Philosophy Department

Kalamazoo College
1200 Academy St. Kalamazoo, MI 49006

PHI 415

Introduction to Philosophy:
Theories of Knowledge

Winter 2,000

Professor Ken Richman

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Course Goals

This course will introduce you to philosophy through the study of epistemology, the science of knowledge. By the end of the course, you will be familiar with the vocabulary and methods of this branch of philosophy. You will have improved your ability to evaluate arguments and difficult texts, and this improvement will be evident in your writing and in your ability to contribute to discussions of academic material. No previous work in philosophy is required for this course.

Required Text


Required Work

* Attend and participate in all class meetings
* Read assignments from the text before each class meeting
* Complete a series of brief, unannounced in-class quizzes
* Write both rough and final drafts of three 4 - 6 page papers on assigned topics

Grading

Your grade will depend equally on four factors: the three papers and the quizzes. The frequency and quality of your class participation can also affect your final grade for the course, especially if your
average for the course falls between two grades. The quizzes will consist of short questions such as definitions and true/false. Quizzes will not be announced, and there will be no make-up quizzes. Quiz grades will be on a percentage basis. Students who must miss quizzes because of true emergencies, illness or religious holidays are required to notify me in advance. Students with excused absences will have their quiz grades computed as a percentage of a lower number of points, depending on how many points were on the quizzes missed. Quizzes missed with no excused absence will receive no credit. Assignments and deadlines for the papers will be distributed in class. Late papers will be accepted at a penalty of one letter grade per day. No excuses will be accepted for an assignment after the deadline has passed.

Readings
We will discuss the following readings, roughly one per class meeting. Reading assignments will be announced in class for the following meeting. This list is subject to change. Several authors are represented more than once-please be sure to read the appropriate selection.
Skepticism

Descartes, Meditation I
Hume, Scepticism with regard to the Senses
Moore, “A Defense of Common Sense”
Lehrer, “Why Not Skepticism?”
Malcolm, “Two Types of Knowledge”

Analysis of knowledge

Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”
Goldman (IV.2.) “A Causal Theory of Knowing”
Lehrer and Paxson, “Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief”

Justification: foundationalism and coherentism

Descartes, Meditations II and III
Audi, “Contemporary Foundationalism”
Sosa, “The Raft and the Pyramid…”

Justification: externalism and internalism

Goldman, “Reliabilism: What is Justified Belief?”
Lehrer, “A Critique of Externalism”

Critique of the Tradition: Naturalism

Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (Pojman VII.4.)
Quine, “Epistemology Naturalized” (Pojman VI.3.)

Critique of the Tradition: Pragmatism

Rorty, “Dismantling Truth: Solidarity versus Objectivity”

Critique of the Tradition: Feminism

Antony, “Quine as Feminist: The Radical Import of Naturalized Epistemology” (on reserve)
Code, “Is the Sex of the Knower Epistemologically Significant?”
Longino, “Feminist Epistemology as Local Epistemology”

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