Central European UNiversity

olive up 2017-18

Winter Term

# Introduction to philosophy I

Tutor: Dóra Kis-Jakab

dora.kisjakab@gmail.com

### Course description

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with important topics in moral, political and religious philosophy with a focus on the relation of religion and politics in the public sphere. Throughout the course students read primary philosophical texts, participate in in-class discussion and write papers on the topic of how religion should be handled in the public sphere, with answers ranging from civil religion through atheism to the separation of private and public morality. They read classic texts of Western philosophy and cultivate their analytical and critical skills that are necessary to engage with philosophical texts in a meaningful way.

### Course objectives

By the end of the semesters students will be familiar with some of the important texts and key concepts of moral and political philosophy and theories of religion, with a focus on the place of religion in the public sphere. They will familiarize themselves with important theories outlined by leading philosophers on these areas. Students will be able to think in theoretical and analytical terms on various topics of moral, religious and political philosophy. They are expected to build on their previous studies and further learn how to read, analyze and criticize philosophical texts.

### Grading

The final grade will consist of the followings: class participation (20%); 2 response papers (20%); mid-term paper (25%); final paper (35%).

###### Class participation (20%)

Readings, attendance and participation are mandatory and account for 20% of the grade. Readings for this course are available online on the courses’ e-learning page.

###### Written assignments (80%)

* 2 response papers (10% each). The first response paper must be on topics covered between Week 1- Week 6 and is due by 2018, the second response paper on topics covered between Week 6-Week 10, due by 2018.

Each response paper should be 500-700 words in length. Response papers must outline the main arguments and key concepts of the discussed text and present the student’s critical reaction to the text’s arguments and concepts.

* + The second response paper can be substituted by student presentation on the student’s topic of interest, if the topic is not included in the syllabus. The student presentations will take place on Week 11. If students wish to take this option, they must let the tutor know by the end of Week 8.
* Mid-term paper of 1,500 words, due by 18 February, 2018. (25%)
* Final paper of 3,000 words, due by 5 April, 2018. (35%)

### Consultations

By the end of the semester, students must have a minimum of 5 consultations with the tutor. To arrange a consultation, please contact the tutor in person or via e-mail.

##### Introduction to Philosophy II

## week 1: Origins of religion

Dennett, Daniel, 2006.  Breaking the Spell:  Religion as a Natural Phenomenon. New York:  Viking Penguin. 12-20, 74-93, 104-114.

## week 2: Religious duties vs. civic duties

Sophocles. *Antigone*

## Week 3: Rousseau – Origins of Public Authority

Rousseau. *The Social Contract*

## week 4: Rousseau – Civil Religion

Rousseau. *The Social Contract*

## Week 5: Locke - religious toleration

Locke. *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

## Week 6: Paper writing, Research

Research methodologies, mid-term paper

## week 7: Theories of Atheism

Flew, Antony, 1984.  “The Presumption of Atheism.”  in *God, Freedom, and Immortality*.  Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, pp. 13-30

## week 8: Hume - Arguments for Atheism

Hume. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

## week 9: Nietzsche – Atheism and moral nihilism

Nietzsche. *Gay Science*; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

## Week 10: Rawls – Public and Private spheres

Rawls. *Political Liberalism; The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*

Habermas, Jürgen, 2006. “Religion in the Public Sphere.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 14: 1-25

## Week 11: Communitarianism

## week 12: research/writing (final papers)