

**MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**PHL210: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**  
**Jon Mark Mikkelsen, Ph.D.**  
**Spring 2012**

***Course description***

PHL210 is designed to provide students with a “survey of the origin and development of [western] philosophical thought” (2011–2012 *Undergraduate Catalog*, p. 266). The present course focuses on the following topics: Logic & Philosophy of Religion (Unit 1); Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science (Unit 2); Ethics & Political Philosophy (Unit 3). Knowledge and understanding of these topics is fostered primarily through: (1) the study of—that is, reading and discussing—*primary source* materials drawn from classical, medieval, modern, and contemporary sources; and (2) acquiring competency in the use of the terminology common to western philosophical discourse.

***General education goals***

PHL210 serves to assist students in obtaining knowledge and skills consistent with the following goals of the university’s two- and four-year general studies programs: (i) Write and speak clearly and effectively; (ii) Think critically and reason analytically; (iii) Gain a greater understanding of the present by understanding other cultures and times; (iv) Function as an enlightened citizen of our democratic society; and (v) Understand common phenomena in the physical and natural environment and . . . the methods by which they are studied (2011–2012 *Undergraduate Catalog*, pp. 39 & 41–42).

***Course schedule***

Reading assignments for each unit will be selected from the reading lists provided below and other materials either distributed in class or posted to WebCT. Specific assignments will be announced in class and/or, as appropriate, electronically—either by postings to the class email list or to WebCT. Students are expected to read each assignment at least once *prior* to coming to class on the first day for which is assigned. This expectation will be reinforced by means of periodic in-class reading and term definition quizzes throughout the semester, as needed.

***Class attendance***

Students are expected to attend class regularly. To encourage and reward regular attendance one (1) point will be awarded for each class session attended (excluding exam days) up to a maximum of 36 points. All absences not deemed explicitly by the instructor to be excused will be considered unexcused. Students who cannot provide the instructor with a good explanation, including (when requested) appropriate documentation, as to why they will be missing a class (or, in those exceptional cases where it was not possible to inform the instructor beforehand, a class already missed), should, therefore, *not* expect to be provided an opportunity to make up exams or quizzes or expect to be awarded points for attendance. (See *Departmental make-up exam policy* below.)

***Student evaluation / grades***

Final grades will be based on student performance on: (1) three exams (90 points each X 3 = 270 points); (2) quizzes and (possibly) various “bonus point” opportunities and/or writing assignments that will be announced throughout the semester (94 points); and (3) attendance (36 points; see above). Since the total points possible for the course is 400, students must earn at least 360 points to receive an “A,” 320–359 points for a “B,” 280–319 points for a “C,” etc.

### ***Exam schedule***

Students should expect that the three unit exams will be given on the following dates: Unit 1 = Fri., Feb. 14; Unit 2 = Fri., Mar. 30; Unit 3 = Mon., May 7 (during the final exam period).

### ***Departmental make-up exam policy***

As a general rule, students will *not* be allowed to “make up” exams or quizzes unless they inform the instructor that they will be missing the class in which an exam or quiz is given *prior* to that class session; exceptions to this rule will be made only in the case of *truly exceptional* circumstances, including (but not limited to) personal illness, an automobile accident, a death in the family, or participation in a college-sponsored activity. Students who are granted permission to make up exams or quizzes may, however, do this only during times designated by the Department of History, Philosophy, and Geography. One make-up period is usually scheduled during the last full week of classes prior to the date when mid-term progress reports are due; a second make-up period is usually scheduled during the last two weeks of classes. If a student is unable to take the final exam at the scheduled time or before the end of the semester, he/she will receive a “0” for that exam *or* a course grade of “Incomplete” (=I), at the discretion of the instructor. No exceptions may be made to this policy without the approval of the department chairperson.

### ***Plagiarism***

Consistent with Western’s Academic Honesty Policy (see next paragraph), no credit will be given in this course for any work that violates well-recognized academic standards for originality and documentation .

“Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another’s work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student’s grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms.”

For specific activities identified as violations of the university’s Academic Honesty Policy and the student due process procedure, please see the *Western Student Handbook and Calendar*. The handbook is available online at <<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>>.

### ***Policy on students with disabilities***

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of his or her abilities should contact the instructor personally as soon as possible to discuss class requirements and testing alternatives. If you have been diagnosed with a disability or if you suspect that you may have a disability that has never been diagnosed and would like to find out what services may be available, please visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Eder Hall, room 203N, or visit the ODS website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/ds/> as soon as possible. This syllabus, as well as all other printed or electronic materials, can be made available in alternative/accessible formats if requested with sufficient prior notice. Missouri Western is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

### ***Office hours and contact information***

MWF 12 noon–1 p.m., T/Th 11 a.m.–12 noon, or by appointment  
Department of History, Philosophy & Geography (Popplewell 115)  
Email = <[mikkelsen@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mikkelsen@missouriwestern.edu)>  
Phone = (816) 271–4530

## **Text**

The only textbook that you need to purchase for this class is the anthology edited by Steven M. Cahn and Maureen Eckert, *Philosophical Horizons: Introductory Readings* 2nd ed. (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2012), which may be purchased at the campus bookstore or from other sources. Selections from sources other than this are, however, also included on the reading lists provided below. Course materials such as this will be made available on WebCT or distributed in class. For sake of brevity, the following abbreviations are used in identifying the Cahn textbook and the other sources in the reading lists below:

C&E = Steven M. Cahn and Maureen Eckert, eds., *Philosophical Horizons: Introductory Readings*, 2nd ed. (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2012); WPAA = John Cottingham, ed., *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (Blackwell Publishers, 1996); God = Timothy A Robinson, ed., *God*, 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2002); P4t21stC = Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Philosophy for the 21st Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002); RPSfPP = Theodore Schick, Jr., ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of Science: From Positivism to Postmodernism* (Mayfield Publishing, 2006); EPIA = Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, 4th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2012).

