COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will introduce you to some of the most fascinating and captivating questions, thinkers, styles, and disciplines of philosophy. We will deal with topics such as:

- What is philosophy? What are the different sub-disciplines and styles? (Overview)
- What constitutes a good life? Is there a “meaning” of life? (Practical Philosophy)
- What is reality and how do we know about it? (Theories of Knowledge: Epistemology)
- How do our minds and our consciousness relate to our body? Are our mental states and thoughts as “real” as our bodies? What is the “self”? (Philosophy of Mind, Mind-Body problem)
- Is there life after death – and how does this question relate to the Mind-Body problem?
- What speaks for and against a belief in god?
- What is Democracy?
- What is Art, and how does it relate to our life and reality? (Aesthetics)

In approaching these and/or other questions, we will encounter different philosophical traditions, epochs, cultures, and styles of argumentation, from antiquity to present-day discourse.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course participants know several of the key questions, disciplines, texts, authors and terminology of past and contemporary philosophy. They are familiar with the technique of close reading, of analyzing the meaning of texts and of (re)constructing philosophical arguments in speaking and writing. They are able to critically formulate questions and discuss possible positions in response: in the classroom as well as in written form. They interact attentively and in a supportive manner with their classmates during discussions. And they are capable to reflect on their own lives, thoughts and existence on the basis of philosophical readings and discussions.
COURSE ORGANIZATION

Each class will have a lecture-part and a discussion-part. For each session reading-material will be assigned. It is essential that you read the assigned text as a preparation for class – if possible more than once. In philosophy, studying a text repeatedly in order to extract and examine its meaning and arguments is a normal procedure. Amongst the most creative responses to philosophical texts are questions. Thus: take notes while reading; on what is unclear or where you disagree, and address these points in class. Much class-time will be devoted to discussion; the more actively you participate, the more fun, entertaining and rewarding it will be for you – which will also be reflected in your grades.

PROGRAM

The program as well as the readings assigned for each upcoming session will be announced in class and in the Assignment Sheets section on UMLearn. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to send me an email.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Steven Cahn: Exploring Philosophy - An Introductory Anthology, Sixth Edition, 2018

Select essays and video-links will be uploaded on UMLearn

FINAL GRADE, IMPORTANT DATES

Fall Term (Part A)
25% In-Class test (Thu, Oct. 31st)
15% Brief Essay (2-3 pages, due Nov. 21st, 2:30 p.m. in print and via email.
10% Active participation in class discussions and regular attendance.

Winter Term (Part B)
20% In-Class test (Thu, Feb. 27th)
20% Final Paper (about 4-5 pages, due March 31st) 2:30 p.m. in print and via email.
10% Active participation in class discussions and regular attendance.

Note: You must be present in class on the dates mentioned. No make-up exams will be arranged except for documented medical reasons.

Grading Scale
A+: 90-100     A: 80-89     B+: 75-79     B: 67-74
C+: 60-66     C: 50-59     D: 45-49     F: 0-45
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ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected in all sessions. Absences must be excused beforehand, except in extra-ordinary cases, otherwise it will result in a deduction of 2% of the overall grade for each missed unexcused session. **More than 5 unexcused absences will lead to an automatic “F” in the class**, cf. section on ‘Attendance and Withdrawal’ in the ‘General Academic Regulations’ 7.1.


CLASS ETIQUETTE

You are expected to attend every class. Electronic devices such as phones should be put away, and kept away, during lectures. This restriction includes laptops, unless you have a medical requirement for computer assistance. Both devices are too much of a distraction – also for the students around you. In special circumstances, that require the potential use of your phone during class time, such as illness in your family, please let me know before class. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Please bring your textbook to all class sessions. If I assigned a text uploaded on UMLearn, please bring a printed copy to class as the basis for the lecture and discussion.

ABOUT EMAILS

Please make sure that all emails sent to me follow proper etiquette: They must include the course number in the subject line of the message. In the body of the message, you must address me directly, and sign your full name. Otherwise I will not respond.

A NOTE ON RECORDING CLASSES

Unless a student has a medical reason for doing so, recording classes is prohibited.
PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism or cheating will result in an F for the assignment, and may carry additional penalties as per university policy.
Students should acquaint themselves with the University’s policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, and duplicate submission, see

If you are ever uncertain about academic honesty of anything you are doing for the course, please do not hesitate to ask me.

WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

The last date for voluntary withdrawal in Fall/Winter spanned classes in the 2018-2019 term is Friday Jan. 17th 2020.

LATE POLICY

Overdue papers will only be accepted with a documented medical excuse.

HELP IN AN EMERGENCY

Make use of the information on this website: http://umanitoba.ca/student/mentalhealth/
If one of them is not successful or helpful, try others. You can also talk to me confidentially during my office hours or make an appointment.
There is more information on different forms of support in the HELP section of this course on UMLearn.