

PHILOSOPHY 204
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
CHRIS CAYTON - INSTRUCTOR

TEXT : VICE & VIRTUE IN EVERYDAY LIFE by Christina and Fred Sommers

COURSE DESCRIPTION :

The goal of this course will be to study the relationship between philosophy and religion. We will focus particularly on the western philosophical and religious traditions. In the past, our culture has tended to separate philosophy and religion into separate domains of interest, which often do not have anything to do with each other. However, the fact is that historically western philosophy and religion have always had a very close relationship. This is especially true of Greek philosophy, Christianity and Islam. Many, indeed most, of the philosophical concepts that took their form in the Greek philosophical tradition were given spiritual expression in Christianity and Islam. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate the relationship between philosophy and religion, it is necessary to understand the history of that relationship.

Consequently, much of the work that we will be doing this term will be historical. Indeed, it is impossible to know anything about any of these areas of knowledge without studying the history of their traditions. Knowledge of that history would not be possible without the aid of archeologists, anthropologists, sociologists and all of the other social sciences. All of these areas of specialized interest are involved in the study of religion and philosophy. It will be the goal of this class to investigate how all of these domains of knowledge come in to play in understanding the relationship between philosophy and religion.

INTENDED OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE:

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Recognize the philosophical assumptions about religious issues that are embedded in the students' own ideas and in the ideas that permeate our culture.
2. Reflect on and evaluate the philosophical assumptions about moral issues that are embedded in the students' own ideas and in the ideas that permeate our culture.
3. Recognize and reflect on the interconnectedness of and the historical development of these ideas.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:

The purpose of performance evaluation is that the student must somehow demonstrate that he/she has achieved the outcomes (listed above) for this course. The extent to which the student has met those outcomes is evaluated and rated/graded by the instructor. In determining your grade for this class equal consideration will be given to three areas of performance:

1. REFLECTION

Option 1 – Essays:

You will be given two essay assignments during the term. These essays should be typed, double-spaced. The length should be 3 pages minimum (about 850-1000 words) - 5 pages max.

The essays will be due one week after the subjects have been handed-out. The essays are due AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. ASSIGNMENTS HANDED IN LATE WILL BE GRADED

DOWN. Together the essays will constitute 60% of the final grade.

If, however, you wish to work on an essay subject or project of your own choosing you may do so. This would allow you more time to research and write the essay. The essay subject must be approved by the instructor.

Option 2 – Service to Community

You will volunteer a total of 20 hrs time to a community agency. At the end of the term you will submit a report describing the work you have done and focusing on the philosophical implications of the experience. The report should be about three pages in length (900-1000 words).

II. QUIZZES

Short quizzes will be administered regularly throughout the term. The quizzes will cover the reading material assigned for that particular day, or the material covered during the previous class session. The quizzes will be in a short essay (½-1 page) format. They will not be announced prior to the day they are given. Taken together, the quizzes will constitute 40% of the final grade.

III. ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION :

Attendance will be taken on a regular basis and participation in class discussions will be noted. Even though no percentage rating for participation can be given, the importance of your contributions to class discussions cannot be stressed enough. Although non-participants will not be graded down, regular participants will be graded up.

On the other hand, 3 hrs. of missed class time can result in a 10% reduction of the final grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of class each day. I will not change attendance records for any given day on subsequent days. So, if you arrive late it is your responsibility to see me after class to make sure that you were not marked absent for that day.

In order to be assured of an “A” in this class a student will have to:

- 1) read the assignments for each class and perform consistently well on the quizzes,
- 2) write solid essays following the instructions concerning content and format that will be thoroughly explained by the instructor (see essay instructions attached),
- 3) participate in class discussions in such a way as to contribute to those discussions.

Note: I will assume you are taking the class for a letter grade unless you tell me otherwise. If you would like a Pass/No Pass option, or you would like to audit the class, you need to notify me in writing of your request by the third week of class. It would also be a good idea to remind me of your request at the end of the term.

HOW CAN YOU REACH ME?

During the summer term I will not have regular office hours. You will need to arrange to meet me either before or after class.

My desk is located in the SS (Social Science) Building 215, desk #. Ask the receptionist at the front desk how to locate the desk.

To be sure of seeing me at during those times or at another time, it is best to make an appointment. You may do this after class, by phone, or by e-mail:

Dept. phone #: **503-977-4289** Message: **503-244-6111 ex. 3745**

e-mail - ccayton@pcc.edu **Fax: 977-4959**

I check my e-mail more often than I do my phone messages so that is the best way of getting in touch with me.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

As your instructor, I am committed to making this class as stimulating and relevant to your life as possible, and I will devote considerable time and energy toward achieving that goal. Therefore, the depth and quality of your experience is largely dependent upon you and the extent to which you are willing to assume responsibility for yourself and the opportunity this class offers to you. The nature of this class is such that you will be thinking introspectively about the values, attitudes and experiences of your own life and you will be encouraged to communicate those thoughts to others in the class. While some people have no problem doing that, others may be uncomfortable with that level of openness. Consequently, a certain level of maturity will be required of everyone and consideration for others will be expected. Be aware of how certain behaviors can disrupt the ability of others to feel comfortable in class. For example:

- Talking or whispering to other students while someone else is talking.
- When I arrive in the classroom it will take me a couple of minutes to get set up. Use this time to terminate any discussion you are having with other students. When I start taking roll all talking should stop.
- Interrupting others while they are talking and dominating class discussion.
- Coming and going from the classroom while class is in session.
- Students are expected to arrive at class on time and remain in class until dismissed by the instructor. If, for whatever reason you arrive late to a class, please enter as quietly as you can. If for whatever reason, you plan to leave during the class session, please let me know before class begins.
- Cell phones or beepers that ring while class is in session.
- Turn them OFF before coming to class.