An Introduction to Philosophy – PHI 2321

ICI University
Beijing, China
Summer 2014

Class Time: MTWTh 9:20 a.m. 
Instructor: Dr. Mark Hanshaw
Office: 
Office Hours:

Classroom: 
Phone: 
e-mail: mhanshaw@txwes.edu

Required Materials:

- Various Handout Materials to be provided.

Methods of Instruction
The course will be taught through discussion, lecture, collaborative learning and may include the utilization of outside resources, such as films, guest lectures and media presentations.

Course Description
A representative survey of the major divisions and characteristic problems of philosophy.

Course Objectives:

- Learn core terminology associated with the study of Philosophy.
- Learn key figures and ideals associated with the human philosophical venture.
- Identify ethical issues associated with particular social systems and methods of social organization.
- Analyze and use data, professional literature and theoretical approaches in the consideration of issues and situations identified in the course.
- Engage in the critical use of evidence to derive conclusions.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

- Participation in class: Up to 10 points
- Responsive Reading Essays: Up to 35 points total (Up to 5 points each)
- Project: Up to 15 points
- Responsive Exams: Up to 40 points total (Up to 20 points each)

Grading Scale – A total of 90-100 points constitutes an A; 80-89 is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; and anything below a 60 will receive a failing mark.

Responsive Essays on Reading Assignments
There will be several brief responsive essay assignments on certain assigned readings. Some of these will be done in-class, while others may be undertaken outside of class. Responsive essay
assignments will normally be collected at the beginning of class. There will be no make-ups on in-class responsive essays, unless you have an excused absence. Thus, you are encouraged to be present as much as possible.

For outside responsive essays, you will submit a brief 1-2 page typed essay in which you will consider certain themes developed in the work. In these essays, you will be graded on your comprehension of the text and the soundness of your own responsive arguments. If you are going to have to be absent on any day when an essay is due, attempt to get the essay to me by e-mail or other means. One letter grade will be deducted for each day that an essay is late.

**Seminar Course Style**
Throughout the semester, we will focus attention on a variety of topics, issues and outside authorities. Students will play a role in introducing the discussions related to some of these topics.

**Critical Thinking**
One of the most important activities in this class will be the work you will do in critically evaluating concepts, data and positions. As you know, not all information we receive is created equally. Thus, we will seek to develop an approach that is open, but inquisitive. Our desire is to encourage open and informed dialogue within our classroom community.

**Attendance**
Attendance and participation is important to the process of learning within this course. By participating in this course, you will gain more from it and your work will be stronger. In respect to other students and their endeavors to learn, cell phones and electronic devices not related to the class should be turned off during class.

**Late Work**
Please get your work in on time. It will benefit you in this course to meet your deadlines. However, I will accept late work to a point. Unless you have received special accommodation from me, all late work will be subject to a penalty. Work submitted from 1 to 3 days after the due date will be subject to a one-letter grade penalty. Work submitted more than 3 days late will incur a two-letter grade penalty. All work must be submitted by the last day of the class to receive any credit.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic integrity includes cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s work as one’s own, whether he/she means to or not. Copying or paraphrasing passages from another writer’s work without acknowledging that writer is plagiarism. It is easy to avoid this situation by simply acknowledging any words, phrases, or ideas received from other writers. If students are not sure how to quote or paraphrase a source or if they need help with documentation, they are encouraged to ask for help. Plagiarism is a serious offense.

**Schedule Note**
The attached is the planned course schedule. Your professor reserves the right to change the schedule as circumstances necessitate. All changes will be announced in class. If you are not present for a class meeting, it is your responsibility to determine if any
changes have been made to the schedule during your absence. An absence, whether excused or unexcused does not exempt you from any assignments that may be due on that date.

**Course Schedule**

**Week One**

1. Introduction to the Course: What is Philosophy?
   *Reading:* Blackburn, *Think*, Introduction

2. Seeing East and West
   *Reading:* Buddhadasa, “No Religion!”

3. What does it mean to “know”? What does it mean to “believe”?
   *Reading:* Blackburn, *Think*, Ch. 1
   *Written Assignment:* Reflection Essay on “No Religion!”

4. What does it mean to “know”?, pt. II
   *Reading:* Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”

**Week Two**

5. The World of our Mind
   *Reading:* Blackburn, *Think*, Ch. 2
   *Written Assignment:* Reflection Essay on “The Ethics of Belief”

6. The World of our Mind, pt. II
   *Reading:* *Maitri Upanishad*

7. Are we free to act in the World?
   *Reading:* Blackburn, *Think*, Ch. 3
   *Written Assignment:* Reflection Essay on *Maitri Upanishad*

8. Presentations on Duality and Non-Duality

**Week Three**

9. Are we free to act in the World?, pt. II
   *Reading:* Searle Interview

10. Who am “I”? 
    *Reading:* Blackburn, *Think*, Ch. 4
    *Written Assignment:* Reflection Essay on Searle

11. Who am “I”? , pt. II
    *Reading:* “Twelve Essential Rules to Live like a Zen Monk” and Krishnamurti, “Truth is a Pathless Land”

12. Responsive Exam I

**Week Four**


13. What is “God”?  
   Reading: Blackburn, Think, Ch. 5  
   Written Assignment: Reflection Essay on “Truth is a Pathless Land”

14. What is “God”? , pt. II  
   Reading: Read Kant, “A Critique of the Ontological Argument” and Thakur,  
   “Religion without God”

15. Interpreting our World Logically  
   Reading: Blackburn, Think, Ch. 6  
   Written Assignment: Reflection Essay on Kant and/or Thakur

16. What is Real?  
   Reading: Blackburn, Think, Ch. 7

Week Five

17. The Nature of Ethics  
   Reading: Blackburn, Think, Ch. 8

18. Re-thinking Our Own Ethics  
   Reading: Loy, “Loving the World as our Own Body”  
   Written Assignment: Reflection Essay on Loy article

19. Responsive Exam II