

## **Philosophy 100 (second term) - Introductory Philosophy – 2011-12**

**Professor:** William Sweet

**Office:** 707 Nicholson Tower

**Telephone:** 867-2341 / **E-mail:** [wsweet@stfx.ca](mailto:wsweet@stfx.ca)

**Office Hours:** M 9.15-11.15; Tu 11.15-1.15; Th 10.15-12.15; and by arrangement

Information on the course, on assignments and examinations, etc., will be periodically posted on the course web page: <http://www.stfx.ca/people/wsweet/phil100-2011.html>

*The objectives of this course are to provide students with an opportunity to develop critical thinking and clear expression and to introduce them to the history of philosophy and to some of the traditional problems of philosophy.*

### **Course outline**

#### **I. Some basic philosophical terms and basic logic**

#### **II. Epistemology and Metaphysics, Part I**

The problem of appearance and reality

The origin of knowledge in reason and argument (Descartes)

The nature of the (human) self, the relation of the mind and the body, cause and effect, and the existence of god/God

1. Descartes: *Meditations*

2. Formal Logic

#### **III. Epistemology and Metaphysics, Part II**

The origin of our knowledge in experience (Hume)

The nature of the (human) self, cause and effect, and the existence of miracles

Argument and method

1. Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

2. Inductive Reasoning

#### **IV. Additional readings and arguments to analyse**

Anselm, Aquinas, Paley

#### **The texts we shall use are:**

- Rene DESCARTES (*Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*), 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hackett)
- David HUME (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*),
- and copied notes

**Students should also have a good dictionary available.**

**Students might consult web pages on:**

Philosophy Pages (from Garth Kemerling): <http://www.philosophypages.com/>

**Method of the course and the role of the student:**

The class will have a 'lecture and discussion' format. The professor will introduce a topic with a summary of the relevant arguments or a commentary on a text. This will be followed by questions and discussion of the material by the class as a whole (e.g., points of clarification or criticism and of comparison; comments on the relations between or among different issues).

Students are expected to have prepared the readings before class, to attend all of the classes and to participate in discussion. **In conformity with University regulations, students who have more than 3 unjustified absences in a term may be reported to their Dean.**

**It is essential in studying philosophy that students be prepared to ask and answer questions in class.**

St. Francis Xavier University values academic integrity. All forms of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism) are unacceptable and will be sanctioned. For the university policy on plagiarism, please visit <http://www.stfx.ca/services/registrar/academic-integrity-document.pdf>

**Email and Office Policy**

I can respond to short messages through email, and I try to check e-mail once a day. I do not, however, provide grades or answers about course content by email. Students should make use of my office hours and ask questions in class. Urgent requests (e.g., to meet) are best made by telephone. If I am not in when you call, please call later or drop by.

**Laptops and other technologies**

I assume that laptops and other technologies are being employed only for the purposes of note taking. If you need to surf the net, text, or engage in other activities, please leave the classroom.

**Evaluation**

Midterm test (25%); 1 written assignment (late March) (25%); Final examination (50%)

Good participation and preparation of class notes can merit up to an additional 10 points.

**The final grade for the course will be an average of the 1<sup>st</sup> terms (50%) and 2<sup>nd</sup> term (50%)**