PHIL 111: Introduction to Western Philosophy  
Summer 2019

Class time:

Name of Faculty: Dr Jack Davison, Texas Lutheran University

Contact details:

Course Description

‘He who cannot draw on three thousand years is living from hand to mouth.’ Goethe

Will you survive the death of your body? Do you have free will? Does God exist? If you have wondered about these questions this is the perfect course for you! Aristotle said that philosophy begins in wonder, so if you have wondered about such questions you are already thinking like a philosopher.

This course will introduce you to some of the major thinkers—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Hume—and what they thought about some of these perennial questions. Doing philosophy is not like memorizing the capitals of the world or when the Normans conquered England. We will engage with their ideas, and in so doing will sharpen our critical reading, thinking, speaking and writing skills. Getting better at recognizing and evaluating argumentative reasoning will be one of the most helpful skills that you will take from this class.

This is an excellent course to take abroad, especially at Harlaxton. We will learn a little about Alan Turing, whose work on logic and computation led to deciphering the German enciphering machine Enigma which actually shortened the Second World War. Watching “The Imitation Game” and touring Bletchley Park (where Enigma was deciphered) will be fun and teach us a lot about a certain period of British life. When talking about Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle we will visit the British Museum’s Greek and Roman collections. (Anyone see “Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb”?) And those are just two of the field trips we will go on.

Credit Hour Policy Statement

This class meets the federal credit hour policy of:

☐ This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 total hours for each credit.

General Education Objective

This course meets the General Education requirements for:-

UE Outcome 4: Engagement with fundamental beliefs about human identity, core values, and humankind’s place in the world.

Learning Objectives

Listed below are the Learning Objectives for the course:

• Learning about these great philosophers and their thought will make you philosophically literate
• Developing and refining your ability to recognize, analyse, and critically assess arguments
• Developing and refining your ability to critically communicate in speaking and writing

Assessment and Grading Criteria

• Five announced quizzes. The lowest quiz score will be dropped, so only four will count. (20 point each.)
• Short writing assignments that will be graded credit/no credit. (20 points)