

Dr. Lane DesAutels

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Office hours: 11:00-12:00, M/W
2:00-3:00, T/Th
12:00-1:00, F
(and by appointment)

Class time: M/W/F 1:00-1:50
Location: Popplewell 102

Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophy by way of examining some of the major questions philosophers confront in the theory of knowledge, theory of mind, personhood, value theory, and existence.

Students will obtain knowledge and skills consistent with the following goals of the university's two- and four-year general studies programs:

1. Write and speak clearly and effectively
2. Think critically and reason analytically
3. Locate, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information from print and electronic sources
4. Understand and appreciate moral values and ethical choices
5. Gain a greater awareness of the present by understanding other cultures and times
6. Understand and enjoy aesthetic experiences and share in related activities
7. Develop an understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts and their applications
8. Understand common phenomena in the physical and natural environment and understand the methods by which they are studied through lectures and the connected laboratory experience
9. Understand and appreciate the means of gaining and maintaining mental and physical health

Knowledge and skill areas [1-5] will be emphasized in this course.

Objectives

By completing this course, students should gain significantly greater abilities to:

- I. Carefully engage in close reading of demanding texts
- II. Produce a precise and carefully structured piece of writing
- III. Participate in reasoned discussion of difficult topics
- IV. Employ modern deductive logic in their philosophic work, and
- V. Develop and defend their own philosophical positions and engage in sustained and critical reflection on their own values and beliefs

Required Texts

- *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (8th Edition): John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer (Eds.), Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

(1) 7-10 quizzes based on assigned reading to given at the beginning of class. These will typically be true/false, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer questions. Quizzes may not be made up. The student's two lowest quiz grades will be dropped in calculating his/her final grade.

(2) A midterm examination.

(3) A 3-4-page argumentative essay. Students will submit their first paragraph and thesis before submitting their final draft. Both the first paragraph/thesis and the final draft will be graded, and the final paper grade will be an average of the two. A detailed assignment sheet to be provided. Again, late papers will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late.

(4) A final examination.

(5) Meaningful contributions to in-class discussion based on assigned reading is expected.

Grading Breakdown

Final grade calculation: 15% for quizzes; 25% for midterm exam; 25% for argumentative essay; 25% for final exam; 10% for participation.

Grading Scale:

A= 90%-100%; B= 80%-89%; C=70%-79%; D= 60%-69%; F=59% and below

Attendance: University Statement

“Missouri Western State University has the expectation that students should be active participants in their coursework. Regular class attendance is considered a key element of participation and an essential part of the educational experience.” (MWSU Student Handbook)

Attendance: Course Statement

Attendance is not strictly mandatory in this class. However, your participation in class discussions as well as your in-class quiz grade contribute significantly to your overall course grade.

Classroom Behavior Guidelines

Please arrive on time and leave only after the class is over. Please do not talk to your neighbor during class. Turn off and put away all cell phones and message devices. Laptops may NOT be used during lecture (unless proper documentation is provided from the Accessibility Resource Center).

Academic Honesty, Due Process, and Grade Appeal

Academic dishonesty is defined in the Student Code of Conduct as engaging in acts which include (but not limited to):

- a) Falsifying documents or academic records;

- b) Any activity that violates the University's Academic Honesty Policy including (but not limited to) any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, using any electronic device to either improperly store information for an exam or to transmit portions of questions or answers to other students, or allowing another student to take your exam for you.

For more details concerning Departmental Grade Appeal Procedure, see "GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE MATERIALS" which is filed in Popplewell 115.

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking accommodations must first provide documentation of needed accommodations to the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) located in Eder Hall, Suite 203. Once accommodations have been approved by the ARC, students are responsible for notifying their instructors of those accommodations. This should be done within the first two weeks of classes. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Pregnancy

Missouri Western State University does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions. Absences due to medical conditions relating to pregnancy, and recovery from pregnancy, will be excused for as long as deemed medically necessary by a student's doctor. Students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work. Pregnant or parenting students needing assistance should contact the Title IX Coordinator, Adam McGowan at 816-271-4432 in Blum Student Union 228.

A Note on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

Consistent with its mission, Missouri Western seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX, and University policy prohibit harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Missouri Western encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the University Policies and Procedures (<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/studentaffairs/wp.../handbook.pdf>) about what happened so they can get the support they need and Missouri Western can respond appropriately.

There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Missouri Western is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website: <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/titleix/sexual-misconduct-policy/>

Students have received information via email regarding training regarding Title IX. Student employees may have additional required training. Please follow the link in the email sent to your MWSU student account to complete the training. Students who do not complete the training will receive a hold on their account, prohibiting future semester enrollment until the training is complete. These training courses will ensure that all students are appropriately educated about these important regulations.

