***History of Western Philosophy***

PHIL 215 Fall 2020

Instructor: Tim Christion

christt@linnbenton.edu

Office Hours by appointment

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the major philosophers and issues of the past 2,500 years and the historical conditions that have affected, and been affected by, the development of philosophy.

**Course Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to identify the following: key concepts in the history of Western philosophy and describe the characteristics that distinguish Western philosophy from that of other regions; individuals who contributed significant ideas to philosophy and place them within their historical context; and major ideas which gave birth to the concept of philosophy and trace their evolution to the contemporary world.

**Course Expectations and Recommendations**

* Read carefully and actively. In my view, philosophy (which means “love of wisdom”) is ultimately about making sense of the world and our lives in it. But *learning to think philosophically* begins with an ability to carefully read philosophical texts. Our aim is to comprehend the author’s intentions while actively reflecting on insights discovered to make better sense of the world and life. Treat this course as an opportunity to discover what works best for you—since this is a critical step in maturing and learning to think for yourself. Some of these readings will be strange and challenging, so I encourage you to contact me with *any* question about the material or anything else. I usually respond within 48 hours, and can set up a personal zoom meeting to discuss things one-on-one.
* Short lectures. Pre-recorded lectures will be uploaded once or twice a week to cover the essential points of that week’s readings. I recommend watching them once before reading to give you a general sense of the text (so do don’t go in blind) and afterwards to reinforce the material you just read.
* Groups Discussions. Perhaps the best way of learning philosophy is to discuss ideas with others. Students will be divided into small groups in the first week and they will set up a time to discuss questions covering a two-week period of readings and formulate solid responses in a team effort. Each group will select someone to post their team responses on a Moodle forum for a group grade every other week. The participation and contribution of *each student* will also factor into the group grade (see Grading section below). Discussions like this can be intimidating at first, but remember that other students are in the same place. It is essential that everyone respect the perspectives of others without judgement in order to create an inviting space to open up and learn.
* Writing good papers. Success in this course depends on the ability to write good papers. This not only involves comprehending the assigned readings, but an ability to respond to them in thoughtful and nuanced ways. Whether agreeing or disagreeing with the material, you will need to *justify* your views on the matters in question by providing *good reasons* in defense of your thesis/argument (as opposed to offering unexplained opinions, going off on tangents, or simply regurgitating the material). And like all good writing—which involves *careful organization*, *clarity*, and *good reasoning*—multiple drafts are essential. For help with writing, I encourage you to contact me or the LBCC Learning Center for tutoring support and other resources: <https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/library-tutoring-testing/learning-center/writing-support/index.php>.

**Grading**

Weekly Quizzes: 15%

Bi-weekly Group Discussions: 25%

Midterm Paper: 20%

Paper Proposal & Outline 10%

Final Paper: 30%

* Quizzes: The quizzes test basic comprehension of the reading materials for each week. They consists of five questions: four multiple-choice and one short-answer (a paragraph). Short-answer responses should engage the reading material it refers to demonstrate comprehension. They must be completed each Friday before midnight. Late quizzes are not accepted. Of the ten quizzes, I will drop the lowest two scores (counting the top eight). Expect grades within one week from the Friday deadline.
* Discussion Groups: Each group will receive a “group grade” based on the quality of their submissions based on comprehension, clarity, and insight. Starting week two, group submissions are due at the end of every two week period by midnight that Sunday (see Scheduled Readings below or Moodle). Importantly, the participation and contribution of each individual within that group will factor into that grade. At the end of the term, I will ask each student to “rate” the overall participation and contribution level of the other group members on a five-point (1-5) scale: 1—Very Bad (60% of group grade), 2—Somewhat Bad (70%), 3—OK (80%), 4—Somewhat Good (90%), 5—Very Good (100% of group grade). Hence, if a student’s peer rating averages to a score of 3 (“OK”) but the group grades all receive a perfect score of 100 (because others in the group did most of the work), that student will receive *80% of the group grade*. 80% of 100 would therefore amount to an 80% grade for that student, whereas those student receiving a “Very Good” rating of 5 (100%) by their peers would get the full group grade.
* Papers: The midterm paper (3-4 pages double-spaced) is due at the end of Week 5 on Sunday November 1st by midnight. Expect grades within two weeks. The final paper (5-6 pages double-spaced) is due on Tuesday December 8th by midnight. For each paper, students will choose one of three topic areas to develop and defend a thesis. Detailed instructions will be provided one to two weeks prior to due date.
* Paper Proposal & Outline: The proposal (1-2 pages double-spaced) and outline (1 page double-spaced) offer students an opportunity to propose their thesis for the final paper for detailed feedback. Expect feedback within one week.

