

**PHILOSOPHY 118: The Contemporary Mind**

Grossmont College

Fall 2007

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 – 1:45 PM

Location: Room #535B

**INSTRUCTOR:** June Yang, PhD, Instructor of Philosophy

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Office Hours: M: 1:50 – 2:20, T: 2 – 3:30, W: 1:50 – 2:20, 5:30 – 6:30,  
R 2 – 3:30, and by appointment.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

Required: *Classics of Philosophy, Volume III, The Twentieth Century*, Ed. Louis P. Pojman, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Recommended: *The Voyage of Discovery, A Historical Introduction to Philosophy, The Contemporary Voyage 1900-*, Second Edition, William F. Lawhead, Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002.

**BLACKBOARD:** A REQUIREMENT of this course is to check Blackboard regularly. You can find lecture notes, announcements, assignments, and you can email one another and the instructor by using this site. To get to Blackboard, go to <http://bb.gcccd.net/webapps/login>. You will be at a sign-in screen. If you are enrolled in the course already, your username is firstnamelastname (no spaces) and your password is DDMMYY of your birthday. If you have any problems accessing Blackboard, contact the instructor immediately.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** “Contemporary philosophy is an effort to trace new paths of meaning when traditional sources (religion, science, and society) are questioned. This course is a survey of the major trends in philosophy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It also examines the recent developments in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two of the most significant schools of thought are 1) the analytic movement of Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein and 2) the existential/phenomenological thought of Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre” (*Grossmont College Catalogue 2007-2008* 245).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** The student should be able to: 1) Summarize the philosophical views and trends considered in this course 2) Compare and contrast these views and trends and 3) Consider the psychological, economic and social impacts of these views.

**COURSE CALENDAR (topics and important dates included):**

(Do not be concerned if we fall forward or behind on this schedule. What is important is that most students understand the concepts involved.)

**Week 1:** August 20: Introductions, Syllabi, Schedule of Topics, the Contemporary Context.

August 22: Philosophy & the Meaning of Life: Jean-Paul Sartre’s Existentialism.  
Required: 546-553, Lawhead, 498-499, Pojman.

**Week 2:** August 27: Bad Faith and Humanism. Required: 499-514, Pojman.

August 29: Applications and Implications to Morality and Politics.  
Required: 540-543, Lawhead.

**Week 3:** September 3: Labor Day Holiday

September 5: Bad Faith and Pleasure: Robert Nozick’s “The Experience Machine.”  
Required: 423-424, Pojman.

**Week 4:** September 10: Societies and the Dialogue on Justice: Nozick's Libertarianism.  
Required: 408-415, Pojman.

September 12: Nozick's "Theory of Entitlement." Required: 415-423, Pojman.

**Week 5:** September 17: John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Required: 427-434, Pojman.

September 19: Conclude Rawls, Consider relationship between individuals and societies, Consider relationship between these thinkers and current events.

**Week 6:** September 24: **Midterm Examination #1.**

September 26: Introduction to Twentieth Century Epistemology and Metaphysics.  
Required: 453-458, Lawhead, 1-7, Pojman.

**Week 7:** October 1: Is Time Real? John McTaggart's "The Unreality of Time." Required: 12-17, Pojman.

October 3: Continue McTaggart's Discussion of Time. Required: 17-21, Pojman.

**Week 8:** October 8: A Discussion of Nominalism vs. Realism as it relates to time and other relations as a prelude to Bertrand Russell's work. Required: 499-502, Lawhead, 53-56, Pojman.

October 10: Russell's Logical Atomism. Required 502-505, Lawhead, 42-53, Pojman.  
**Essay Topics Distributed.**

**Week 9:** October 15: Russell's Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description.  
Required: 56-70, Pojman.

October 17 How Russell's View applies to Universals & the Value of Philosophy.  
Required: 70-85, Pojman.

**Week 10:** October 22 Russell's Student – early Ludwig Wittgenstein.  
Required: 510-514, Lawhead, 165-167, Pojman.  
Recommended: 168-174, Pojman.  
**Essay Draft #1 Due.**

October 24: Continue the view of the *Tractatus*.

**Week 11:** October 29: later Wittgenstein  
Required: 514-519, Lawhead, 174-182, Pojman (skim this).

October 31: Conclude later Wittgenstein  
Comparison of McTaggart, Russell, and early and late Wittgenstein.

**Week 12:** November 5: **Midterm #2**

November 7: Begin the Problem of Consciousness, Introductory Remarks, if time.  
Required: 568, Lawhead.

**Week 13:** November 12: Thomas Nagel's "What is it like to be a Bat?" Required: 360-367, Pojman.

November 14: Continue Nagel, begin John Searle's "The Chinese Room."  
Required: 387-394, Pojman.

**Week 14:** November 19: Conclude Searle's essay. Consider the status of dualism.

November 21: Catch-Up Day.

