

# Knowledge, Reality and Values

## CORC 1210

Instructor Mateo Duque

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Section: TR8

Code: 0135

Semester: Fall 2012

Classroom: 4141B

Meeting time: Tues and Thurs 8:00AM-9:15AM

Credits: 3.0

Office: Philosophy Department Adjunct Office

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00AM-11:00AM,

Friday 12:30PM-1:30PM, and by appointment.

### **SYLLABUS**

#### **Introduction**

Philosophy's distinctive ways of understanding and thinking about perennial human questions: "What can I know?"; "What is real?" "What is right and wrong??" This course will cover the basic introduction to a number of major debates in epistemology, metaphysics, and value theory.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- 1) Students will improve critical thinking by developing skills of explaining, critically examining, and responding to philosophical theories, issues, and claims in the philosophical areas of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.
- 2) Students will improve writing skills by explaining, exploring, and critically examining philosophical theories, issues, concepts, and arguments relating to the philosophical areas of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics clearly in writing.
- 3) Students will improve communication skills by explaining orally philosophical theories, issues, claims, concepts, and arguments relating to the philosophical areas of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.
- 4) Students will improve skills of interpreting and evaluating philosophical writings.
- 5) Students will develop an openness to having their beliefs challenged, will learn to hear and comprehend the views of others, and to entertain objections to their own views.
- 6) Students will be able to explain several classic ethical theories, to compare and contrast ethical theories, and to apply these to justify conclusions relating to concrete moral issues.
- 7) Students will acquire a familiarity with and an understanding of some classic and contemporary philosophical literature and some fundamental philosophical issues, and will be able to explain important contributions to the history of philosophy and their relation to present viewpoints.
- 8) Students will be able to explain several classic epistemological theories, and to compare and contrast theories of what knowledge is and how it is acquired.
- 9) Students will be able to show that issues may be regarded from multiple viewpoints, and will be able to present reasons in support of each viewpoint.
- 10) Students will improve reasoning skills and ethical decision making skills by acquiring an understanding of ethical theories and philosophical concepts that will enable them to develop their own opinions on conceptions and practices of moral interaction and democracy.
- 11) Students will develop a conceptual foundation for future learning by exploring philosophical theories and arguments and will acquire related critical thinking and communication skills.

### **CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity**

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits that violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation.

### **CUNY Policy on Disability Services**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me immediately.

Please be aware of the NY State Education Law, which provides that:

1. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which they may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days
3. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of their rights

## Required Text

We will be using Steven Cahn's *Classics of Western Philosophy*. Hackett Publishing, 2007. ISBN-10: 0872208591 | ISBN-13: 978-0872208599

Try to get the most current edition (7<sup>th</sup> edition). It is available on Amazon and the bookstore.

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>

## Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be composed of the following:

- Two in-class essay tests: one, a midterm (15%); the other, a final exam (20%, for 35% total).
- A minimum of 10 Online Posts (out of 13 possible posts, bottom 3 will be dropped each is worth 3%, for 30% total).
- In-class participation (10%)
- Two short papers (2-3 pages) (first paper 10%, second paper 15%, for 25% total).

## Course Expectations

Like a fine spirit, philosophy requires time and fermentation. You will get the most benefit out of the class by being here and doing the work. Unexcused absences will be noted and will affect your final grade. Complete the readings before the day that they are due, participate in class discussion, and complete all listed assignments. Students should come to class with the required reading in-hand, either as a printed hard-copy or an electronic version (Kindle, iPad, etc.). Repeatedly attending class unprepared may adversely affect your grade.

Cell phone use (calling, texting, web browsing, etc.) is prohibited in class. Eating and drinking is acceptable as long as it does not interfere with the class. Habitual lateness (especially if it interferes with the class) may adversely affect your grade.

The two essay exams may be made up *only* with a doctor's note or in the event of serious family illness or death. Extra credit will not be offered.

The two required papers must be turned in on time. Each day the assignment is late will incur a one grade reduction from the paper's final grade. (If the paper is one day late, an "A" becomes a "B," if two days late, an "A" becomes a "C," etc.)

## Reading Schedule

WEEK 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, Syllabus, What is Philosophy? And why is it useful?</li> <li>• Structure of Thought, Informal Logic</li> </ul>
WEEK 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plato, <i>The Symposium</i> Focus on Intro, and the speeches by Aristophanes, Socrates, and Alcibiades</li> </ul>
WEEK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• René Descartes, <i>Meditations I and II</i></li> </ul>
WEEK 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• René Descartes, <i>Meditations III and VI</i></li> </ul> <p><b>PAPER # 1 DUE</b></p>
WEEK 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> First Half (TBA)</li> </ul>
WEEK 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> Second Half (TBA)</li> </ul>
WEEK 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excerpt: Hume. A Treatise of Human Nature. Book II the section entitled “On the Passions”</li> </ul>
WEEK 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout: Excerpt from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s <i>Brothers Karamazov</i> “Rebellion” and “The Grand Inquisitor”</li> <li>• Review for Midterm</li> </ul> <p><b>MIDTERM EXAM: IN-CLASS ESSAYS</b></p>
WEEK 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go over Midterm</li> <li>• J. S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> Chapters 1 and 2.</li> </ul>
WEEK 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> Chapters 3 and 4.</li> </ul>
WEEK 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excerpt: J. S. Mill. <i>Utilitarianism</i>. Chapter 2.</li> </ul> <p><b>PAPER #2 Due</b></p>
WEEK 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excerpt: Immanuel Kant. <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i>. Chapter II.</li> </ul>
WEEK 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristotle, Excerpt: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book II and III</li> </ul>
WEEK 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout: Excerpts from Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i></li> <li>• Review for Final</li> </ul>
Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Last Day) <b>FINAL EXAM: IN-CLASS ESSAYS</b></li> </ul>