

Department: Philosophy

Course No: 185 W

Credits: 3

Title: Philosophy and Literature

Contact: Donald Baxter

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

WQ: Writing

Catalog Copy: PHIL 185W Philosophy and Literature Either Semester. Three Credits. Prerequisite ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250. Anderson Philosophical problems raised by, and illuminated in, major works of literature.

Course Information: a. and c. Students will become acquainted with a number of philosophical issues (e.g. the debate between Individualism and Collectivism, free will and determinism, the problem of evil, the aesthetic vs. ethical ways of living one's life, what we can know about ourselves and the external world) by seeing them introduced in novels, plays and short stories. Furthermore, most of the authors we will be reading attempt to answer the two most basic philosophical questions: (1) What is the human predicament? and (2) Given an answer to (1), how, then, should we live our lives? Students will have an opportunity to discuss these issues/questions as they discover different authors' positions on these issues/questions. b. Students will read a short novel, part of a longer novel, or several short stories each week. They will write 3 or 4 papers and have an essay final exam with questions that require comparing/contrasting two or more authors' views on common issues/questions.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: This course satisfies five of the goals of general education: 1. Students will learn to be more articulate through class discussion, writing assignments and preparing for the final exam. 2. In studying metaphysical, epistemological and ethical issues of authors representing diverse perspectives, they will acquire intellectual breadth and versatility. 3. In having to assess the positions of authors having conflicting viewpoints, they will need to make critical judgements. They will learn how to do so and support their positions. 4. Since a number of the authors deal with ethical issues, students will acquire moral sensitivity. 5. As part of the discussion of different authors' views, we will consider the extent to which the philosophical issue raised applies to contemporary society (e.g. E. M. Forster's critique of society becoming increasingly dependent upon technology), so students will become more aware of their era and society.

CA1 Criteria: 1. Since the authors we will read give their views of the human predicament and how we should live our lives, which we will be assessing, we will be critically analyzing human experience. 2. Since the subject of the course is philosophical issues in works of literature, the course will be concerned with philosophical theory. 4. Since we will be reading novels, plays and short stories, the course will involve teaching students how to comprehend and appreciate "written forms".

W Criteria: 1. In this course (capped at 19), students will show that they have understood, and can critically evaluate, the material discussed by writing 3 or 4 papers from at least 3 different sections of the course. The number of pages for these papers must total at least 15 pages. After comments have been given, students must rewrite the papers. The 3, or best 3 of 4, papers will count 3/4 of the total grade for the course, the remaining 1/4 being the essay final exam, with questions given out in advance and students being allowed to bring outlines of the essays they wish to write so that they, too, will be well-written.

2. and 3. Some time in class will be spent talking about how to write a good philosophy paper. All students must have at least one initial conference with the instructor about their writing, after the first paper is handed in, with further conferences encouraged. Written comments will be given on the first drafts of papers and the drafts must be attached to revisions so that the instructor can determine whether defects have been addressed. Students with serious writing problems will be told that they must also visit the Writing Center and have their papers signed by someone in the Center to prove that they have received help.