

VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE SYLLABUS

Spring 2009

Course No.: Phil 121 **Course Title:** Introduction to Modern and Contemporary Philosophy **Units:** 3
Section No.: 23427 **Class Hours:** MW 9:35 - 11:00am **Room No.:** 30-14
Instructor Name: John Wehrle, MA **Office No:** N/A **Email:** wehrlej@vvc.edu
Website: www.thepursuitofwisdom.com

SPRING 2009

Spring Semester Begins	February 17
Spring Break Holiday	April 10
Spring Break	April 13 - 18
Memorial Day Holiday	May 25
Spring Semester Ends	June 13

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Last day to withdraw from a 16-week class and receive a "W" is May 8, 2009.

NOTE – CLASSES **WILL NOT** BE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DATES: Friday, April 10 through Sunday April 19; and Monday May 25.

STATEMENT OF ACCESS: Students with special needs are encouraged to meet with instructors to discuss the opportunity for academic accommodation and be referred to disabled student program and services per Administrative Procedure (AP 3440)

Visit Victor Valley College online at www.vvc.edu

Prerequisite:

Eligibility for English 101

Textbook:

The Great Conversation; A Historical Introduction to Philosophy; Volume II: Descartes Through Derrida and Quine 5th Edition by Norman Melchert.

Course Description:

Survey of major Western philosophers and movements since the Renaissance: Continental Rationalism, British Empiricism, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Utilitarianism, Nietzsche, Pragmatism, Analytic Philosophy, Existentialism, Phenomenology, and Postmodernism. Three lecture hours per week. CSU, UC (No prerequisite. Eligibility for ENG 101 recommended)

Course Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. (a). Describe the subject matter of philosophy by distinguishing and illustrating the sub-fields of epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology. (b). Distinguishing the questions and methods of philosophy from those of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and other disciplines within the Humanities. (c). Discuss the positive role of philosophy in higher education and in personal and social life.
2. (a). Summarize, compare, contrast, and evaluate the rationalist philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. (b). Summarize, compare, contrast, and evaluate the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. (c). Describe, analyze, and evaluate Kant's resolution of the conflict between rationalism and empiricism.
3. (a). Summarize and evaluate the idealism of Hegel, including his metaphysics, philosophy of history, and logic. (b). Discuss and assess the effectiveness of the neo-Hegelian critique of Hegel's philosophy, including the positions of Feuerbach and Marx. (c). Identify and evaluate the social, moral, and political philosophy of the major

Utilitarian philosophers. (d). Discuss the main themes of the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, explaining in what ways they provide contrasting alternatives to dominant idealist and materialist views in the nineteenth century.

4.(a) Summarize and evaluate the philosophies of Pierce, James, and Dewey, including pragmatic theories of meaning, concepts of truth, interpretations of religion, and ethical/social philosophies. (b). Identify the goals and methods of early 20th century analytic philosophy, including the Logical Atomism of Russell and Logical Positivism.

(c). Discuss the distinctive contributions of ordinary language philosophers and the later Wittgenstein to the understanding of traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems. (d). Compare and contrast the philosophical methods and accounts of human existence in the philosophies of Sartre and Heidegger. (e). Define "postmodernism" and illustrate its meaning in philosophy with reference to the work of Rorty and Derrida. (f). Summarize recent philosophical critiques of patriarchy in philosophy, and explain how the interests and experiences of women are expressed in philosophical perspectives such as the ethics of care and ecofeminism.

5. (a). Formulate and defend historically informed positions on major philosophical issues of special contemporary concern, including religious truth, ethical relativism, and the legitimate uses of power. (b). Summarize and illustrate the specific ways in which philosophy contributes to fulfillment of the obligations of effective citizenship.

Assignments:

Outlines:

Students will outline most chapters which are due in class - not online. Outlines are worth 15 points each. See Course Calendar for due dates.

Class Participation:

Students will participate in class discussions, group learning activities and generally contribute to the learning process. Class participation is worth 200 points.

Essays:

Students will write four short essays (750 - 1000 words each) on topics that will be assigned in class. Each essay will be written in MLA Style and will be turned in to Turnitin.com (details for the use of Turnitin.com will be provided). Each essay will be worth 100 points. See Course Calendar for due dates.

Discussion Forums:

Students will engage in online discussion about weekly topics that will be posted online. Student posts will be judged on originality of content, coherence of thought, degree of participation, and respectfulness of interaction. Each week's postings will be worth 25 points.

Assessments:

Exams:

There will be four online exams each worth 100 points. See Course Calendar for exam dates.

Grade point breakdown:

90 - 100%	1269 - 1410 points	A
80 - 89%	1128 - 1268 points	B
70 - 79%	987 - 1127 points	C
60 - 69%	846 - 986 points	D
0 - 50%	0 - 845 points	F

Academic Integrity Policies:

Classroom Behavior: Class time will consist of informal lectures and class discussions. These discussions may be on topics that some students feel very strongly about. I welcome everyone to voice their opinions respectfully. Students who are not respectful of others will be asked to refrain from such behavior. If that warning is not heeded, the student will be asked to leave the classroom. If the behavior continues at another class session the issue will be referred to Department Chair Dr. Marc Skuster and the student will not be allowed to return until all issues have been resolved with his help.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is a serious abuse of my trust and counter to the entire purpose of the educational system. Unfortunately, cases of plagiarism are on the rise so I must make my policy on the matter clear. If plagiarism has occurred, the paper assignment will receive zero credit and the student may be failed from the course entirely depending upon the seriousness of the case. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to Department Chair Dr. Marc Skuster at which time further action will be considered.

To avoid plagiarism, always use quotation marks when using another's words verbatim. Always cite what you have quoted and what you have paraphrased or summarized. Always give credit to others for their ideas. Never make it appear that another person's ideas are your own. If you have any specific questions you may ask my advice prior to turning in your paper.

Note: I reserve the right to alter this syllabus.