**Philosophy Syllabus**

The Search for Wisdom, Excellence, Happiness, Self

Intro…

 Emerson – on using knowledge

 Progress

 Education

## Overview of Classical Themes

Big questions

Areas of Philosophy

**Metaphysics** – the study of what is real.

Basic questions: Do we have free will? How are mind and body related to each other? What is the nature of reality?

**Epistemology** – the study of knowledge

 Basic questions: What is the relationship of faith to reason? What is the difference between knowing that we know and believing that we know? Does all knowledge come from the senses? What are the roles of reason and experience in determining the truth? What is the nature of truth?

**Aesthetics** – the study of art

 Basic questions: What is the nature of beauty? What impact on individuals can art have? What goes into creating art? Is the artists’ opinion of her artwork always correct?

**Social philosophy** – the study of the effects of social institutions on individuals

 Basic questions: What are the effects of race and gender on social status? What are the strengths and weaknesses of different types of societies?

**Logic** – the study of the rules of correct reasoning

 Basic questions: What are the merits of different kinds of evidence? How can we distinguish fallacious reasoning from sound reasoning? How reliable are analogies and comparisons? What are the conditions of validity?

**Axiology** – the study of values

 Basic questions: Are value judgments more than matters of opinion? What is the relation between facts and values? To what extent, if any, can we be objective?

**Ethics** – the study of morals

 Basic questions: Are moral values universal? What are characteristics of the good life? Do moral values depend on God?

**Political philosophy** – the study of the state and the nature of sovereignty

 Basic questions: Who has the right to exercise power? What are the limits of the state? What are the strengths and weaknesses of political systems?

Relativism

Wisdom, Knowledge, Belief, Willed Ignorance

## Pre-Socratic Naturalists

 The Search for the Common Principle

 The Problem of Change

 The One

 The Many

 Atoms and the Void

 The Logos

 Appearance and Reality – Senses Trusted?

 Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Parmenides,

 Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus

## Sophists

 Professional Educators

 Art of Persuasion

 Relativism

 Moral Realism: Might Makes Right

 Doctrine of the Superior Individual

**Socrates – Wisest Man in Athens**

 General Character

 The Teacher and his Teachings

 The Physician of the Soul

 The Dialectic

 Socratic Ignorance, Irony

 Beauty

 No one knowingly does evil

 Virtue is Wisdom

 Trial and Death

**Plato – The Philosopher King**

 Plato’s Disillusionment

 Epistemology

 Dualistic Solution

 Knowledge and Being

 Theory of Forms

 The Divided Line

 The Simile of the Sun

 The Allegory of the Cave

 The Rule of the Wise

 The Republic

 The Search for Justice

 Function and Happiness

 The Ideal State

 The Parts of the Soul

 Cardinal Virtues

 Society of Individuals

 The Origins of Democracy

 The Pendulum of Imbalance

 The Tyranny of Excess

**Aristotle – The Naturalist**

 Natural Changes - Matter, Form, Change

 The Four Causes – Material, Formal, Efficient, Final

 Entelechy

 Natural Happiness

 The Good

 Teleological Thinking

 The Science of the Good

 Eudaimonia

 The Good Life Is a Process

 Hitting the Mark

 The Principle of the Mean

 Hitting the Mark

 Character and Habit

**Stoics**

 The Cynical Origins of Stoicism

 The Slave and the Emperor

 Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius

 The Fated Life

 The Stoic Logos

 The Disinterested Will

 Stoic Wisdom

 Control vs. Influence

 Relationships

 Suffering and Change

**Middle Ages – Faith vs. Reason**

 The burying of rational thought for a faith based world.

 Reason is not good enough.

 Background on 3 dominant religious kingdoms in middle ages

 What had happened to Greek philosophy during the Middle Ages?

 St. Augustine (Confessions and City of God)

-Limits of Reason

-Creation

-Good vs. Evil

-Fate?

-Salvation?

 Scholasticism

 Hierarchy of knowledge

-revelation (as interpreted by the church)

-faith/theology

-philosophy

 St. Thomas Aquinas

 “Truth”

Great synthesis between faith and knowledge/reason.

Natural theological truths

Aquinas’ five proofs of the existence of God…

1. The argument from change/motion

2. The argument from causation

3. The argument from contingency/necessity

(dependent on something else)

4. The argument from gradation/complexity/degrees of excellence

5. The argument from harmony/design

**Overview of Modern Themes**

 Reason, Reformation and Revolution

# Renaissance

 New View of Mankind – Individualism, Humanism

 New View of Nature - Pantheism

 New Scientific Method – Empiricism

 New World View – Heliocentric

 New Religiosity – Personal relationship with God

# Baroque

 Irreconcilable Contrasts

 Carpe Diem vs. Momento Mori

 Birth of Modern Theater

 Life a Dream

 Idealism vs. Materialism

 Mechanistic World View

 Determinism

**Rene Descrates – The Rationalist**

 Rationalism

 Methodic Doubt

 Cartesian “I”

 Standard of Truth

 Innate Ideas

 Cartesian Genesis

 The Doubting Self

 Maybe it’s all a dream?

