**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