Phil 103-A75

The Committed Life

Summer Session A3: June 5-23, 2017

COURSE INFORMATION:
Instructor: Dr. Grayson Hunt
Email: grayson.hunt@wku.edu

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT: Like its associates, Phil 101: *Truth and Relativism*, Phil 102: *The Good and the Beautiful*, Phil 103 is a general introduction to the subject of philosophy. The three courses cover different readings and different approaches, and students may take all three without redundancy. These courses all count towards the Colonnade *Explorations* Arts and Humanities Category.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The title of the course refers to moral, social, and political relations among persons, as they pursue their individual and collective goals within an organized society. We will explore theories about how we ought to share resources and rights. We will ask whether our freedom is at odds with the government’s authority, and whether liberty is at odds with equality. Like other courses in philosophy, Phil 103 not only presents the ideas of philosophers but also aims also to develop students’ abilities to articulate and support their own philosophical views in writing.

ASSIGNMENTS:
**Reflective Essay (75 points):** Students will write a 500-word reflection essay concerning Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” and Talia Bettcher’s “Other Worldly Philosophy.”
**Close Reading Assignment (50 points):** After reading David Concepción’s “Appendix: How to Read Philosophy,” students will do a close reading of Immanuel Kant’s essay, “What is
Enlightenment?”

Political Compass Test & Analysis (50 points): After taking the “Political Compass Test,” students will write a thoughtful analysis of their results.

Take Home Debate Essay (100 points): Students will write a 1000-word essay with quotes and a bibliography that contrasts liberal egalitarianism and libertarianism and that takes a stand on which political philosophy is better. Students must compare and contrast Martin Luther King Jr. and Hannah Arendt.

Public Engagement (25 points): Students will attend 1 event on or off campus during the semester that connect in some way to the themes of the course: justice, oppression, political philosophies (liberalism, libertarianism, anarchism, socialism), truth, progress. After attending the event (which can include a public debate, a film, a sermon, a public talk, book club, etc.), students will type a 250-word commentary describing how each event related to a central debate or concept from the course (50 points with the option to attend an additional event for 50 bonus points).

Final Exam (200 points): A comprehensive exam with short- and long-answer questions during finals week.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Essay</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading Assignment</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Political Compass</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Debate Essay</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Public Engagement</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Final Exam (May 9th 8am CH 325)</td>
<td>200</td>
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Total points: 500 points

PREREQUISITES: None.

REQUIRED TEXTS: All readings will be available for free on blackboard.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS & ONLINE RESOURCES: Introducing Political Philosophy: A Graphic Guide by Dave Robinson & Judy Groves. London: Totem Books, 2011. This graphic novel offers a brief but comprehensive historical view of European political philosophy delivered in a very accessible way. Other helpful and more technical online resources include: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. You can use these resources to look up ideas, theories, concepts, and philosophers.

COLONNADE LEARNING OUTCOMES: In this introductory course, students will acquire some fundamental concepts, theories, and methodologies of philosophy. More specifically:

- Students will utilize basic elements, methods, and concepts of philosophy (including: problem identification, textual analysis, argumentation skills, fallacy detection, marshaling of appropriate evidence, identifying hidden assumptions, using the principle of charity,
weighing evidence for and against different interpretations, challenging one’s own positions, adjusting theses and arguments to make them more adequate, searching for common ground, etc.

- In its focus on philosophical argument about social and political conceptions broadly construed, students will careful study both texts (historical and contemporary), contexts (including religious ideals and social goals), as well as more abstract conceptual analysis.
- Students will learn that philosophical reflection on questions of social and political life has evolved over time, and how it has been concretely situated within particular philosophers’ own historical and cultural circumstances.
- Students will become equipped to evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience by being educated about fundamental theoretical options, ideals, and arguments.

POLICIES:

Respect for the material
Throughout the semester, we will be reading challenging essays and you will be expected to express your claims and reasons in ways that are tactful, and avoid the use of denigrating or potentially offensive language.

Late Assignment Penalties
Assignments are due on time. Essays submitted late will be docked a letter grade for each 24 hours beginning from the time they are due.

Discussion of graded assignments
A student wishing to contest a grade must present their instructor with a typed (either email or hard copy), well-considered petition regarding the evaluation within one week of having received the evaluation of the assignment in question, but not before 24 hours have passed. The petition must be related to the assignment as presented, and based on how it compares with the criteria for the assignment (not how it compares with someone else’s work or how it will affect a student’s GPA). Once the student has submitted their petition to the instructor, the instructor will respond in writing within seven days. Student and instructor may then decide to discuss ways to improve future assignments.

Email Communication
I will communicate to the entire class using campus email, so it is essential that you check your Topper email regularly or that you have your WKU account forwarded to your preferred email address. Course information and grades will be posted to the Blackboard course website. Please check Blackboard and your WKU email regularly for updates, course material, and grade postings.

You are expected to be professional in all your communications with me. Make sure to identify yourself in the email and note the course number. Make sure to address me; you can call me Dr. Hunt or Professor Hunt. Include a specific subject line (e.g., “PHIL 103-A75 essay question”). Unless I am away, I check my email regularly and usually respond within 2 hours during regular working hours (8am-5pm).

I will not respond to questions that can be answered by checking the syllabus or looking online.
**Academic Integrity**

Cheating is intellectually lazy and academically costly. Students caught intentionally or unintentionally cheating can receive an F for the assignment or for the course. Please see the WKU Student Handbook for additional information. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Cheating.** Intentionally obtaining or attempting to use unauthorized materials or information (notes, texts or study aids) or unauthorized help from another person in any work submitted for evaluation toward academic credit including exams, quizzes, exercises or other assignments.

2. **Plagiarism.** Representing someone else’s work as your own or providing materials for such a representation. To avoid plagiarism, students must acknowledge the source whenever:
   a) quoting another person’s actual words;
   b) using another person’s idea, opinion or theory;
   c) borrowing facts, statistics or other illustrative material – unless the information is common knowledge.

3. **Bribes, favors, threats.**
   a) Threatening, bribing, or attempting to bribe any person with the intention of affecting an evaluation of academic performance;
   b) conspiring to bribe or threatening a person with the intention of affecting an evaluation of academic performance.

4. **Grade tampering.** Tampering or attempting to tamper with grades.

5. **Recycling.** Re-using or duplicating work you did for another course.

If you have any questions regarding academic integrity, please ask me.

All incidences of plagiarism may be reported to The Office of Student Conduct. It is your duty to know and understand the university’s policy on student conduct and discipline. I find these pages especially helpful: [http://www.wku.edu/~jan.garrett/dptengpl.htm](http://www.wku.edu/~jan.garrett/dptengpl.htm) and [https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php](https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php).

**Student Accessibility**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a Faculty Notification Letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

**Title IX**

If you have experienced interpersonal violence there is a support system in place on and off campus. Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct Assault Policy (#0.2070) at [https://wku.edu/coo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf](https://wku.edu/coo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at [https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf](https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf).

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua...
Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159 or Hope Harbor (270-782-5014).

**Tentative Nature of Course Schedule**
If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision. Students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced in class, on Blackboard, or by email.