

SYLLABUS
CORC 1210 SECTIONS: TR2F and TR3F
Knowledge, Reality & Value
Fall 2012

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and by appointment.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Don't make the mistake of thinking that this will be an easy class because it is philosophy, and "anything goes" in philosophy. Rather, consider philosophy as a kind of mathematics or logic of everything, making it all the more difficult than mathematics or logic. There are three major fields in philosophy: Epistemology, which is the study of knowledge and belief, Metaphysics, which is the study of existence, being, and reality, and finally, Axiology, which is the study of values, value claims, and judgments. We will be studying these three fields in depth, as well as, being exposed to *some* logic. We will learn how to support our views, as Socrates, one of the fathers of Western Philosophy did, through the use of argument.

RULES FOR THE COURSE:

The following special rules apply, subject to revision without notice. Read very carefully. There will be reading assignments for each class meeting. Philosophy reading assignments **must** be read at least once, and **should** be read at least two times each. This is no spectator course; you must be prepared to answer pointed questions about the assigned readings and to participate in group discussions for each class meeting. I will spot quiz you by name or as a group at any time to assess reading preparation.

On the first day of class, you will be assigned a take-home writing assignment, which will then be used for in-class discussions at the beginning of the semester. This writing assignment must be typed and will be collected. No grade will be assigned for this assignment; however, failure to fulfill this requirement will result in a grade of zero added to your numeric average. There will be several in-class writing assignments and classroom group assignments throughout the semester, a take-home paper which will be assigned and due during the second half of the semester, in-class quizzes, an in-class midterm exam, and an in-class final exam. Exams may include any combination of T/F, multiple choice, fill-in or essay questions. Make-up exams are subject to strict conditions: they require my permission, are devalued 10 points per day until you speak to me to make arrangements, and are altered (e.g., made more difficult) as I see fit; others will have a grade of zero added to their average. The opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments will be explained for each assignment when it is assigned.

Your numeric average is calculated as follows: the midterm and final are

averaged in twice, the paper and all quizzes are each averaged in once, and all in-class group assignments will be averaged together and considered as one quiz grade, (which will then be averaged into your numeric grade once). There will not be a curve on any of the above listed grades; however, course grades are *not* based *solely* on numeric averages from exams, etc. Your grade may be raised for good class participation and attendance. Negative or disruptive behavior during class could result in the lowering of your numeric average as well. Prompt attendance is *essential*. Your course average may be lowered 2 points per unexcused absence and 1 point per unexcused lateness or early exit; you may fail as a result. **Please note:** Students will be excused for non-attendance because of religious beliefs as explained in the Brooklyn College Bulletin (2011-2012) on page 49. Please read page 49 carefully for a full explanation of the New York State Education Law and please speak with me regarding the above, so that we can work together to ensure that everything goes smoothly for you. You will be marked absent *unless* you notify me of your presence during attendance or *immediately* after class. If you are absent or late, you are responsible to get assignment, exam, and all other information from your classmates. I advise that you exchange telephone numbers and/or email addresses with at least two of your classmates. After receiving the information from your absence, you may then make an appointment with me if you have any questions. If you don't drop the course or withdraw by the deadline, you tacitly consent to these rules.

COURSE GOALS AND 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.

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 the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

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 your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

TEXTS: Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett), Third Edition.
Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Hackett), Third Edition.
There may be handouts as well.