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course deals with philosophy in a global context. It presents the world's view of philosophy from ancient to contemporary times and emphasizes the contributions of thinkers chosen from a broad range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Emphasis will be placed on the wide diversity and historical backgrounds of various philosophical traditions. The course also offers an introduction to some of the basic origins which enable us to appreciate the value-systems of the five major living religious cultures of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The course will not engage in any deep examination of the history of each religious tradition. However, the primary focus will be *phenomenological*, in other words, the lived experience of each tradition as it grapples with such matters as the nature of God and creation, the origin of evil, human responsibility, morality, and social issues of society. This does not imply that the analytical concerns will constitute a course in theology, which is the detailed study of specific religious doctrines or dogma. The two frequently tend to deal with similar issues, however, from quite different perspectives.

Course Objectives

After regular participation in this course and the successful completion of assignments and self-assessment questions constructed in conformity with the syllabus specifications, students should be able to gain increased knowledge within the following areas:

- the similarities and differences among the major world religions
- the evolution of religion and science in the world
- the basic foundations of the diverse cultures across the world & their philosophical ways of thinking
- the aims, nature and methods of philosophical inquiry
- the ability to compare and contrast philosophical positions from different cultures
- the concepts of Man, God, and the World - as the basic general categories of metaphysics
- the relevant literature, problems and methods of philosophy.

METHOD:

The course is associated with studies in the humanities or the social sciences. As the basic foundations of human knowledge and intellectual tradition, courses in philosophy are also of high relevance and general applicability to all professions and disciplines. It offers a broad survey of global philosophical thought from approximately 1500 BC to the present. The central focus will highlight the ways in which selected pre-modern thinkers addressed questions concerning the principles of creation, life, existence, and thought.

While Greek and some other Pre-socratic philosophers relied heavily on metaphysical explanations, the Pharaonic Egyptians before them will be shown to have dwelled essentially on applied religious perceptions that reached far beyond the natural world and still exist today as traditions among some non-European cultures. In contrast, Aristotle and others among his successors sought their answers empirically by resorting to the offering of naturalistic accounts which laid the foundation for our scientific traditions.



Later Classical and Medieval philosophers were influenced by these diverse backgrounds to develop ideas which in turn mapped out Neo-platonism, Stoicism as well as some of the values espoused by the great world religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The significance of philosophy in aiding us to attempt an understanding of the universe, the physical, spiritual and the mental world - affords us a degree of continuity for the advancement of human knowledge and progress. Grasping the interplay between source material and its interpretation is, in a standard way, a critical component of the history of philosophy - indeed, of all philosophy. Due emphasis will be placed on the ability of students to utilize their analytical faculties, and on the need to acquire some of the pertinent linguistic skills necessary for philosophical explanations. This can be warranted, for instance, by a careful and interested examination of the particular uses to which language is applied in philosophical discourse.

Class Schedule and Sequence of Instruction

[Sample] Spring, early January to early May 2014 (Thursdays, 18:00 - 20:45)

Lecture	Date	Content
1		Module 1: Ancient Origins of World Philosophical Traditions (Week 1-4) Understanding World Philosophy
2		Ancient Pharaonic Egypt
3		Creationist Perceptions
4		Ancient Persia Module 2: Characteristics of Ancient Greek / Western Philosophy (Week 5-8) The Nature of Pre-Socratic Philosophy
5		Pythagoras
6		The Emergence of Socrates Post-Socratic Philosophy Stoicism
7		Philosophy in the Roman Empire Medieval Philosophy
8		*** Independent Review ahead of Midterm Progress Examination *** Midterm Progress Examination (Week 8)
9		Midterm break
10		Module 3: Introduction to Eastern, African & Native American Philosophy (Week 9-12)
11		Eastern (Indian) Philosophy
12		African Philosophy
13		Native American Philosophy
14		Module 4: Modern Philosophy (Week 13-16) Philosophical Theories born of the Nation State *** Independent Review ahead of Final Examination *** Conclusion of all outstanding Issues.
15		*** Research Projects due (Week 16) *** Final Examination (Week 16)

Required Textbooks and Materials

As officially prescribed, or the following: Archetypes of Wisdom (Douglas Soccio)

NOTE: The overriding materials for this class entail the course modules which have been planned ahead to be presented as lecture series. Students need the textbook(s) to 1) amplify their knowledge base, and 2) enhance their scope for research preferences.

