

PHIL A185: CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	12/02/2020
Top Code	150900 - Philosophy
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S)
Associate Arts Local General Education (GE)	• OC Humanities - AA (OC1)
Associate Science Local General Education (GE)	• OCC Humanities - AS (OSC2)
California General Education Transfer Curriculum (Cal-GETC)	• Cal-GETC 3B Humanities (3B)
Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC)	• IGETC 3B Humanities (3B)
California State University General Education Breadth (CSU GE-Breadth)	• CSU C2 Humanities (C2)

Course Description

Methods and problems of contemporary philosophy. Continental European and Anglo-American philosophy since 1900. Problems of the self, freedom, time, choice and action, language, thought and interpretation, science, evidence, and justification. Transfer Credit: CSU; UC.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Present a critical philosophical analysis of a selected topic in contemporary philosophy that articulates and critically evaluates the claims made.

Course Objectives

1. Evaluate the criteria for reliable scientific knowledge.
2. Evaluate the role of the mind in verifying evidence.
3. Compare the faculties of the mind and the will.
4. Identify the problems in contemporary life that bring about indecisiveness and failure of moral resolve.
5. Explain the role of choice and action in self-determination.
6. Explain the role of inner time and of history in self-determination.
7. Compare the arguments for and against "Foundationalist" systems in philosophy.
8. Evaluate Husserl's Phenomenological Reduction.
9. Compare Husserl's view of the mind with that of Heidegger.
10. Compare (and contrast) Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Wittgenstein on the mind. Explain the "no-ownership" view and compare it with the Cartesian view of the mind.

11. Compare (and contrast) Husserl, Heidegger, and Levi-Strauss on geneticist explanation.
12. Compare Freud's view of the mind with that of Sartre.
13. Evaluate why Simone de Beauvoir describes woman as (traditionally) thought of as the "other."
14. Evaluate Derrida's method of "deconstruction." Explain its origins in the history of philosophy, its implications for philosophy and literature, and its implications for referential theories of meaning.
15. Explain Wittgenstein's use of the "language game" and of "family resemblances," and how these ideas are critiques of traditional semantic theories.
16. Evaluate some of Bertrand Russell's arguments against idealism, and against the sense-data theorists. Explain Russell's conception of "knowledge by acquaintance" and compare this to "propositional knowledge." Explain the difference between "connotation" and "denotation."
17. Evaluate Wittgenstein's early claim that propositions (as models for thought) "mirror" or "picture" reality.
18. Evaluate Wittgenstein's claim that meaning is significantly defined by its context.
19. Evaluate Quine's view of the analytic/synthetic distinction.

Lecture Content

Continental philosophy: phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism, hermeneutics, post-modernism Anglo-American philosophy: logical atomism, logical positivism, ordinary language theory, language-game theory, speech-act theory, neo-pragmatism Continental Philosophy

- I. Historical Influences: Transcendental Idealism A. Immanuel Kant and Critical Thought B. Kant's Account of the Mind in terms of Sensibility and Understanding C. Kant's Phenomenalism (Distinction between Phenomenal and Noumenal) D. Kant's Challenge to Hume on Causality; Kant on Scientific Knowledge E. Kant's Distinction between Analytical and Synthetical Judgments F. Kant on the Synthetic a priori G. The Problem of Freedom in Kant H. Georg W.F. Hegel's Challenge to Kant's view of scientific knowledge I. Hegel's Dialectic and History J. Hegel on the Concrete Universal b K. Arthur Schopenhauer's View of the Will, Individuation, and the Present II. Science, Determinism, and Human Action: The Problem of Free Will III. Nineteenth Century Existentialism: Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche A. Kierkegaard's Rejection of Existence as a Logical Category B. Kierkegaard's View of Choice and Inner Awareness C. Kierkegaard's View of the Three Stages of Existence: Aesthetical, Ethical, and Religious; Aesthetical Indecision, and Its Danger; Ethical Complacency D. Kierkegaard's Rejection of Hegel's methodology E. Nietzsche's Nihilism and the Rejection of Foundationalism F. Nietzsche's Critique of other Historical Figures (Socrates, Plato, Kant, Mill, etc.) G. Nietzsche, the Will to Power, Self-Determination, and the Overman H. Nietzsche on the Transvaluation of Values I. Nietzsche and the Irrational J. Nietzsche on the Failure of Institutions K. Literary Approaches : 19th and 20th Century 1. Fyodor Dostoevsky and the Paralysis of the Human Will: Notes From Underground 19th Cen. 2. Albert Camus: The Plague 20th Cen. IV. Twentieth Century Phenomenology and Existentialism A. Henri Bergson on Time and Duration B. Bergson on Free Will C. Bergson's Rejection of the Cartesian Rational Ego D. Bergson on Mistaken Views of the Past and Present E. Edmund Husserl and Phenomenology 1. Evidence,