**Note: Unexcused assignments will be docked *one half-letter grade (5%) for each day late.***

A = Superior, a mark of excellence. (90-100%)

B = Outstanding, very good (80-89%)

C = Good/Acceptable, average for most college students (70-79%)

D = Passing, but needs improvement (60-69%)

F = Below 60% is not a passing grade.

**Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities**

Linn-Benton Community College offers accessibility resources for students with documented disabilities. See the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) website at <https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/accessibility/> for information on qualifying for disabilities and the resources available. Questions can be addressed via email at: cfar@linnbenton.edu.

**Academic Honesty**

Instructors are good at recognizing plagiarism. Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts. A student will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgment of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;

2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely

paraphrased in one's own words;

3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other materials, unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaborations on papers can lead to a charge of plagiarism. Consult me if in doubt.

**Required Texts**

* *An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy* (BHWP), by Anthony Kenny. Find this pdf file on the Moodle dashboard. If you choose to download it to your computer (as opposed to print), note features on Adobe Reader like the highlight and sticky note icons to help you study.
* All other reading materials are available on Moodle for the week they are assigned. Note the page numbers for some readings (e.g. “read pp. 20-26”)
* Short videos are available on Moodle viewing to reinforce the reading material and motivate interest. These are especially useful for visual and auditory learners but recommended for all.

**Scheduled Readings**

**WEEK 1 (09/28-10/04): Introduction to Philosophy and the Presocratics**

□ *An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy* (BHWP): “Introduction” [12 pages]

# VIDEO: *Student Philosopher: Where to Start with Philosophy?* [5:08]

# VIDEO: *What is Philosophy for?* [4:40]

# VIDEO: *Eastern vs. Western Philosophy* [3:47]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. I: “Philosophy in its Infancy” [19 pages]

# VIDEO: *Introduction to the Presocratics* [12:57]

**WEEK 2 (10/05—10/11): Ancient Philosophy I: The Trial of Socrates**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. II: “The Athens of Socrates” (read pp. 20-26)

# VIDEO: *Socrates: Biography of a Great Thinker* [6:05]

□ Plato, “Euthyphro” [18 pages]

# VIDEO: *The Ideas of Socrates* [10:55]

□ Plato, “Apology” [21 pages]

* VIDEO: *History of Ideas: Ancient Greece* [10:55]
* **GROUP DISCUSSION SUBMISSION DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, 10/11**

**WEEK 3 (10/12—10/18): Ancient Philosophy II: Plato and Aristotle**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. III: “The Philosophy of Plato” (read pp. 36-50)

* VIDEO: *Philosophy - Plato* [6:29]

□ Plato, “The Cave” (from *Republic*, Book VII) [5 pages]

# VIDEO: *Plato on: The Allegory of the Cave* [6:16]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. IV: “The System of Aristotle” (read pp. 57-74)

* VIDEO: *Philosophy – Aristotle* [7:30]

□ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I (read sections 1-8) [17 pages]

* VIDEO: *The Good Life – Aristotle* [5:57]

**WEEK 4 (10/19—10/25): Hellenistic and Early Medieval Philosophy**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. V: “Greek Philosophy After Aristotle” [16 pages]

