



Course Information:
Basic Philosophical Questions
UCOR 132-15
T/Th 10:50am – 12:05 pm
Fisher Hall 722

Course Information:
Basic Philosophical Questions
UCOR 132-17
T/Th 12:15 – 1:30 pm
Bayer Learning Center PAPT

Instructor Information:
James Taylor
Office: College Hall 335
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Office Hours: T/Th 9:50am – 10:50 am
Additional hours available by appointment

Course Outline

In this course we will read several texts designed to give you an introduction to the history of Western Philosophical Thought. The theme of coherence of this course will be an understanding of philosophy through a critical look at questions of identity, interdependence, intersectionality, and community. We will study these texts in an effort to understand those ideas and arguments which are being presented. However we will also interact with these texts in a critical way that encourages calling the ideas of these philosophers into question. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to get you philosophically involved in questioning and thinking about the world you live in and the presuppositions that help you support it.

This course will be broadly historical in approach, with a balanced and proportionate amount of time spent on each period. We will begin with the philosophy of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. In this period we will touch on some of the key works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. This period introduces us to the idea of identity, and identity as knowledge. Our next historical period will cover the works of the Medieval Christian thinkers. In this period we will look at the key works of Augustine and Aquinas. In this period identity is a union of faith and reason, with reason ultimately subordinated to belief. In the next period we will discuss the Modern revolution in philosophy. The thinkers we investigate here are Rene Descartes and David Hume. In this period identity is focused on the notion of self and the disparity between rationalism and empiricism. Our final period will cover contemporary thinkers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here we will investigate the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, and W.E.B. Du Bois. These thinkers all emphasize that identity is socially and interpersonally conditioned.

Required Texts available in the Bookstore: Forrest E. Baird, *From Plato to Derrida*, Sixth Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011