

PHILOSOPHY 367 Section AB 1 — Sept. 2010
Philosophy for Counsellors

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Peter B. Raabe
CLASSROOM: D-225 **TIME:** TUESDAYS 1:00 PM – 3:50 PM
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COURSE OUTLINE

OBJECTIVES: The most successful methods in clinical psychology, psychotherapy, counselling, and social work—such as Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (R.E.B.T.), existential therapy, cognitive therapy, and Logo therapy—are largely fashioned after philosophy. Unfortunately, most clinical psychologists, therapists, and counsellors receive little if any formal training in philosophy before they offer their professional services to the public. This leaves them inadequately prepared to deal with their clients' philosophical issues such as ethical decision-making, sorting out confused reasoning, coming to terms with religion, defining reality, determining what it means to be a normal person within society, and so on. This course is designed to enhance your philosophical reasoning skills and increase your knowledge of the content of philosophy in order to improve your ability to deal with the issues and problems presented by patients and clients. This is accomplished through readings, discussions, case studies, and essay assignments.

TEXTS: Required:

1. *Philosophy* Manuel Velasquez (New York: Thomson).
2. *Issues in Philosophical Counseling*. Peter Raabe. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).

METHOD: Classes will contain a minimum amount of formal lecturing and a maximum amount of discussion and other in-class activities.

EVALUATION: Requirements include two research essays and two open book exams.

Distribution of marks:

Essay 1	25%
Open book Mid-term exam	20%
Essay 2	30%
Open book Final exam	25%

ESSAYS: Maximum length: **Essay 1:** 7 double-spaced pages; **Essay 2:** 10 double-spaced pages. Please do not cover your essay in any sort of plastic folder. A simple title page is fine. Assignments sent by e-mail will **not** be accepted. **Works cited:** Because the assignments are research essays, a works cited page is required. Any format is acceptable as long as you keep it consistent throughout your entire essay.

Late assignments: All essays are due at the beginning of class. Late essays (without a good reason) will be given an automatic 0%.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

- 1) Sept 7 Reasoning and thinking skills — Part 1.
What philosophy is, and how it can be used in counselling and therapy.

- 2) Sept 14 Reasoning and thinking skills — Part 2
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 1 “The Nature of Philosophy”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 1 “The Man Who Saved the World But....”

- 3) Sept 21 Philosophy of human beings. **Essay #1 Due**
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 2 “Human Nature”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 7 “Sex and Logic”

- 4) Sept 28 Metaphysics: What is and isn’t real.
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 3 “Reality and Being”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 19 “Dream Interpretation”

- 5) Oct 5 Epistemology: Knowledge, truth, and the emotions.
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 5 “The Sources of Knowledge” and Chapter 6 “Truth”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 9 “Rational Passions”

- 6) Oct 12 Moral theory: Proposed strategies for an ethical life.
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 7 “Ethics”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 20 “Duty to Oneself”

- 7) Oct 19 Applied ethics: Theories put to work in real-life situations.
Read for this class: *ISSUES IN PC* Chap. 17 “Suicide as Self-defense”

- 8) Oct 26 **Mid-term exam**

- 9) Nov 2 Religion, Spirituality, and God
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 4 “Philosophy and God”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 18 “What Does God Have to Do With it?”

- 10) Nov 9 Social & Political philosophy: Power, conflict, and cooperation.
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 8 “Social Philosophy”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 16 “Learning to be Old.”

- 11) Nov 16 Feminist philosophy: Women and men as equal but different.
Read for this class: *ISSUES IN PC* Chap. 8 “Speaking Like a Woman/Listening Like a Man”

- 12) Nov 23 The meaning of life **Essay #2 Due**
Read for this class: *PHILOSOPHY* Chapter 9 “Postscript: Art and Meaning”
ISSUES IN PC Chap. 15 “The Meaning of Life”

Due Sept. 21

Research Essay #1 Topic:

1. Read Chapter 2 in *Philosophy* “Human Nature”
2. Read Chap. 7 in *Issues* “Sex and Logic” and answer the following question:

Your client is an unmarried woman in her late twenties asking for your help in overcoming her feelings of sadness and hopelessness. She tells you that a medical doctor at a local clinic told her she is suffering from depression. She says she is worried that she will go back to using hard drugs and working as a prostitute, both of which she gave up two years ago to work at a boring and poorly-paid restaurant job. She tells you she is an adopted child. She says she believes her parents never really loved her; they only adopted her to “make a family” or to collect the government child support cheques. She says that she read an article in a recent *People* magazine which said that an addiction can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her unborn child. She says that she knows a number of young women addicts her own age whose mothers were also addicts. This has convinced her that it’s in her nature to use drugs and to be a prostitute because she has discovered that her biological mother lived the same lifestyle. She says she expects to die at an early age either from the drugs or some sexual disease. How would you use philosophy to help this woman?

(NOTE: Apply what we’ve discussed concerning problems that arise in reasoning, and also what you’ve read about human nature) (Max. 7 pages)

Due Nov. 23

Research Essay # 2 Topic:

1. Do on-line research of “anti-psychiatry” at www.antipsychiatry.org
2. Read Chaps. 11,12, & 13 in *Issues IN PC* “Medicating the Mind,...Getting to Normal” and answer the following question:

Imagine that you have been invited to speak at a conference for psychoanalysts, clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, and counsellors. You have been asked to discuss the role of philosophy in psychotherapy and counselling in relation to modern medications. In other words, what’s the point of philosophy given that there are so many psychopharmaceutical treatments available today for individuals diagnosed as having mental illnesses? What would you tell your audience?

