2013

408-01 Philosophy of the Mind

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Instructor Info:

Matthew Ian Dunch, SJ
Office Hours MW 3:00-3:30, and by appointment 207 Hinkle
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Note: In an attempt to go paperless and provide a more usable syllabus, the syllabus of this course has been integrated into Canvas. While the text of this PDF syllabus is identical to the online version, the formatting and integration with assignments and electronic calendars varies considerably.

Office Hours:

My office is 207 Hinkle Hall.
Scheduled office hours are Monday and Wednesday 3:00-3:30.
I prefer to meet students by appointment (email: dunchm@xavier.edu). Since I live on campus in the Jesuit Residence, I'm fairly flexible about meeting times.
Students are strongly encouraged to make use of office hours individually and in groups. Participation in office hours counts towards the class participation grade.

Participation:

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the text of the day. That preparation should include completing a Reading Journal entry complete with a summary of key points, a summary of difficult aspects, and an opinion on the text. Students may be asked at random to discuss their reading journal entry during class. Participation grade will be assessed on both the quantity and quality of a student's contribution to class discussion. Participation grades are adversely effected by absences. One cannot participate without being present.
A participation grade of "A" is reserved for those students who enhance class discussion through their insight and enthusiasm.

Reading Journal:

Readings in Philosophy of Mind are dense therefore taking notes while reading is a must.
Students are expected to take notes on each class reading. Notes should include page numbers for easy reference later.
Try to capture the key points in each reading--also highlight difficult aspects of the reading and give your preliminary judgement on the author's argument.
Notes should be taken prior to class then updated in light of class discussions. I expect to see revisions in the notes which show the evolution of your thinking about a given text.
Reading journals (or copies thereof) will be submitted three times during the semester for review. The submitted reading journals (or copies) may be used during exams. Format: Journals may be electronic or handwritten. A paper version of the journal must be submitted for use on the exams. Those wishing to keep electronic journals should submit both a paper version and a PDF version via email. I reserve the right to screen journals through Turnitin.

Papers:

Students are required to submit three papers during the semester: two discussion papers and a term paper.

Discussion Papers
Term Paper


Please submit papers via Canvas. Canvas will automatically screen papers through Turnitin.

Discussion Papers:
Nearly every Friday we will have a discussion session on two or more papers (or on a given section of Supersizing the Mind)
Two students (occasionally three) will sign up each Friday to lead discussion. The students will decide upon a point of disagreement between two course authors up for discussion.
Based on this point of disagreement, construct opposing theses--each defending one author's position.
Each student should write a two page paper to be read in class which explains the point of disagreement and offers an argument for one side or the other. The end of each paper should include at least one question for class discussion based on the paper.

Paper procedure:
Sign up for two Friday discussions with a partner or two different partners.
Read the two articles to be discussed (or section of Supersizing the Mind) and discuss a point of difference with your partner.
At least 5 days prior to the selected discussion day, meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss thesis statements.
Draft papers.
Review your partner's paper.
Present paper in class.
Present discussion questions.
Revise paper based on class discussions if necessary.
Final version of paper is due on Canvas the Thursday following the paper presentation.

Grading:
Papers will be assessed primary on:
The paper's identification and explanation of an important point of disagreement between two philosophers.
The paper's argument in favor of the philosophical position of one philosophy of that of another.
Grammar, style, citation method, and overall clarity of writing will also be considered.

Exams:

There will be two exams in this course. A midterm and a final comprehensive exam. The exams will consist of definition, short essay, and long essay questions. Graded reading journals may be used during the exam. Exams are given in class. No blue books are needed. Unlike my other courses, exam questions will not be given out ahead of time.

Grades:

The most up to date grades are listed posted on Canvas as they become available. Final grades will be posted by December 23. Grades are assessed according to the Philosophy Department Grading Standards. The final grade is out of 1000 points. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade regardless of point total. I strive to make assessments as clear as possible. Should a grade be unclear students are encouraged to discuss their grade with me during office hours or by appointment. Before discussing the grade students should carefully read all comments made on the assignment.

Grade Distribution:
Total Points: 1000
Discussion Papers (x2): 300
Term Paper: 200
Reading Journal: 100
Midterm Exam: 150
Final Exam: 200
Participation: 50

Department Grading Standards:

The Philosophy Department ... agrees that these letter grades signify the following level of accomplishment by students when given for discursive, written work:
A = work that not merely fully and accurately reproduces class discussion, the main thread in an argument or the main philosophical significance of a text under discussion, but which, having considered arguments and counter-arguments, goes beyond these and indicates a contribution of the student herself or himself, giving evidence of an individual and hence deeper understanding of the material in question.
B = work that shows a more or less complete and exact understanding of the issues, texts, and/or arguments as explained in class, clearly and logically formulated without
going beyond such explanations.

C = work that shows basic understanding of the material but with errors, omissions and confusions of either a formal or material nature.

D = work that shows a minimal acquaintance with the material or serious logical and conceptual flaws in formulating responses to the question raised, the argument at issue, or to the philosophical text under discussion.

F = work that shows inadequate acquaintance with texts, issues, or ideas with little or no valid logical argumentation; or, the work is a plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism, which involve the use of published or others’ written work without giving credit, must be given F.

The department does not mandate grade distributions or curves. The final goal of all of our grading must be fairness to all students and the encouragement of the highest level of achievement possible in each student.

Approved by Philosophy Department
April 15, 2002
Revised by Philosophy Department
January 12, 2005

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious academic transgression and will not be tolerated in this class! Those I catch plagiarizing or otherwise cheating on any assignment will fail the course and be reported to the Dean. All non-handwritten assignments will be run through Turnitin (and may receive further evaluation) to rule out plagiarism.

Despite my warnings, every semester of my teaching career I've failed at least two students for plagiarism, often more. Please think twice before copying another's work. The consequences are serious.

For advice on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it see: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/index.cfm

A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, cite. If you are having trouble contact the writing center or come to office hours for help.

This University policy on plagiarism is as follows:

Academic Honesty
The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all
such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

Books:

The two books for this class are:


**Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension by Andy Clark, Oxford 2010**

Absences:

Students may have four unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional absence will result in a 10 point deduction on the final course grade. Excused absences include university sanctioned events, serious illness, or serious family issues (such as the death or major illness of a close relative). All excused absences require proper documentation.