Scientific Knowledge, and the Crisis of the European Sciences

2. The Phenomenological and Eidetic Reductions
 3. The Transcendental Ego, from Cartesian Meditations
- COURSE CONTENT AND SCOPE/TOPIC OUTLINE, continued
- V. Existentialism, Hermeneutics, and Political Action
 - A. Martin Heidegger: The Rethinking of Metaphysics in Being and Time
 - B. Challenges to Plato and Kant by Heidegger
 - C. Heideggers Rejection of the Metaphysics of Presence
 - D. Heideggers Concept of Dasein, and Its Relation to Existence
 - E. Destructuring of Traditional Ontology by Heidegger; Challenge to Husserl
 - F. WWII, the Holocaust, and Implications for French and German Philosophy
 - G. Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus; and the Resistance by Literary Paris to the Nazi Regime
 - H. Merleau-Pontys Condemnation of French Economists and Intellectuals, in The War Has Taken Place
 - I. Jean-Paul Sartre on Freedom, Individuality and Political Responsibility
 1. Sartres View of the Origins of Negation
 2. Sartre on Human Reality: Consciousness (Pour-soi), Facticite (En-soi)
 3. Sartre on Choice, the Conferring of Value, and Action
 4. Sartres Arguments Against Foundationalism
 - J. Sartres Views on Bad Faith or Self-Deception
 1. Sigmund Freud and Beyond the Pleasure Principle
 2. The Freudian Ego, and Its Relation to the Super-Ego and Id
 3. Criticisms of the Freudian Unconscious by Sartre; Responses by Gilles Deleuze
 - K. Simone de Beauvoir, and the Problem of Freedom for Women
 1. Challenge to Hegel
 2. Woman as "Other"
 3. de Beauvoir and Sartre
 - L. Claude Levi-Strauss
 1. Reflections on the Dialectic of Passage from Nature to Culture
 2. Reflections on Civility and Primitivism
 3. Comparisons with the views of Jean-Jacque Rousseau re: Language and its Origins
 - M. Post-Modernism: Its Implications for Philosophy and Literature
 1. Jacques Derrida, and the Methods of Deconstruct
 2. Jean Lyotard, and the Changes in Knowledge, Nation States, and Technocracy: French Thought Embraces Wittgenstein s Use of Language Games
 3. Implications of Post-Modern Thought for Art, Culture, and Feminism
 - Anglo-American philosophy since 1900
 - VI. Bertrand Russell, Logical Atomism, and the Foundations of Logical Positivism
 - A. Russells Repudiation of Platonism and Hegelianism
 - B. Russells Interest in Empiricism and Constructivism
 - C. Russells Rejection of Sense-Data Theory
 - D. Russells Proposal of "Knowledge by Acquaintance"
 - E. Russell, Meinong and the Referential Theory of Meaning
 - F. Russells Logical Atomism and Analytical Methods
 - G. Russell and Whitehead, The Attempts to Formulate an Ideal Language
 - H. Russells Life-Long Pacifism; His Views on Social and Moral Issues
 - I. Russell, Frege, and Wittgenstein
 - VII. G.E. Moore, and the Early Revolt: The Ordinary Language Movement
 - VIII. Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - A. Wittgensteins Relationship with Bertrand Russell
 - B. Wittgenstein of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus
 1. Wittgensteins Difficulties with Russells Atomism/ Ideal Language
 2. Wittgensteins View of the Proposition as the Mirror of Reality: (Facts, States of Affairs, and Logical Representations)
 - C. Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle, Moritz Schlick, and Logical Positivism
 - D. Wittgensteins Disagreement with the Verifiability Criterion of Meaningfulness
 - E. Wittgenstein of the Philosophical Investigations, and after
 1. Language Games
 2. Language as a "Form of Life"
 3. Comparison to Heideggers "Ready-to-Hand," and to Jean Lyotards Work on the Modern Conditions for Knowledge
 4. Influence of Wittgenstein on J.L. Austin and John Searle
 - IX. The Americans: A Neo-Empiricist and A Neo-Pragmatist
 - A. Willard Van Orman Quine
 1. The Web of Belief
 2. The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction
 3. Synonymy
 4. Two Dogmas of Empiricism
 - B. Richard Rorty and the Consequences of Neo-Pragmatism

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Live Online Lecture (02S)

Instructional Techniques

1. Critical papers as described in "Written Assignments"
2. Examinations assessing students abilities to explain ideas, identify major concepts, and compare, contrast and evaluate theories.
3. Classroom Discussion using Socratic Methods

Reading Assignments

Students will spend 2-3 hours per week on readings assigned from textbooks.

Writing Assignments

1. Students will be asked to write two brief reports, analyzing a philosophical view or problem. They will have the option of working in groups on the issues.
2. Students will have the opportunity to present their papers orally in a seminar format.

Out-of-class Assignments

Written reports explaining concepts, and comparing, contrasting, and evaluating theories.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

Students will be asked to write two brief reports, analyzing a philosophical view or problem.

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

1. Students will be asked to write two brief reports, analyzing a philosophical view or problem. They will have the option of working in groups on the issues.
2. Students will have the opportunity to present their papers orally in a seminar format.

Eligible Disciplines

Philosophy: Masters degree in philosophy OR bachelors degree in philosophy AND masters degree in humanities or religious studies, OR the equivalent. Masters degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required McNeill, W., Feldman, K.S.. Continental Philosophy, ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 1998
- Rationale: .
2. Required Camus, A.. The Plague, ed. Random House, 1991
- Rationale: .

Other Resources

1. Selected excerpts in handout form: Notes From Underground, Part I, Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Selected works of Bertrand Russell
- Philosophical Investigations, Ludwig Wittgenstein
- Two Dogmas of Empiricism, W.V.O. Quine