

# HISTORY OF WESTERN THOUGHT II

## IDS 321

### Summer 2008

Alexandra Shuford, Ph.D.  
alexshuford@gmail.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** - This course will pick up where History of Western Thought I left off last semester. As an advanced introductory course, it will acquaint students with a number of important texts, ideas, figures and events that have shaped the evolution of Western Thought. Although not exhaustive in scope, the course allows students to explore and critically interrogate some of the cornerstones of prototypical Western approaches to knowledge, beliefs, truth, ethics, as well as social and political philosophy. While the assigned readings are primarily philosophical in nature, the text takes a multi-disciplinary approach to better understand how our most fundamental ideas are imprinted upon a diverse range of cultural expressions.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS** - Readings are to be completed on a weekly basis as indicated on the syllabus. Be sure to give yourself enough time to read and digest the material - anticipate re-reading some of the text selections to gain full understanding.

*Note:* If you are taking this class out of sequence, you may want to review the initial chapter of the text as it provides an excellent overview describing some of the main components of Western thought. For students who took IDS 320 with me last semester (Spring 07), some of the material covered in Week 1 will be a review. However, I urge you to take the time to re-read lectures and the text for a more complete understanding of this material.

#### **Required Readings:**

- The following book is available online through various booksellers:  
*Philosophy: A Text with Readings*. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. 2005. Manuel Velasquez, edit., CA: Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN 0534626130

Be sure to get the NINTH edition. Do not worry if the book comes with the supplemental CD – I will make the readings covered by the CD available online. I am requiring this edition to hold down costs (the 10<sup>th</sup> edition is considerably more expensive.)

#### **COURSE GRADES**

##### **Graded Assignments:**

Quizzes (6 x 5%) .....30%  
Discussion Participation (4 x 5%).....20%  
Comprehensive Final Exam.....50%

#### **Scale Used to Compute Final Grades**

A	94-100	C	73-75
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	86-89	D+	66-69
B	83-85	D	63-65
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	76-79	F	59 <

## **Discussion Participation:**

The on-line lectures and assigned readings are designed to stimulate your thinking, to reveal patterns and complexities, not to provide you with “the answers.” The discussion component of this class provides a place for you to make connections, ask questions, offer ideas, and think through some of the issues explored. These discussions are an opportunity to work on developing and clearly explicating themes covered in the course. Thoughtfully doing this work will aid you in deeper understanding of the material.

To receive full credit (5 pts.), discussion postings must be timely, substantive, engaged, respectful, and show comprehension of the readings assigned. Students will be expected to participate in discussion 4 times throughout the course beginning in Week 2. In developing your discussion posting, remember to *explain why* you think what you do not just stating that you agree with an idea or that you think an idea is wrong. Each discussion time, I will ask a ‘tip-off’ question or two to help get conversation rolling.

*Note:* Late discussion postings will immediately lose 2 pts.

## **Quizzes:**

There will be six short (5 questions) open book/note multiple choice quizzes given throughout the semester every week starting in Week 4. These quizzes will test your familiarity with the concepts presented in lecture and in the course text. (More info tba)

## **Final Exam:**

The *final exam* will be take-home essay exam due at the start of the last course meeting (8/20). One week prior to the due date, students will be given a list of questions and will be asked to write on two of them. Essays should be 7-8 typed pages total.

Do not simply summarize the readings and lectures. You are expected to make *clear connections between the ideas presented in readings and lectures*. Thus, a substantial portion of the essays must involve an accurate discussion of those aspects of the readings and lectures relevant to the question at hand.

Grades will be based on how accurately you answer the question and develop your reasoning to support your answers. This includes substantive use of readings and lectures as well as the degree to which you've elaborated upon and supported your ideas. As in discussion, it will be important to explain *why* you think what you do --- don't just say that you agree with an idea or that you think an idea is wrong without providing well-considered support/evidence. (More information will be announced re: submission of exam.)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity:** All work for this course must be your own and must be produced exclusively for this class. Academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating, plagiarism) is strictly prohibited and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or entire course. All appropriate Linfield College guidelines on cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism are in full effect for this course.

## **TOPICS & READING SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1**

#### **Sources of Knowledge (a.k.a. Epistemology)**

**M 6/16**      Read: 5.1 Introduction: Why is Knowledge a Problem? pp. 360-366  
5.2 Is Reason the Source of Our Knowledge? pp 366-378

**W 6/18**      Read: 5.3 Can the Senses Account for All Our Knowledge? pp.379-394

**Week 2**  
**Epistemology and the Mind**

**M 6/23**      Read: 5.4 Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World? pp.394-403

**W 6/25**      Read: 5.5 Does Science Give us Knowledge? pp.403-415  
5.6 Chapter Summary 415-418

**F 6/27**      **Discussion 1**

**Week 3**  
**Beliefs and Truth**

**M 6/30**      Read: 6.1 Introduction: Belief, Knowledge and Truth pp. 438-442

**W 7/2**      Read: 6.2 What is Truth? pp..443-452 (up to “Coherence Theory”)

**F 7/4**      *Independence Day Holiday (no assignments)*

**Week 4**  
**Truth**

**M 7/7**      Read: 6.2 What is Truth? (cont.) pp. 452-465

**W 7/9**      Read: Bertrand Russell, “Truth and Falsehood” (selection)  
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/introbook2.1/x8821.html>

**F 7/11**      **Discussion 2 & Quiz 1**

**Week 5**  
**Truth (cont.)**

**M 7/14**      Read: 6.3 Does Science Give us Truth? pp.466-473  
Tomlinson, “After Truth [...]” pp.501-502  
Sellar, “Realism Vs. Relativism [...]” pp. 503-506

**W 7/16**      Read: 6.4 Can Interpretations Be True? pp. 473-483  
Akutagawa. “In a Grove” pp.496-500  
6.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusions pp. 483-486

**F 7/18**      **Quiz 2**

**Week 6**  
**Ethics and Consequences**

**M 7/21**      Read: 7.1 Introduction: What is Ethics? pp. 510-514  
7.2 Is Ethics Relative? pp. 515-519

**W 7/23**      Read: 7.3 Do Consequences Make an Action Right? pp. 519-530  
Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 1-12 **(CD)**

**F 7/25**      **Discussion 3 & Quiz 3**

**Week 7**  
**Ethics and Principles**

**M 7/28**      Read: 7.4 Do Rules Define Morality? pp.531-548  
Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface & pp.1-12  
(CD)

**W 7/30**      Read: 7.5 Is Ethics Based on Character? pp. 554-565  
Nietzsche and Wollstonecraft, pp. 584-593

**F 8/1**              **Quiz 4**

**Week 8**  
**Ethics in the Real World**

**M 8/4**              Read: 7.6 Can Ethics Resolve Moral Quandaries? pp.565-575

**W 8/6**              Read: 7.7 Ethics and Moral Responsibility pp. 576-581  
7.8 Chapter Summary and Conclusions pp. 582-584

**F 8/8**              **Discussion 4 & Quiz 5**

**Week 9**  
**Social and Political Thought**

**M 8/11**              Read: 8.1 Introduction: What is Social Philosophy? pp. 606-608  
8.2 What Justifies the State? pp. 608-627

**W 8/13**              Read: 8.3 What is Justice? pp.627-646  
**Final Exam Questions Distributed**

**F 8/15**              **Quiz 6**

**Week 10**  
**Social and Political Thought**

**M 8/18**              Read: 8.4 Limits on the State pp.646-670

**W 8/20**              **Final Exam Due**