## **Unit 1**

### **Topic: Logic & Philosophy of Religion**

**Dates: Fri., Jan. 20 — Fri., Feb. 17** (13 class periods)

1. Plato (428–347 BCE), *Euthyphro* (C&E 20–31)
2. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), “The Five Ways” (C&E 34–35)
3. Steven M. Cahn (b. 1942), Patricia Kitcher (b. 1948), and George Sher (b. 1942), “The Elements of Argument” (C&E 3–15)
4. William Paley (1743–1805), “The Teleological Argument” (C&E 35–38)
5. David Hume (1711–1776), from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (C&E 38–86; selections TBA)
6. St. Anselm (1033–1109), “The Ontological Argument” (C&E 31–34)
7. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), “Critique of the Ontological Argument” (P4t21stC 27–28; available on WebCT)
8. Ernest Nagel (1901–1985), “A Defense of Atheism” (C&E 87–91)
9. Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), from *Theodicy* (WPAA 260–265; available on WebCT)
10. Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), “The Wager” (C&E 101–102)
11. Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (WPAA 277–283; available on WebCT)
12. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), “Parable of the Madman” from *The Gay Science* (available online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/nietzsche-madman.asp>)
13. William James (1842–1910), “The Will to Believe” (C&E 107–119)
14. John Wisdom (1904–1993), “Gods” (WPAA 288–295; available on WebCT)
15. Anthony Flew (1923–2010), R. M. Hare (1919–2002), and Basil Mitchell (1917–2011), “Theology and Falsification” (C&E 119–125)
16. Rudolph Otto (1869–1937), from *The Idea of the Holy* (God 285–298; available on WebCT)
17. Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), “The Phenomenology of Religion,” from *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (God 299–308; available on WebCT)
18. Martin Buber (1878–1965), from *I and Thou* (God 397–407)

## **Unit 2**

### **Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science**

**Dates: Wed., Feb. 22–Fri., Mar. 30** (14 class periods)

1. Heraclitus (b. circa 570 BCE), Parmenides (b. circa 515 BCE), and Zeno (b. circa 490 BCE), “Being vs. Becoming” (C&E 132–134)
2. Plato (428–347 BCE), “The Divided Line and the Myth of the Cave” (C&E 134–138)
3. Aristotle (384–322 BCE), “Substance, Cause, and Change” (C&E 138–141)
4. Aristotle, from *Posterior Analytics* (WPAA 19–21; available on WebCT)
5. A. D. Woozley (1912–2008), “Universals” (C&E 141–145)
6. Carl Hempel (1909–1997), “The Role of Induction in Scientific Theory” (RPSfPP 41–49; available on WebCT)
7. Karl Popper (1902–1994), “The Problem of Induction” (RPSfPP 49–53; available on WebCT)
8. Karl Popper, “Science: Conjecture and Refutations” (RPSfPP 9–13; available on WebCT)
9. Thomas Kuhn (1922–1996, “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” (RPSfPP 183–190; available on WebCT)
10. Thomas Kuhn, “Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?” (RPSfPP 13–19; available on WebCT)
11. René Descartes (1596–1650), *Meditations on First Philosophy* (C&E 206–234; selections TBA)
12. David Hume (1711–1776), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (C&E 296; selections TBA)
13. John Locke (1632–1704), from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (C&E 241–246)
14. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), from *Critique of Pure Reason* (C&E 361–366)
15. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), “The Problem of Induction” from *The Problems of Philosophy* (EPIA 82–84; available on WebCT)

## **Unit 3**

### **Ethics & Political Philosophy**

**Dates: Mon., Apr. 2–Mon., Apr. 30** (14 class sessions)

1. Plato (428–347 BCE), *Apology* (C&E 618–633; alternative translation available on WebCT)
2. Plato, *Crito* (C&E 634–640; alternative translation available on WebCT)
3. Peter Singer (b. 1946), “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” (C&E 592–599)
4. John Arthur (1946–2007), “World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer” (EPIA 473–478; available on WebCT)
5. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), *Utilitarianism* (C&E 523–558; selections TBA)
6. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), *Groundwork* (C&E 484–522; selections TBA)
7. Aristotle (384–322 BCE), from *Nicomachean Ethics* (C&E 462–468)
8. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), from *Leviathan* (C&E 640–645)
9. John Locke (1632–1704), from *Second Treatise of Government* (C&E 645–649)
10. John Rawls (1921–2002), from *A Theory of Justice* (C&E 667–674)
11. Robert Nozick (1938–2002), from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (C&E 674–677)
12. John Stuart Mill, from *On Liberty* (C&E 656–661)
13. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), “The Solitude of Self” (C&E 661–666)
14. Karl Marx (1818–1883), “Estranged Labor” (C&E 653–656)
15. Amartya Sen (b. 1933), from *The Idea of Justice* (C&E 678–679)
16. James Madison (1751–1836), *The Federalist No. 10* (C&E 649–653)
17. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968), “Letter from a Birmingham Jail Cell” (C&E 679–688)