(NOTE: Your essay must include clear evidence that you researched “anti-psychiatry” on the web. Don’t just quote from the Raabe text. Use what you learn from your on-line research and from both course texts. (Max. 10 pages)

Related Books:

- Ballou, Mary and Laura S. Brown. *Rethinking Mental Health and Disorder: Feminist Perspectives*. New York: Guilford, 2002.
- Bolton, Derek. *What is Mental Disorder?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Bolton, Derek and Jonathan Hill. *Mind, Meaning, and Mental Disorder*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Cohen, Elliot D. *What Would Aristotle Do?* New York: Prometheus, 2003.
- Diestler, Sherry. *Becoming a Critical Thinker*. New Jersey: Pearson, 2005.
- Erwin, Edward. *Philosophy and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage, 1997.
- Gambrill, Eileen. *Critical Thinking in Clinical Practice*. New York: John Wiley, 2005.
- Gordon, Paul and Rosalind Mayo. *Between Psychotherapy and Philosophy*. London: Whurr Publishers, 2004.
- Graham, George. *The Disordered Mind*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Gula, Robert J. *Non-Sense: A Handbook of Logical Fallacies*. Mount Jackson, VA: Axios Press, 2002.
- Horowitz, Allan V. *Creating Mental Illness*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Howard, Alex. *Philosophy for Counselling and Psychotherapy*: London: Macmillan, 2000.
- Lahav, Ran. *Essays in Philosophical Counselling*. New York: University Press, 1995.
- LeBon, Tim. *Wise Therapy*. London: Continuum, 2001.
- Ruscio, John. *Critical Thinking in Psychology*. Belmont CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2006.
- Schuster, Shlomit C. *Philosophy Practice*. Westport, CONN: Praeger, 1999.
- Stein, Dan J. *Philosophy of Psychopharmacology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PHILOSOPHY”?

Philosophy involves examining the reasons we have for the values we hold as good, and the beliefs we hold as true, so that we can free ourselves from blindly following tradition, slavishly obeying authority figures, or simply acting only on our feelings.

Personal philosophy: my philosophy; my approach to life; my “Weltanschauung;” what leads me to act the way I do; what I believe, not just spiritual.

Being philosophical: critical and creative thinking and discussion; good reasoning about an issue; a thoughtful and thorough exploration; a learned skill.

History of philosophy: the study of the origin and evolution of ideas; what great thinkers have said on various important topics.

Academic philosophy: structured courses studying philosophers and their theories and ideas; systematic examination of various, mostly abstract, issues.

Applied philosophy: discussion and research into problems arising in specific areas such as medicine, business, the environment, etc.

Philosophical counselling: A philosopher helps a non-philosopher resolve real-life issues and problems by examining conflicting values, problematic assumptions, dubious beliefs, unjustified biases, things learned as a child, etc.

Epicurus (341 B.C.–271 B.C.): “Empty is the argument of the philosopher which does not relieve any human suffering; for just as there is no benefit in medicine if it does not drive out bodily diseases, so there is no benefit in philosophy if it does not drive out diseases of the soul.”

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD PHILOSOPHY PAPER

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE ⇒ Think and Discuss

- Think about your topic before you start to write to clarify it in your mind.
- A good paper is a good **argument**, so decide which side of the issue you're going to argue.
- Organize your thoughts by making an outline of what you might want to say.
- Discuss your thoughts and outline with others; ask for feedback and input.
- Organize the source material you plan to cite to support what you say.
- Write in your own voice. Don't try to copy someone else's style (like Plato).
- Use simple and direct language.

THE BEGINNING ⇒ Introduce

- When you begin to write, state the position for which you are going to argue. In a single, short, and precise sentence state the point you are trying to make, and of which you're trying to convince your reader. (This is the **thesis** of your essay). Don't expect the reader to understand the argument you're trying to make in your paper if you're not sure about it yourself.

THE MIDDLE ⇒ Elaborate

- Give grounds, reasons, justifications, and facts which support your position. Support your opinions with **citations** from respected sources. Don't ask your reader to simply accept your unsupported opinion. Don't expect your reader to agree with everything you say just because you say it.
- Use a different paragraph for each new point in your argument.
- Anticipate objections. Offer the strongest **counter-arguments** against your position that you can think of, then argue against them to show how your position is more reasonable. Your job is to convince the reader that your point of view is better than all others. It's not necessary to dispute all the counter-arguments you can possibly think of. The three or four best ones are all you need.
- If your essay seems "too short" make sure what you've written is sufficient to justify your position. If your essay seems "too long" eliminate unnecessary filler passages and digressions to side issues.
- Make sure you cite every writer you quote. If you quote but don't cite it's **plagiarism**.

THE END ⇒ Summarize

- Briefly restate your arguments in the conclusion to demonstrate how you have made your point.

AFTER YOU FINISH WRITING ⇒ Review & Rewrite

- Check for spelling errors, poor grammar, incomplete sentences, sentences that are too long and complicated, and technical terms that need explaining. Don't leave sentences in your essay that don't make sense to you.
- Put your essay aside for a few hours or days; read it again later; then make changes and improvements. Don't assume your first draft is perfect. It never is! Careful editing and rewriting are the keys to achieving a first class mark.