University of Texas at Arlington

Department of Philosophy and Humanities

Philosophy 2300 Dr. Charles Nussbaum Introduction to Philosophy Fall 2016

Office: 308 Carlisle Office Hours: Th 3:30-4:30

E-mail: Nussbaum@uta.edu (and by appointment)

SYLLABUS

Course Description

Philosophy is distinguished from all other disciplines in that it is the only discipline that is thoroughly self-reflective. Nothing at all, be it first principles, method, logic, or rationality itself, need be taken for granted or assumed without examination. Everything is potentially up for grabs (though not everything at the same time!). Philosophical reflection moves in both an analytic and a synthetic direction: when we philosophize, we attempt to clarify our concepts and principles, but we also take a comprehensive view of our cognitive and practical endeavors, and ask how they fit together. In the modern tradition, philosophy consists of three principal areas of inquiry: ontology and metaphysics (the study of the fundamental categories and structure of existence), epistemology (the study of the scope and limits of human knowledge), and ethics (the search for moral justification). We shall touch on all three and more.

List of Readings

Frankfurt: On Bullshit

Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy

Hume: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

Wielenberg: Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe

Greene: “The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul”

Requirements

We will have short essay-type exams after Descartes, Hume, and Wielenberg. We will also have a comprehensive final exam. Grades will be computed on the basis of performance on these exams. Each of the short exams counts one-fifth of the final grade; the final counts two-fifths. Before each exam I shall supply study questions from which the exam questions will be taken.

Attendance and Exam Policy

Regular attendance is expected, but not graded. Please do not make a practice of coming in late. If you must be late on some occasion, try to enter as unobtrusively as possible. Exams must be taken at the scheduled times. Note that university policy is now such that students will no longer be dropped from class rolls for non-attendance. All incompletes must be made up by the beginning of the following long semester.

Individual Attention

If you are disabled in any way and require special accommodations, please talk to me privately. I am available at any time during office hours for discussion with any student. If you cannot visit during office hours, do not hesitate to make an appointment.

Academic Dishonesty

For definitions and procedures concerning academic dishonesty please consult the UTA Undergraduate Catalogue and the published guidelines established by The Undergraduate Assembly, Student Congress, and the Research and Evaluation Office/Student Affairs.

# University Statement

“The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded

programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.”