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**Course Title:** *Introduction to Philosophy*

**Semester:** Fall 2008

**Instructor's Name:** Mark Holcombe

**Class Day/Time:** M-W-F 9:00 – 9:50; 12:00 – 12:50

**Office Location:** HB414

**Office E-Mail:** [mholc@uab.edu](mailto:mholc@uab.edu)

**Office Mailbox:** HB-414A

**Office Hours:** M-W-F 10:30 – 11:30, and by appointment

**Website:** <http://www.philosophicalturn.net>

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**Required Course Textbooks:**

1. Pojman, Louis. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. either Third or Fourth editions.
2. Additional reading assignments are posted on my website, other internet sites, etc.

**Course Description**

This course introduces the student to classic problems in Philosophy. Emphasis will be placed upon the most influential thinkers in Philosophy in each area both classical and modern. We will analyze and question basic noetic assumptions.

**Course Goals/ Student Objectives:**

In order to successfully complete this course, students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in all of the areas listed under the course objectives. In order to promote proficiency, each student will be required:

1. to become acquainted with the Philosophical and Socratic method;
2. to develop reading and writing skills shaped by argumentation;
3. to analyze arguments from a logical point of view;
4. to understand, appreciate, and develop a coherent noetic structure;
5. to understand and appreciate the role of argumentation in the overall intellectual effort to make sense of one's experiences in the world.

**Attendance Policy**

You are expected to attend my classes. We will cover issues related to but not contained within the readings. If you are not a part of these discussions, you will be unable to adequately address issues on graded work. If you find that sickness or other personal problems prevent you from attending classes regularly, you should expect your grade to be adversely affected. You will not pass if you do not attend classes regularly.

**Communications**

All students are required by the University which will be enforced in this course to maintain an active e-mail account. Every UAB student is offered a free e-mail account and free computer access. You must establish a UAB e-mail account; however, you may set-up the account so that all e-mails to it automatically forward to an e-mail of your choosing.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS/COURSE POLICIES

Each student must obtain a copy of the textbook. Quizzes, writing assignments, and class discussions will be based primarily on the assigned texts; however, they may include material posted on my website. The grading criteria details are provided in the chart below:

Grading Criteria for Course	Grading System
Reading Quizzes: 40% collectively	A: 90 - 100
Section 1 Exam: 15%	B: 80 - 89
Section 2 Exam: 15%	C: 70 - 79
Section 3A-B Exam: 15%	D: 60 - 69
Section 3C Exam: 15%	F: 59 and below

### Explanation of Grading

An **A** indicates comprehension and application; a **B** indicates comprehension; a **C** indicates memorization with adequate regurgitation; a **D** is not persuasive work or partial memorization; an **F** indicates no memorization.

Grades are determined by how students reflect a mastery of the material and how competitive the student is with his/her peers.

I will consider *quality not quantity* of class participation in calculating your final grade.

At the end of the semester when tallying your grade I will consider only the quality of your work, attendance, and effort. Principles of fairness include equal *opportunity, consideration, and treatment* for everyone with no exceptions. In tallying your final grade, I will not take into account your negotiating skills. You are advised to apply that effort throughout the course rather than mustering all you have at the end to sway me to give you preferential treatment and consideration.

### Quizzes

I will periodically give unannounced quizzes based upon the reading assignments. These quizzes may not be taken if you did not attend class **or** are late to class. The quizzes will *not* be open book; however, you *MAY* use printed notes if and only if you wrote them *prior to class* as you read the assignment.

I will drop the lowest quiz.

Classes will be discussion driven markedly after Section 1: Epistemology. If you have not read the assigned material(s) you will not be able to participate in class discussions and your grade will be negatively affected.

### Pedagogical Philosophy

The grading system above is the result of research within cognitive psychology on how people learn. Learning is achieved when one is capable of utilizing/applying information to novel scenarios. Learning is *not* the ability to store and accurately recall information. Therefore, your learning will be assessed by measuring your ability to apply the information we discuss and contained in your reading assignments. Learning will *not* be assessed by measuring your ability to store and accurately recall information upon demand.

<b>Class Meeting</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>	<b>Supplemental Materials</b>
1. Syllabus Overview		
2. Introduction <b>Section 1: Epistemology</b>	Pojman: "What is Philosophy?"  <a href="#">Plato's Republic Lines 502c – 521b</a>	<i>The Matrix</i>
3 - 4. Rationalism Descartes' Meditations (abridged)	Pojman: Descartes "Meditations on First Philosophy"	"Matriculated" and "A Kid's Story" only
5 - 6. Empiricism David Hume	Pojman: Hume "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding"	<i>Existenz</i> and <i>The Thirteenth Floor</i>
7. Immanuel Kant	Pojman: Kant "The Copernican Revolution in Knowledge"	<a href="#">Brain CEO</a>
	<b>Section 1 Exam</b>	
9. <b>Section 2: Philosophy of Religion</b> <i>(Applying epistemology to religion)</i> Classic Arguments For God's Existence	Pojman: Aquinas "Five Ways"	
10 - 11. Ontological Argument	Pojman: Anselm vs Guanilo	
12 - 13. Teleological Argument	Pojman: Paley "The Watch and the Watchmaker"  Pojman: Hume "A Critique of the Teleological Argument"	<a href="#">Faith vs. Reason</a>  <a href="#">Intelligent Design In a Can</a> (in class) <a href="#">Dualistic Intelligent Design</a>
14. Faith as a Rational Wager	Pojman: Pascal's Wager	
15. Faith as Trust	<a href="#">C.S. Lewis "On Obstnacy in Belief"</a>	
16. The Ethics of Belief	Pojman: Clifford "The Ethics of Belief"	Highly recommended but optional: Pojman: William James "Will to Believe"
	<b>Section 2 Exam</b>	