* VIDEO: *Epicurus* [5:24]
* VIDEO: *The Stoics*[4:53]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. VI: “Early Christian Philosophy” [16 pages]

* VIDEO: *Augustine* [6:24]

# VIDEO: *Boethius’s Consolation of Philosophy* [9:27]

* **GROUP DISCUSSION SUBMISSION DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, 10/25**

**WEEK 5 (10/26—11/01): Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. VII: “Philosophy in the Thirteenth Century” [18 pages]

* VIDEO: *Thomas Aquinas* [6:14]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. X: “Renaissance Philosophy” [22 pages]

* VIDEO: *History of Ideas – The Renaissance* [17:44]

**Midterm Paper Due: Sunday Nov. 1st via email by midnight.**

Late papers will be docked *a half- letter grade (5%) for each day late.*

**WEEK 6 (11/02—11/08): Modern Philosophy I: Cartesian Metaphysics**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XI: “The Age of Descartes” [15 pages]

# VIDEO: *René Descartes* [8:48]

□ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, “First Meditation” and “Second Meditation” (read pp.

1-6 – 1-2) [12.5 pages]

# VIDEO: *The Mind Body Problem* [5:10]

# VIDEO: *Why René Descartes said 'I think, therefore I am'* [5:27]

* **GROUP DISCUSSION SUBMISSION DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, 11/08**

**WEEK 7 (11/09—11/15): Modern Philosophy II: Political Philosophy and Human Nature**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XII: “English Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century” (read pp. 209-214)

* VIDEO: *Thomas Hobbes* [6:45]
* VIDEO: *John Locke* [9:13]*:*

□ Thomas Hobbes, “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind.” (from *Leviathan*, Part I, Ch. XIIII) [4 pages]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XV: “The Enlightenment” [8 pages]

* VIDEO: *Enlightenment Thinkers* [11:55]
* VIDEO: *Modernity* [10:47]
* VIDEO: *Romanticism* [9:43]

□ Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Selections from “Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of

 Inequality Among Men” [13.5 pages]

* VIDEO: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* [7:46]

**WEEK 8 (11/16—11/22): 19th Century Philosophy: Idealism and Materialism**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XVI: “The Critical Philosophy of Kant” (read pp. 259-261)

* VIDEO: *Immanuel Kant* [8:12]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XVII: “German Idealism and Materialism” [9 pages]

* VIDEO: *Hegel* [6:53]

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XIX: “Three Nineteenth Century Philosophers” [12 pages]

* VIDEO: *Søren Kierkegaard* [6:46]
* VIDEO: *Nietzsche* [6:56]
* **GROUP DISCUSSION SUBMISSION DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, 11/22**

**WEEK 9 (11/23—11/29): 20th Century Philosophy: Existentialism and Thinking**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XXII: “Continental Philosophy in the Early Twentieth Century” (read pp. 349-351)

* VIDEO: *Heidegger* [5:23]

□ Martin Heidegger: “Memorial Address” [13 pages]

# VIDEO: *The Question Concerning Technology (& Social Media) – Heidegger* [8:58]

**Proposal Due: Wednesday Nov. 25th via email by midnight.**

Late papers will be docked *a half- letter grade (5%) for each day late.*

 **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

**WEEK 10 (11/30—12/06): Feminist and Ecological Critiques of Western Philosophy**

□ *BHWP*, Ch. XXII: “Continental Philosophy in the Early Twentieth Century” (read pp. 351-355)

* VIDEO: *Introduction to Existentialism* [12:23]

□ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, “Introduction” [16.5 pages]

# VIDEO: *Beauvoir, Introduction to the Second Sex* [25:38]

□ Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, “Introduction” [17.5 pages]

# VIDEO: *Vandana Shiva Interview about Ecofeminism* [3:39]

# VIDEO: *Ecofeminism: A Global Crisis* [7:14]

* **GROUP DISCUSSION SUBMISSION DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, 12/06**

**Final Paper Due: Tuesday Dec. 8th via email by midnight.**

Late papers will be docked *a half-letter grade (5%) for each day late.*