Classroom Recording Policy

The course materials that I author, including, but not limited to, PowerPoint slides, Panopto recordings, Canvas screen shots, class hand-outs, web-based and social media content, and course syllabi, are my intellectual property and are protected by copyright law. Students in the course may download and make copies of my course materials for the course student's own use.

Students are not allowed to record course proceedings, publicly reproduce or distribute these materials or enable others to do so without my express written consent. Failure to comply with this direction may constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook and result in disciplinary action by the University.

Inclement Weather and Illness Policy

In the event that the instructor is unable to make it to a scheduled class session, you will be notified through your university email account, when possible. The email will contain instructions for what you are to do in lieu of coming to class that day.

Make-Up Exam Policy

Two days each semester will be provided for make-up quizzes and tests: one before mid-term grades, the other prior to final exams. Contact the instructor before the scheduled test date or as soon as possible after the test about the prospect of a make-up. Make-up tests will be given solely at the discretion of the instructor. Depending on the circumstances, the instructor may require documentation explaining why the student missed a scheduled test date. As a rule, only one make-up per student per semester will be allowed. Remember, a make-up is a privilege, not a right.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, 226 Blum Student Union, for a list of resources and support. <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/studentaffairs/>

You can also contact Shana Meyer, Vice President for Student Affairs, slmeyer@missouriwestern.edu

The Campus Cupboard is a free resource with pantry and hygiene items, located at 214 Blum Student Union. The pantry is typically open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4 pm and by appointment. You can stop by the Vice President for Student Affairs Office, Blum 228, to contact the Dean of Students with questions or concerns. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable your professor to connect you with the resources you need.

Options for Additional Participation Credit

Students uncomfortable with taking part in our usual in-class discussion will have the opportunity to receive participation credit in one or both of the following ways:

1. Public Event Review:

The student may go to some kind of community event (e.g., public lecture, movie screening, art exhibition, or political advocacy meeting) and write a 2-paragraph report.

The first paragraph details the following

- Day, time, place, and nature of the event
- People involved (presenters), and sponsors;
- What happened at the event (if possible include information from flyers and handouts)

The second paragraph details the following

- What you learned from the event
- How, if at all, you participated in the event
- What the connection is between the event and the course content

2. Presentation of Research

The student may create a presentation based on his/her argumentative essay research. If deemed successful by the professor, the student will be given the opportunity to give the presentation to the class.

Schedule of Readings/Assignments (Subject to Change)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
1/13	Introductions/syllabus		
1/15	What is Philosophy?	Perry et al., 1-14	
1/17		Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"	
1/20	NO CLASS (MLK Day)		
1/22	LOGIC DAY 1	Perry et al., "Introduction"	
1/24	LOGIC DAY 2		
1/27	Skepticism: then and now	Descartes "Meditations on First Philosophy" Meditation I	
1/29		Descartes "meditations of First Philosophy" Meditation II	
2/31		Bostrom 2004 (Canvas)	
2/3	Minds vs brains	Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism"	
2/5		Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"	
2/7		Discussion	
2/10	Minds vs. computers	Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"	
2/12		Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"	
2/14		Discussion	Midterm Exam Study Guide up on Canvas
2/17	Personal identity and the self	Perry "Dialogue on Personal Identity"	
2/19		Perry "Dialogue on Personal Identity" (Continued)	
2/21		Survival Game Exercise	
2/24		Dennett, "Where am I?"	
2/26		VIDEO and exam review	
2/28	MIDTERM EXAM		
3/2	Freedom and moral responsibility	Van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"	
3/4		Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"	
3/6		Free will game	
3/9	SPRING BREAK		
3/11			
3/13			
3/16	Normative ethics: utilitarianism	Mill, "Utilitarianism"	
3/18		Carritt, "Criticisms of Utilitarianism"	Argumentative essay prompt/rubric up on Canvas
3/20		Trolley Problem Discussion	

3/23	Normative ethics: Kantian deontology	Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" part 1	
3/25		Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" part 2	
3/27		Ethics Exercise	
			***1st paragraph of argumentative essay due on 3/29 by 11:59 pm ***
3/30	Practical ethics: life extension	Bostrom "Fable of the Dragon Tyrant" VIDEO (in class)	
4/1		Bostrom "Fable of the Dragon Tyrant" (Canvas)	
4/3		Discussion	
4/6	Existentialism: meaning of life	Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus"	
4/8		Nagel, "the Absurd"	
4/10		Discussion	
4/13	Existentialism: approaches to death	Nagel, "Death"	Extra Credit Presentation guidelines up on Canvas
4/15		Brueckner and Fischer, "Why is Death Bad?"	
4/17		Discussion Exercise	Final exam review guide up on Canvas
4/20	Student Presentations		
4/22	Student Presentations		
4/24	Exam Review		
			*** 3-4-page Essay due 4/26 by 11:59 pm ***
			*** Final Exam in our usual Classroom 5/1, 11:30-1:30 ***