

PHIL410 Theories of Knowledge (Independent Study)

Winthrop University

Spring, 2012; 3 hours (CRN# 22052)

TR, 2:00-3:15pm, KINA312

M. Gregory Oakes, Ph.D.

Office: Kinard 323

Office Hours: M, 4-5pm, WR11:00am-12:30pm; *and by appointment*

Office telephone: x4720

Email: oakesm@winthrop.edu

Website: <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/oakesm>

Essay Due: Monday, April 23

Final Presentation Date: Thursday, April 26, 3pm

Course Description:

This course examines general and basic features of human knowledge. We begin with some background in the Modern understanding of knowledge, which sets the terms for subsequent debate. This involves distinguishing representation from reality, mind from body, and the resultant problems of how one is related, epistemologically, to the other. Having called attention to these problems, the student will investigate prominent attempts to resolve them, drawing upon resources from various philosophical traditions, including Ancient Greek, Continental, and Analytic schools. Our main questions throughout will be, What is knowledge? and What knowledge is possible for humans? Students will write one in-class exam and one term-paper for the course.

Pre-Requisites for this course: PHIL301 or PHIL302.

Goals:

This course intends meeting Goals 1 and 2 of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Mission Statement, located here: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/philrelg/goals.htm>

Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate the following: an appreciation of fundamental issues in epistemology; familiarity with major figures in historical and contemporary epistemology; a satisfactory ability for research in academic philosophy; a satisfactory facility for critical analysis and evaluation of philosophical prose; and a satisfactory ability for construction of cogent philosophical argumentation.

Texts:

Rene Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Cottingham, ed., Cambridge University Press, 1996 (revised ed.)

David Hume: *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, Selby-Bigge and Nidditch, eds., 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 1975

Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason* (abridged), Pluhar, trans., Watkins, ed. Hackett Publishing Co., 1999

Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Gay Science*, Kaufmann, trans., Vintage Books, 1974 (Optional)

plus a number of readings on ELECTRONIC RESERVE

Course Requirements:	% of Grade
Preparation Exam	20%
Research Reports, Presentations	40%
Term Paper, Final Presentation	40%

Grading Scale: 90-100%, A; 80-89%, B; etc.

Notes and Policies:

- Plagiarism. You are responsible for understanding the Winthrop University plagiarism policy located here: <http://www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm>. Let me know if you have any questions.
- Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring accommodation from me must consult with Gena Smith at x3290 (Crawford hall).
- Student code of conduct: As noted in the Student Conduct Code: “Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals.” The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the “Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy” in the online *Student Handbook* (<http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf>).
- Attendance: required for all scheduled meetings.
- Preparation Exam: In order to proceed with the course, students must pass the first exam with a grade of B- or better. If you do not pass this exam at this level, you must take it again. Students not passing the exam may not submit a term paper for credit.
- Research Reports: Students make weekly, written reports on research progress during the period between the preparation exam and the rough draft of the essay. Students will make bi-weekly oral reports on progress, as well.
- Term Paper: All students must write a term paper for the course. The term paper will be a substantial examination of some epistemological issue. Construction of the term paper will be a staged process, including research, presentations, and draft construction.

Schedule:

(subject to change)

Week of	Tues	Thurs
1/9	Course Introduction: Basic Terminology	tba
1/16	Descartes	tba
1/23	Hume	tba
1/30	Kant	tba
2/6	Catch-up, Review	<i>Exam</i>
2/13	Research Instruction Topic Discussion	Individual Meetings with Students
2/20	Meet in Kinard 312 (Tues) <i>Report #1 (Proposal) + Oral Presentation</i> Individual Meetings with Students	

2/27	<i>Report #2</i> Individual Meetings with Students	
3/5	Meet in Kinard 312 (Tues) <i>Report #3 + Oral Presentation</i>	
3/12	Spring Break	
3/19	<i>Report #4</i> Individual Meetings with Students	
3/26	Meet in Kinard 312 (Tues) <i>Report #5 + Oral Presentation</i>	
4/2	<i>Rough Draft Due</i> Individual Meetings with Instructor	
4/9		
4/16	Individual Meetings with Instructor	
4/23	x	x

Essay Due: Monday, April 23

Final Presentation (Oral): Thursday, April 26, 3pm

Readings:

Guided:

Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy* (entire)

Hume: *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Sections II, III, IV, V (pp. 40-47), VII (pp. 60-70 – through first full sentence – 73-79)

Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*. Prefaces: Avii-Axiii, Bvii-Bxxx (pp. 1-14); Introduction: B1-3, A6/B10-A16/B30 (pp. 15-24); Transcendental Aesthetic: A19/B33-A30/B45 (pp. 25-31), compare Section II on Time (pp. 32-38); Transcendental Logic of Concepts: A50/B74-A52/B78, A64/B89-A83/B109 (pp. 39-50); Transcendental Logic of Principles: A136/B175-A158/B197 (pp. 78-88), A176/B218-A194/B239 (pp. 100-111)

Gardner: *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (pp. 165-179) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

Choose One or More:

Plato: *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Parmenides* excerpts (*Phaedo* 64c-67c, 72e-84b, 95a-107a; *Republic* 474b-480a, 504e-535a; *Parmenides* 130e-135d) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

Nietzsche: *The Gay Science*, Book V, plus: sects. 1-4, 11, 13, 14, 19, 21, 26, 39, 57-59, 108-125

Heidegger: *Being and Time*. Introduction I, §§1-5, 7 (pp. 21-40, 49-63) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

Mulhall: *Heidegger and Being and Time* (pp. 1-33) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

Choose One or More:

Quine: “Two Dogmas of Empiricism.” (pp. 20-46) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

BonJour: *In Defense of Pure Reason*. (pp. 1-6, 98-107, 110-120; 206-216) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

Rorty: *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Chapter 3 (pp. 131-164) [on ELECTRONIC RESERVE]

On Reserve in Dacus:

Davidson, D. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford University Press, 2001
Greene, M., ed. *The Anatomy of Knowledge*, Massachusetts University Press, 1969
Sosa, E., and J. Greco, eds. *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*, Blackwell, 1999
Sosa, E., and M. Steup, eds. *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Blackwell, 2005

Some Useful Websites:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: peer reviewed and authoritative, sometimes opinionated (authors take a position); Analytic bent

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: peer reviewed and authoritative, sometimes opinionated (authors take a position); Analytic and Continental both represented

Useful Encyclopediae (in Dacus Reference):

Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, B51 .R68 1998

The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers, B41 .C66 1991

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Edwards), B41 .E5