

**Introduction to Philosophy**  
**UIC, Spring 2009, Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45,**  
**BSB 319**

Instructor: Aleks Zarnitsyn  
Email: azarni2@uic.edu  
Office: 1424 University Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00-10:00; Thursdays 9:00-10:00 ; and by appointment

## **Course Description**

This course is a general introduction to philosophy and its methods. We will work through a number of philosophical texts that deal with some of the following topics: the existence of god, the nature of the mind, and free will, and others. Reading, thinking and writing about these topics with the hope of acquiring a taste for clarity, precision and good argumentation should prove valuable in the fields other than philosophy.

## **Text**

Nils CH. Rahut, ed., *Readings on the Ultimate Questions*, 2nd ed.  
Some additional readings will be distributed in class or posted on-line.

## **Assignments and Grading**

Students must complete all the required assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade. No exceptions.

*Quizzes:* Quizzes are worth 25% of your overall grade. Quizzes will be given most meetings. At the end of the term, I will drop four of your lowest quiz grades; your combined quiz grade will be an average of the remaining number of quizzes. You must receive a passing grade on at least half of the quizzes in order to pass the course. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. Quizzes will be based on the material from assigned readings and lectures. Quizzes may consist of true/false, short answer, or multiple choice questions.

*Paper:* One 4-6 page paper, on one of the topics that I will supply, worth 25% of your overall grade. You will have two to three weeks to work on the paper. The assignment includes submitting a mandatory detailed outline of the paper a week before the due date. If time allows, I might want to meet with you to discuss your outline before you start writing the actual paper.

*Mid-term Exam:* There will one midterm exam, worth 25% of your overall grade.

*Final Exam:* The final exam is worth 25% of your overall grade. The date of the final exam will be announced in class.

## **Additional Policies**

*Make-up Policy for Exams:* You must contact me at least two days prior to the exam and make arrangements to take it at some other time. Failure to do so will result in a zero (0) for the exam. Failure to show up for the scheduled make-up exam will result in a zero (0) for the exam.

*Late Papers:* In some circumstances, you may request an extension on your paper deadline. If you do not get an extension, late assignments will be downgraded by 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

*Academic Dishonesty:* Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UIC standards; I will refer suspected cases over to the campus disciplinary committee.

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:* Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services [(312 413 2183 or (312) 413 0123]. Any such students should introduce themselves to me no later than by the end of the second week.

## Tentative Schedule of Readings and Lectures

*Note on Reading:* I will expect you to have read the assigned readings before class devoted to that unit. Some (if not all) readings will require multiple readings. Unless otherwise specified, all readings are from Rauhut's volume.

### **Week 1** Introduction and The Problem of Evil

13 January: Introduction; Optional: Kant "What is Enlightenment?"

15 January: Mackie "Evil and Omnipotence"

### **Week 2** The Problem of Evil and Cosmological Argument

20 January: Swinburne "Why God Allows Evil"

22 January: Aquinas "The Five Ways"; Taylor "The Cosmological Argument"

### **Week 3** The Design Argument and Pascal and Belief without Evidence?

27 January: Paley "The Argument from Design" (get a copy from me); Coyne *The Faith that Dare Not Speak Its Name* (on-line)

29 January: Pascal "The Wager" (get a copy from me)

### **Week 4** Belief without Evidence? and wrap up

3 February: Clifford "The Ethics of Belief"; James "The Will to Believe"

5 February:

### **Week 5**

10 February: Arguments Workshop. Handout.

12 February: Rachels "Must God's Commands Conform to Moral Standards?" and wrap up

### **Week 6** Philosophy of Mind: Introduction to the Problem

17 February: Singer, excerpts from *Animal Liberation*; Russell "The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds"

19 February: Descartes, Dualism (Excerpts from "Meditations")

### **Week 7**

24 February: Churchland "A Critique of Dualism"

26 February: Armstrong "The Nature of the Mind"

### **Week 8**

3 March: Review for the Mid-Term Exam

5 March: Mid-Term

### **Week 9** Free Will

10 March: Milgram "Behavioral Study of Obedience" (get a copy from me)

12 March: Optional: van Inwagen?

### **Week 10**

17 March: Chisholm "Human Freedom and the Self"

19 March: Stace "Compatibilism"

**Week 11** Spring Break

**Week 12**

31 March: Frankfurt "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"

Paper Topics Assigned

2 April: Dostoyevsky "Notes from Underground"

**Week 13**

7 April: Dostoyevsky continued

Paper Outline Due

9 April: Utilitarianism: Epicurus and Bentham readings

**Week 14**

14 April: Mill's "Utilitarianism" selections

Paper Due

16 April: Mill continued, Singer "Familne, Affluence, and Morality"

**Week 15**

21 April: Kant handout

23 April: Kant continued

**Week 16**

28 April: Nietzsche handout

30 April: Wrap-up