How do students deal with their textbooks?
- Without waiting to be told, students are expected to begin reading all chapters of their textbooks (from Chapter 1 to the end) by starting early at their own pace!

Student Responsibilities:

By the end of the course, successful students will be expected to have participated fully and consistently in all class sessions. The lecture topics (*listed below within the confines of the projected class agenda*) are not intended to reflect the organizational structure(s) of any accompanying textbook(s); neither will they coincide necessarily with any preparatory readings done in advance by students.

The ability to digest and appreciate the contents of the course literature is, in principle, the student's own responsibility. The interaction between the lectures and the literature is aimed primarily to provide students with instruction in the skills to be developed, namely: private reading for supplementary information, thinking, research, and academic analysis. Students are advised to seek to generate class discussions by articulating themselves freely on any questions of relevance to the subject.

Grading

Grade	Descriptive Grade	Numeric Grade	Grade Points
A	Excellent Scholarship	93-100	4.00
A-	Excellent Scholarship	90-92	3.70
B+	Good Scholarship	87-89	3.30
B	Good Scholarship	83-86	3.00
B-	Good Scholarship	80-82	2.70
C+	Satisfactory Scholarship	77-79	2.30
C	Satisfactory Scholarship	70-76	2.00
D+	Poor Scholarship	67-69	1.30
D	Poor Scholarship	63-66	1.00
D-	Poor Scholarship	60-62	0.07
F	Failure	Less than 60	0.00

Exams

A two-hour mid-term progress examination and a final examination will be administered. The final examination - also lasting two hours - will be administered on the last day of the class meetings (i.e. December 19, 2013). Both examinations will entail a set-pattern of essays and other short responses to certain relevant questions. The exams will be based on the lectures and contents of the accompanying course literature.

The computation and distribution of actual individual grades in terms of A, B, C, D, etc. will depend on the overall criteria of individual performance and the discretion of lecturer as follows:

Midterm Progress Examination	25 %
Degree of in-class interaction	10 %
Ability to apply textbook principles	5 %
Research Project	25 %
Final Examination	35 %

Categories of Passing Grades:

- * A, B+ = First Class Pass
- * B, B-, C+ = Second Class Pass
- * C, C- = Third Class Pass

Paper and Presentation (if applicable)

Research Project (*Reflection Paper*):

Students are expected to be prepared -

- to do web and library research and to submit a 10-page final reflection paper in which they support their preferred theory or philosopher selected from those discussed in the course and apply it constructively to a discussion of any philosophical issue of their choice.

- Specifically, a reflection paper must argue for (or against) a thesis using a clearly presented line of reasoning and examples where appropriate.

The thesis might relate to one or the other of the following questions:

"Where did we come from?"

"What is the meaning of life?"

"What is reality?"

"Is a conflict-free world a possibility?"

"Does the soul live beyond the death of the physical body?"

"What is thinking?"

- The Submission of the research project will be due in the last week of the semester.

Professor: Dr. Patrick Dua (M.A., University of Heidelberg/1978; PhD., University of Heidelberg/1980) obtained the above degrees in the subject-combination of Political Science, International Law and Philosophy; is an adjunct professor of the University of Maryland since 1979; publicized works include the following: a book on the "Third World"; various research projects on social planning for senior citizens and young children; a number of articles related to the "North-South Dialog" and Human-Right issues; functions as a freelance copy editor in various fields of academic literature, as well as a consultant on social policy planning to governmental agencies in Germany.

My Homepage: <http://www.crosslace.com>

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