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Introduction to Philosophy

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Introduction to Philosophy: Sex, Death, & Humor

PHIL 10200

Prof. Garral

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Course Description: This course is a critical introduction to some issues in Philosophy, as well as some characteristic, if diverse and not always compatible, modes (and aims) of doing philosophy. Throughout we will read and discuss a network of philosophical concerns across three central topics: sex, death, and humor.

Required Text: There is no need to purchase any text for this course. This course has a ZTC (“Zero textbook cost”). All text are drawn from OER (“open educational resources”). In our case, this will mean using either digital libraries such as JSTOR and Academic Search Complete to retrieve journal articles or else drawing from a full-text database such as ProQuest that makes e-books available. All texts can be got (read) on site or remotely either through the CCNY library or by accessing your Blackboard account. All assigned text are required reading. Required films will be screened in class.

Grades: There are two tests and a final paper. There are also weekly assignments, of two sorts. The first involves multiple-choice (MC) questions. Here you must not only select the correct answer, you must also articulate why you think the unchosen options are incorrect. The second sort of assignment is a reading response paper (RRP): a 200 word critical summary of the author’s thesis and argument. As for participation, the *quality* of your overall engagement in the course shall at the end be seriously considered. Note: extra credit is not an option in this course. Please plan accordingly.

Classroom Etiquette and Attendance: *please, no browsing, texting, or eating (be it chips, cookies, candies, etc.) in class.* This *is* a classroom, not the cafeteria, let alone the street. However, in the spirit of civility and sophistication, beverages are permitted. As for your record of attendance, please note that all absences, *excused or not*, count as absences, and one or more absences might affect your grade adversely.

Course Goals and Outcomes: As part of CCNY’s Gen Ed Curriculum, Phil 102 sets the following course goals and outcomes. It is designed to enhance your understanding of analytic and philosophical reasoning. You will have had multiple experiences in communicating ideas in writing and speaking. You will have had experiences that emphasize analytic and/or philosophical reasoning, sometimes in conjunction with case studies, to critically examine fundamental questions of ethics, justice and epistemology. You will have had multiple experiences in finding information in the library, on the Internet, and in other places, and in evaluating the reliability of this information. You will be able to read philosophy; that is, to identify the thesis of a piece of philosophical writing and the arguments or evidence adduced in support of that thesis. You will be able to write philosophy; that is, to present a claim in clear terms and to defend it in a logically coherent manner. You will be able to reconstruct and debate some foundational issues in the Western philosophical tradition.

Syllabus: Below is the syllabus. It is a map of the progression of the course to come. Please refer regularly to it, to your CCNY student email account, and to Blackboard for updates, as there may on occasion be changes to the schedule.

08/25 Introduction: What *is* Philosophy and how does one do it?

08/30 Nagel – “Sexual Perversion” JSTOR MC analysis
09/01

09/06 Neu – “Freud and Perversion” Blackboard RRP
09/08

09/13 Priest – “Sexual Perversion” JSTOR MC analysis
09/15

09/20 Neu – “What’s Wrong with Incest?” JSTOR MC analysis
09/22

09/27 Rudy – “LGBTQ...Z” ProQuest RRP
09/29

10/04 Review

10/06 TEST 1 (in class)

10/11 Nagel – “Death” Blackboard MC analysis
10/13

10/18 Williams – “The Makropulos Case” Blackboard
10/20

Film: *What We Do in the Shadows*

10/25 Scheffler – *Death and the Afterlife: The Afterlife* (part 1) RRP due
10/27

11/01 Scheffler – *The Afterlife* (part 2) ProQuest MC analysis
11/03

11/08 Scheffler – “Fear, Death, and Confidence”
11/10

Test #2 (take-home)

11/15 Cohen – *Jokes* (& joking & jokers)
11/17

11/22 Koestler – “Humour”

MC analysis

11/24 No Class (ThxG)

11/29 Brottman – *Funny Peculiar* : “Against Jokes” (ch 2)

RRP

12/01

12/06 Film: Allen – *Annie Hall*

3-page critical essay

12/08

Test #3 (Take-Home)