2013

290-94 Theory of knowledge

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Philosophy and science profoundly shape our orientation in the world. This course examines the intersection between scientific method and our philosophical understanding of knowledge and the mind. We will read the writings of René Descartes, Gilbert Ryle, Alan Turing, Daniel Dennett, John Searle among others. Important ideas we will consider are the nature of knowledge, philosophical method, representation, mind, and body. There are a number of important philosophical questions we will consider: What is knowledge? Is knowledge possible? What is thought? What is the mind? Can computers think? Is the mind separate from the body? Is my mind inside my head or does it extend beyond the skull?

**Required Texts:**
2. Essays available on Blackboard under Content tab.

**Online resources:** There are few reliable online resources for philosophy, but I do recommend the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html), which is reliable, clear, and scholarly. This is the only online source you are permitted to use either for course preparation or in a paper (unless I have permitted otherwise), and it must be cited appropriately.

**Course Requirements:**
- 20% Participation and informal writing assignments
- 20% Quizzes
- 20% Paper #1
- 20% Paper #2
- 20% Final Exam

All papers and exams must be completed to pass the course.

**Participation:** Participation is required. Participation can take place in a number of ways: asking questions, responding to questions, raising objections, and making points. I strongly encourage students to speak up in class. I do recognize that for some students talking in class and discussing philosophy can be intimidating. Discussing the philosophical content of the readings or class discussion by email or during office hours will count toward your participation grade. Participation is not an automatic 20%—you actually have to take part, and I am very aware of who is doing so.

**Papers:** You will write two papers. For each paper I will provide a handout detailing the assignment and my expectations. All papers are due at the beginning of class. A late paper will be lowered for each class it is late a +/- . If your paper deserves an A- and you turn it in one class late, then your grade for the paper will be a B+. If your paper deserves a B+ and you turn it in three classes late, then your grade for the paper will be a C+.

*All papers should be double spaced in Times New Roman (12pt font).*
Final Exam: The final exam cannot be missed or not completed. The final exam will be cumulative.

Quizzes: If you miss a quiz because of an unexcused absence, then you cannot make it up. If the absence is excused, then I will assign you a writing project or quiz that will be graded and carry the same weight as the missed quiz. Unannounced, or pop quizzes, are a possibility.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will result in the failing of the assignment, and it may result in the failing of the course. The following statement on plagiarism is from Xavier University’s website on plagiarism, where you can take a tutorial about how to avoid plagiarism:

http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/index.cfm

- Plagiarism is using the work of another as if it were your own, without enclosing the words of others in quotations.
- Plagiarism is copying from the Internet, from a web page, or from another person without giving credit.
- Plagiarism is using ideas which are not your own without citing those ideas.
- Plagiarism can be applied to ideas, research, art, music, graphs, diagrams, websites, data, books, newspapers, magazines, plays, movies, photos, and speeches.

Attendance: Since each class is equivalent to a week of course during a normal semester, it is required that you attend every class. You are allowed one unexcused absence. Two absences will seriously affect your grade. If you have more than two absences, even if they are excused, you may fail the course. Absences are excused by a doctor's note or some other official documentation. Any unexcused absences will affect your participation grade, since you will not be in class to participate. If you miss a quiz due to an excused absence you will be allowed to make it up, otherwise the quiz cannot be made up.

**Students must keep their cell phones off during class, not on vibrate or silence. No texting at all!!

Schedule

Week 1
7/2: 1. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Parts 1, 2, 3 and 6
    2. John Haugeland, “The Saga of the Modern Mind” (pp. 15-23)

7/5: 1. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Parts 4, 5 and *Meditations* 1, 2, and 6

Week 2

Week 3

7/16: 1. Alan Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”
2. Daniel Dennett, “Can Machines Think?”
3. Andy Clark, “Meat Machines”

7/18: 1. John Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs”

Week 4

7/23: 1. Gilbert Ryle, “Knowing how and knowing that”

2. Julia Annas, “Practical Expertise”
3. Hubert Dreyfus, “Five Steps from Novice to Expert”

Week 5

7/30: 1. Rodney Brooks, “Intelligence without Representation”
2. Lisa Nocks, “Getting Around”


Week 6


8/8: 1. Jerry Fodor, “Where is my Mind?”