**Week 15:** November 26: An Introduction to Pragmatism. C.S. Peirce.

Required: 460-466, Lawhead, 97-103, Pojman.

November 28: **Peer Editing in Class. Mandatory Attendance.**

**Week 16:** December 3: Conclude Pierce.

Required: 103-111, Pojman. If time, Pragmatism: William James' Will to Believe.

Required: 466-471, Lawhead, 112, Pojman.

December 5: Review and Summation.

**Finals Week:** The Final will be administered on Monday, December 10 from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM.

**Final Draft of Essay Due at the Final.**

There will also be another review before the Final Examination.

The Final Exam will not be cumulative. However, as will become clear, the study of philosophy is cumulative, similar to mathematics or languages. This explains why someone can spend a lifetime examining just one of the above philosophers.

**STUDENT EVALUATION:**

Grading: 10% Midterm Examination #1	
20% Midterm Examination #2	A: 90-100 %
20% Essay	B: 80-89 %
15% Final Examination	C: 70-79 %
20% Quizzes/Comprehension Exams	D: 60-69 %
15% Classroom Citizenship	F: <59 %

**ACADEMIC POLICIES:**

**No late work is accepted. Students may make up exams only in the case of a documentable emergency.**

**Electronic Devices are not allowed in class. They must be turned off and out of sight. This includes cell phones and all text-messaging devices. You will be asked to leave if you use these in class.**

**Student Responsibility to Drop/Withdraw:** It is the student's responsibility to officially add, drop, or withdraw from the course. Failure to do so can result in a failing grade.

**Class Attendance:** A student may be disenrolled from the course after three absences; however, a student will be disenrolled from the course after five absences *without exception*.

**Tardiness/Early Departure:** If a student arrives unreasonably late or leaves early without notifying the instructor before the event, then that student will be considered absent for that class session.

**Professionalism:** It is assumed that students will conduct themselves in a professional manner with a positive attitude. An open mind is one of the most important tools required for success in academia.

**Student Code of Ethics and Conduct:** Students must abide by the Student Code of Conduct published in the *Grossmont College Catalogue 2007-2008*. Students who obstruct the instructor's ability to convey knowledge, or disrupt their fellow students' ability to learn, will be dealt with under the terms delineated in the Grossmont College Student Code of Conduct. Such dealings may include, but are not limited to, verbal and written warnings, written reprimands, disciplinary probations, instructor-initiated suspensions, terminations of financial aid, short or long-term suspensions from campus, and temporary or permanent expulsions. These consequences are serious and can easily be avoided.

Examples of disruptive activities that cannot be tolerated are: repeated cell phone ringing, repeatedly falling asleep in class, excessive talking, passing of notes, entering and leaving class several times during a session, verbal rudeness directed towards the instructor and/or other students, and non-verbal rudeness directed towards the instructor and/or other students.

This instructor is charged with maintaining a positive learning experience for all students in this course, and that responsibility is a serious one. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this course. **To this end, citizenship points will be deducted at the discretion of the instructor.**

Plagiarism will result in the student's being dropped from the course, and the appropriate administrative authorities will be contacted. It is the student's responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism.

#### **TEN TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE:**

1. Be optimistic about your ability to learn from the textbooks, the instructor, and each other.
2. Attend because this is the only way to attain the quality of work required to succeed in this course.
3. Do all assigned reading, even if you do not understand it.
4. If you find you fall behind in your understanding, contact the instructor.
5. Be prepared to spend at least two hours per hour spent in class in order to master this material. If you do not, you probably will not receive a passing grade.
6. Have confidence in your ability to do the work.
7. Use all resources at your disposal.
8. Remember that you are gifted with more education than many persons on this planet. If you try, you are sure to get it, or at least most of it!
9. Remember that we are all here to learn.
10. Remember that you are being trained, or acquiring a skill. Studying, like anything else, is a craft, i.e. an activity. No one is born a good student, we must all transform ourselves into excellent students.

#### **Tutoring Referral:**

Students are referred to enroll in the following supervised tutoring courses if the service indicated will assist them in achieving or reinforcing the learning objectives of this course:

- IDS 198, Supervised Tutoring to receive tutoring in general computer applications in the Tech Mall;
- English 198W, Supervised Tutoring for assistance in the English Writing Center (Room 70-119); and /or
- IDS 198T, Supervised Tutoring to receive one-on-one tutoring in academic subjects in the Tutoring Center (Room 70-229, 644-7387).

To add any of these courses, students may obtain Add Codes at the Information/Registration Desk in the Tech Mall. All Supervised Tutoring courses are non-credit/non-fee. However, when a student registers for a supervised tutoring course, and has no other classes, the student will be charged the usual health fee.

**Announcement:** Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact Disabled Student Services & Programs (DSP&S) early in the semester so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented as soon as possible. Students may contact DSP&S in person in Room 110 or by phone at (619) 644-7112 or (619) 644-7119 (TTY for Deaf).