 Evil Genius

 Cogito, ergo sum

 Innate Idea of God

 Perfect Idea of Perfection

 Ontological Argument

 Reconstructing the World

 The Cartesian Bridge

 Cartesian Dualism

 The Mind-Body Problem

**Spinoza** – God is not a puppeteer

 Polishing Lenses

 New perspective – eternity

 Ethics – humanity subject to universal laws of nature

 Monist – thought and extension

 God as inner cause speaking through laws of nature

 Determinism – no free soul, imprisoned in a mechanical body

**Locke, Berkely, Hume – the British Skeptics**

 Skepticism

Empiricism

Epistemological turn

**John Locke**

 Experience is the origin of all ideas

 Copy/Correspondence Theory of Truth

 Rejection of Innate ideas

 Tabula Rasa

 Locke’s dualism

 Primary and Secondary Qualities

 Locke’s Egocentric Predicament

**George Berkeley - Immaterialist/Idealist**

 Copy Theory of Truth – rejected

 All qualities secondary qualities

 Esse est percipi - to be is to be perceived

 God is the guarantee of external world

**Hume – Skeptical Empiricism**

 Impressions vs. Ideas

Emperical Criterion of Meaning

 Bundle Theory of Self

 The Limits of Reason

 The Limits of Science

 The Limits of Theology

 The Limits of Ethics

 Fact-Value Distinction

**The Enlightenment**

 Opposition to Authority

 Rationalism

 Enlightening the Masses - Encyclopedia

 Cultural Optimism - Progress

 The Return to Nature

 Natural Religion - Deism

 Human Rights – Women?

**Immanuel Kant – The Universalist**

 Kantian Formalism/Transcendental idealism

 Critique of how knowledge is possible

 What is the role of the mind?

 new view of mind as actively interacting with impressions and perceptions

 what can be known must conform to the mind

 Phenomena and Noumena

 Transcendental Ideas

 The Objectivity of Experience

 The Metaphysics of Morals

 Practical Reasoning

 The Moral Law Within

 The Good Will

 Inclinations, Wishes, Acts of Will

 Moral Duty

 Hypothetical Imperatives

 The Categorical Imperatives

 The Kingdom of the Ends

**Romanticism**

 Feeling, Imagination, Experience, Yearning

 Exaltation of the Artistic Genius

 Man is only Free when he Plays

 Yearning for the distant and unattainable

 The Byronic Hero

 Yearning for nature and nature’s mysteries

Cosmic consciousness

World spirit/World Soul

Path of mystery leads inwards

 Synthesis of philosophy, nature study and poetry

 Organic nature of World

 Dynamic view of world

 Continuity, evolution, design

 Universal Romanticism

 National Romanticism

 Fairy Tale as literary ideal

 Not completely conscious

 Innate force

**Hegel**

 “World Spirit” is progress of human life, thought and culture

Truth is subjective

History has fixed point yet changes –

like a river – there but changes

Reason is dynamic, a process - so too truth is dynamic, a process

 Cannot detach thoughts from age thought

History is purposeful –

progressive, moving toward increasing self-knowledge and self-development

The Dialectic

Thesis, Negation, Negation of Negation

(Also called Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis)

Dynamic Logic – reality is characterized by opposites

*Reason comes to light first in interplay of people…*

**Kierkegaard**

 Existentialism**…** *“the dilemma of lived choices.”*

 *Credo quia absurdum – “I believe because it is irrational.”*

*Falling* in love…?

Conformist society –a leveling**,** a reduction to mediocrity

Existence should be an exciting notion - untamed stallion

3 stages of life

**Marx – the Materialist**

 Point of philosophy – Change the world

 Material changes create spiritual changes

 Dialectical Materialism

 Basis of society – Superstructure

 Conditions of production

 Means of production

 Mode of production

 History of class struggles

 View of Man’s Labor

 Alienation

 Exploitation

 Critique of Capitalism

# Darwin

 Evolution

 Natural Selection

 Modern Medicine

 Teaching of now…

# Freud

 Tension/Conflict

 Sublimation

 ID

 Ego

 Superego

 Conscious, Subconscious, Unconscious, Preconsious

 Parapraxes

 Rationalization

 Projection

 Free Association

 Dream Interpretation

 Wish Fulfillment

 Manifest, Latent Dream

 Art/Surrealism

 Creativity/Imagination

**Sartre** – Existentialism

 Man must create himself

 “We are condemned to be free”

 Alienation, despair, boredom, nausea, absurdity

 Taking responsibility for actions

 Life must have meaning

 Literature/Theater of the Absurd

 Existential questions can not be answered once and for all

**Buddhism**

 East West differences in thinking

Background – Siddhartha Guatama,

Legends of the Four Passing Sights

Middle Way

Reaction to Hinduism

# Four Noble Truths

Eightfold Path

4 Noble Virtues

Karma

Samsara

Nirvana

Emptiness

2 main schools of Buddhism

 Theravada

Mahayana

 Zen

 Zazen

Koan

Sanzen

Satori

**Tibetan Buddhism**…and Dalai Lama

**Taoism** – Tao of Pooh

?John Stuart Mill – Utilitarianism

?William James - Pragmatism