

# **Philosophy 120—Introduction to Philosophy**

*Wofford College, Spring, 2009*

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Instructor: **Prof. Charles D. Kay**

Office: Daniel 201

E-Mail: [kaycd@wofford.edu](mailto:kaycd@wofford.edu)

This course is an introduction to the ideas and methods of philosophical thinking. The course is intended to develop your skills of analysis through a close study of selected texts, but will also lead to a better understanding of the way ideas are brought into synthesis as we consider the lives and legacies of the authors. Although lectures will be necessary on occasion, it is hoped that most classes will be devoted to a discussion of the readings and the issues they raise.

Since few students entering college have ever studied anything like philosophy before, this course serves as an introduction to a discipline that will at first seem largely unfamiliar. Yet almost any reflective individual already will have confronted some of the major issues usually identified with the discipline of philosophy: the existence of God, the nature of freedom and responsibility, the meaning of life. What will make so much of this course seem unfamiliar is that you will be encouraged to think self-consciously about these things, and to seriously consider alternative views that you might normally reject out of hand. The readings and discussions are intended to stimulate you to critically evaluate a variety of claims and beliefs—including your own beliefs—not necessarily in order to change them, but in order to become more aware of whatever reasons lie behind them and of the consequences to which they lead.

As stated in the Catalog, Wofford's purpose as an institution is to enable all members of the college community to "develop intellectual curiosity, independence of thought, maturity of judgment, self-discipline, religious faith, and moral character so that they will be ever sensitive to the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship and render effective leadership and generous service to the communities in which they live." Throughout the semester, you should reflect from time to time on the extent to which this course is actually achieving these goals, and on your own role in making that achievement possible—both for yourself and for the rest of us in the class. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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**Class Schedule:** 9:30-10:50 am, Tu, Th; Olin 213

## Required Texts:

Craig—**Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction** (*Oxford U. Press*)

Descartes—**Discourse on the Method** (*Hackett Pub. Co.*)

Plato—**The Trial and Death of Socrates** (*Hackett Pub. Co.*)

Russell—**The Problems of Philosophy** (*Hackett Pub. Co.*)

Weston—**A Rulebook for Arguments, 4<sup>th</sup> edition** (*Hackett Pub. Co.*)

## Basis for Grade Evaluation:

- I. **Attendance and Participation** (20%): You are expected to be present at each class session, and prepared to engage in classroom discussions. Participation grade will include unannounced quizzes as necessary.
- II. **Papers** (10% each): There will be two short (2-page) papers due during the term: March 2, April 20. Details of the assignments will be distributed at the appropriate time
- III. **Examinations** (30% each): Two in-class examinations are scheduled. The first for March 26, and the second at the assigned time during finals week, May 12.

All work done for credit in this course is subject to the provisions of the Wofford College Honor Code. The text of the Code is available online at the College website:

<http://www.wofford.edu/uploadedFiles/studentLife/0708HonorCode.pdf>

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## Schedule of Readings:

(subject to change as needed)

- |     |   |                            |
|-----|---|----------------------------|
| Feb | 3 | Introductory               |
|     | 5 | Craig, chapter 1; Weston V |

### Socrates: What Should We Do?

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Feb | 10 | Plato— <i>Euthyphro</i> ; Weston, Introduction and I                  |
|     | 12 | Plato— <i>Euthyphro</i> ; Weston, Appendix II: Definitions            |
|     | 17 | Plato— <i>Apology</i>   |
|     | 19 | Mark Allman ( <i>handout</i> )<br>(change in class time: 10:00-12:00) |
|     | 24 | Plato— <i>Crito</i> ; Craig, chapter 2                                |
|     | 26 | Plato— <i>Crito &amp; Phaedo</i>                                      |

**Essay due by Noon, March 2**

### What is there, and how do we know?

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Mar | 3  | Hume on Miracles ( <i>handout</i> ); Craig, chapter 3 |
|     | 5  | Milinda ( <i>handout</i> ); Craig, chapter 4          |
|     | 10 | Russell I-II, IV                                      |
|     | 12 | Weston II-III; Russell VI                             |

(continued)

## Schedule of Readings (*continued*):

### Ethics

- Mar 17 Mill (*handout*); Craig, pages 45-50;  
19 Kant (*handout*)  
24 Rawls (*handout*); Craig, pages 50-52  
26 **Examination**

[break]

### Logic and Reason

- Apr 7 Craig, pages 52-60; Russell V, XI  
9 Weston VI  
14 Metaphysical “-isms” Craig, pages 61-66  
16 Epistemological “-isms” Craig, pages 66-73

**Essay due by Noon, April 20**

### Descartes and the Life of Philosophy

- Apr 21 Craig, pages 74-77; Descartes I-III  
23 Descartes IV  
28 Craig, pages 78-80; Descartes V-VI

### Expanding Our Horizons

- Apr 30 Craig, pages 81-99  
May 5 Craig, chapter 8  
7 Russell XIV-XV

**Final Examination:** Tuesday, May 12, 9:00am (TR 9:30)