<b>18. Section 3A: Ontology/Metaphysics</b>  <i>Personal Identity</i>	Pojman: Locke "Our Psych. Properties Define the Self"	<i>Memento, Total Recall</i>
<b>19.</b> Skepticism about personal identity	Pojman: Hume "We have no Substantial Self..."	
<b>20.</b> Skepticism about personal identity continued	Pojman: Parfit vs. Vesey	Star Trek TNG "Second Chances" (in class)
<b>21. Section 3B: Ontology/Metaphysics</b>  <i>The Mind-Body Problem</i>  Identity Thesis	<a href="#">J.J.C. Smart "Sensations and Brain Processes"</a>	<a href="#">Roger Penrose "What is Reality?"</a>
<b>22.</b> Functionalism & Property Dualism	Pojman: Churchland "On Functionalism and Materialism"  <a href="#">Jackson: "What Mary Didn't Know"</a>	<a href="#">Chaotic Neurons</a>  <a href="#">Emotional Robots</a>
	<b>Section 3A-B Exam</b>	
<b>24. Section 3C: Ontology/Metaphysics</b>  <i>Free Will</i>  Determinism	<a href="#">Patricia Churchland "Feeling Reasons"</a>  <a href="#">Patricia Churchland "Do We Have Free Will?"</a>	<i>Matrix Reloaded</i> <i>Sliding Doors</i> Numb3rs "Judgment Call" (in class)
<b>25.</b> Compatibilism	Pojman: Stace "Free Will is Consistent with Determinism"  Pojman: Frankfurt "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"	
<b>26.</b> Libertarianism/Agency	Pojman: Taylor "Defense of Free Will"	<i>Being John Malkovich</i>
	<b>Section 3C Exam Is the Final Exam</b>	

## **Classroom Policies:**

### **Electronic Devices**

Kindly switch all cell-phones off prior to entering the classroom. ***All cell phones, pagers, or any other electronic device must be completely turned off and stored away during examinations!*** Also, the consumption of food and beverage is not permitted during class sessions by order of the Dean. Each student is encouraged to express his/her ideas and attitudes, to be receptive and respectful of the ideas and attitudes of fellow classmates, and to be civil and fair in voicing disagreement or dissent. Rowdy, noisy and disruptive behavior in class will not be tolerated.

### **Early Alert System**

The University has requested all professors teaching 100 and 200 level courses to participate in the Early Alert System. This system is intended to identify students who are in danger of receiving a D, F, or W grade. The criteria are left to each professor individually. My criteria is based upon class attendance, grades on the reading quizzes, my informal assessment of whether the student is doing the reading assignments, grades achieved through other assessments (such as the section tests).

The e-mails sent to the student with EAS in the subject line do not come from me but from the EAS office. These e-mails contain information to assist the student with the difficulties s/he may be experiencing.

### **Students with Disability Statement**

Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary accommodations and/or coordinate with UAB Disability Support Services (DSS),

516 Hill University Center

(205) 934-4205 (Voice)

(205) 934-4248 (TDD)

[dss@uab.edu](mailto:dss@uab.edu)

Services available and how to register with the DSS Office:

<http://students.uab.edu/services/show.asp?durki=40136>

## **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Any student violating the [Academic Honor Code](#) will receive at minimum No Credit for that assignment. Multiple violations will result in expulsion from the University.

Students enrolling at the University of Alabama at Birmingham assume the obligation to maintain standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic obligations include: unethical practices and acts of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and the facilitation of such acts.

Cheating includes the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance or the actual giving or receiving of any unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Plagiarism is the use of another's ideas or words, or both, as if they were one's own. However, ideas or direct quotations from others are acceptable with appropriate citation of source. Cheating on exams is also an affront to the principle of academic honesty.

Plagiarism is defined as the following:

- using the exact words of another person's work/writing without acknowledgment of your source through the use of quotation marks and correct citation/documentation;
- to claim as one's own the ideas or words of another
- rephrasing a passage by another writer without giving proper credit;
- using someone else's facts or ideas without acknowledgement;
- using a piece of writing for one course that was already used in a previous course (or in courses in which you are simultaneously enrolled) without express written permission from both instructors to do so; and
- presenting fabricated or falsified citations or materials.

Please consult me if you are unsure about how to document sources.

Students are subject to dismissal from a degree program for unethical practices and acts of academic dishonesty (including academic harassment of the professor or other students). It should also be stated that a plea of ignorance of the policy will not be accepted. The following actions are prescribed whenever a violation of academic integrity is noted:

- The Instructor will provide to the chairperson a written report with documentation of the academic offense.
- The chairperson will present the facts to the departmental Academic Affairs Committee.
- The departmental Academic Affairs Committee will review the report, meet with all parties concerned, and make a formal recommendation to the department chair for transmittal to the academic dean.

If it is determined that a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the academic dean may suspend or expel the student from the University.

## **Academic Harassment**

Academic harassment is defined as the following:

Coercive, threatening, or discriminatory activities either overt or implied directed at faculty, students, or staff intended to produce a hostile, unpleasant, or dogmatic educational environment.

Examples of academic harassment include but are not limited to:

- Posting unauthorized "class cancelled" signs.
- Fallacious or threatening comments or unsupported opinions on course/faculty evaluations either sanctioned or not sanctioned by the university including independent websites.
- Public labeling of faculty, staff, or students as "communists", "terrorist sympathizers" or other ad hominem attacks.
- Hate speech, racism, sexism, ageism or any other form of illegitimate discriminatory speech.