

## CORC 1210 Syllabus

Prof. Steinsvold

Fall 2012

### Course Description

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. 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. 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. Students will improve skills of interpreting and evaluating philosophical writings. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. Students will develop a conceptual foundation for future learning by exploring philosophical theories and arguments and will acquire related critical thinking and communication skills.

Required Text *Philosophical Problems 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. L. Bonjour & A. Baker

Available at the college bookstore.

### Grading: Mid Term, Class Participation, and Attendance

The student's final grade depends mainly on the mid-term, final and paper. Attendance and class participation are also factors. The final grade is calculated as follows.

$(45\% \text{ of the final exam grade}) + (45\% \text{ of the mid-term exam grade}) + (10\% \text{ of paper grade})$

Good attendance and good participation will be reflected by adding points to the final grade. Thus, if the student has an exam grade of a B- and good class participation, the final grade may be a B or B+. Thus, participation may affect your grade by a range of ten points. These points are given at my discretion. A healthy attendance record may be viewed favorably as well in determining your final grade.

Overall, I hope you feel encouraged to participate. Class discussion makes everything more interesting. A *lack* of class participation will *not* negatively affect your grade (unfair to penalize the quiet). However, negative class participation (e.g., being rude with others, etc.) can negatively affect your grade. Being late, especially being continually late, will take away from your class participation points. Being late means arriving after attendance has been taken. If you arrive late, inform me after class to mark you as attending. For the state law regarding non-attendance due to religious beliefs, see p. 53 of the Bulletin.

I will announce my official office hours soon, though it is usually best to simply talk to me after class, I am typically free. Email: [steinsvold1@verizon.net](mailto:steinsvold1@verizon.net). If you feel the need for an extra-credit assignment, ask and we'll discuss it.

## **Plagiarism**

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.

## **Students with Disabilities**

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.

## READING LIST CORC 1210

FALL 2012  
T,TH 3:40-4:55 PM, TR3

Professor Steinsvold  
4141B

Text: *Philosophical Problems 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, eds. Bonjour and Baker. Available in school bookstore.

Aug. 28: Overview, Syllabus and Reading List handed out.

Aug. 30: Baker. *Introduction to Philosophical Thinking*, p.2-17.

Sept. 4: Plato. *Euthyphro*, p.17.-26.

Sept. 6: Aquinas. *The Five Ways*, p.518.

Sept. 11: Introduction to Chapter 4, p. 215-220 & Parfit. *Personal Identity*, p. 238 (stop at 242).

Sept. 13: Hick. *The Problem of Evil*, p. 576-580.

Sept. 20: Kaufmann. *Pascal's Wager*, p. 58-582. &  
W.K Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief* .<http://www.anthoniflood.com/ethicsofbelief.htm>

Sept. 27: Introduction to Chapter 2, p.42-46.

Oct. 2: Descartes. *Meditations I and II*, p. 47-52

Oct. 4: Descartes. *Meditation III*, p. 52-58.

Oct. 9: Descartes. *The Ontological Argument*, p. 556-557 &  
Kant. *The impossibility of an Ontological Proof of the Existence of God*, p. 558-560.

Oct. 11: Searle, *Is The Mind's Brain A Computer Program?* P. 180-187.

Oct. 16: **MID-TERM**

Oct. 18: Rachels. *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism*, p.420-427.

Oct. 23: Feinberg. *Psychological Egoism*, p. 428.-434.

Oct. 25: Bentham, *An Introduction to The Principle of Morals and Legislation* p. 323-328.  
& Nozick. *The Experience Machine*, p. 605.-607.

Oct. 30: Kant. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 353-362.

Nov. 1: Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 396-405 & Hursthouse. *Virtue Theory And Abortion*, p. 414-419.

Nov. 6: Locke. *From An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 6-73.  
Berkeley, *From Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, p. 74-93.

Nov. 8: O'Neill. *The Moral Perplexities of Famine Relief*, p.363-374.

Nov. 13: Hobbes. *The Social Contract*., p. 449-457 & Locke. *The Social Contract*, p. 459-469.

Nov. 15: Rawls. *Justice as Fairness*, p. 483-.

Nov. 20: Nozick. *The Entitlement Theory of Justice*, p. 475-495.

Nov. 27: Gettier, Edmund. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?", available at  
<http://www.ditext.com/gettier/gettier.html>

Nov. 29: Nagel, *What Is It Like To Be A Bat?* p.192-197 &  
Jackson, *What Mary Didn't Know*, p. 198-200.

Dec. 4: Foster, *A Defense of Dualism*, p. 157-160.

Dec. 6 Nagel. *The Absurd*, p. 608-613 & Epictetus, *The Manual* (selections), p.600-605.

Dec. 11: Susan Wolf. *Happiness and Meaning*, p.614-625.

**FINAL: TBA**