

PHILOSOPHY 290 A01 (CRN 22411)

Philosophy and Science Fiction
Spring Semester, 2017

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Office Hours: Monday 1300- 1400 hrs, Thursday 1000 - 1100 hrs. and by appointment.

It is not a course in literature but in philosophy, using science fiction as a tool. To this end, emphasis will be placed on philosophical understanding, and selections from the science fiction literature are paired with selections from philosophical writings. Topics considered will include the concept of a person, the nature of punishment, the relationship between perception and reality, as well as topics in religion and the philosophy of language.

Formal Course Requirements and Grading Procedures

There will be two non-cumulative examinations (a mid-term and a final), each worth 25% of the course mark. Each examination will be one hour in length. Additionally, there will be two short papers (five page maximum, double-spaced, Times-Roman font, standard format) each worth 25% of the course grade, topics to be arranged in consultation with the instructor. Students are encouraged to decide early on their paper topics. Students are expected to have read and become familiar with the assigned material prior to its presentation and discussion in class. The TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS below indicates approximate times in this regard.

Significant dates

Examination: Mid-term examination: MT #1 Feb. 2 and MT #2 March 2

Final examination: scheduled by the university

Papers: First paper is due February 9.

Second paper is due March 16.

Exceptions from course requirements, adjustments for taking examinations at set examination dates, due-time for the paper, etc. will only be made in accordance with UVic regulations as published in the Calendar. It is the responsibility of the student to acquaint themselves and significant others with this fact so that vacations, family reunions, weddings etc. can be planned accordingly. Mid-term examinations and papers will be returned as soon as they are graded. Final examinations are the property of the University and will not be returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office at a time designated by the University.

Approximately one-half the material in the syllabus will be covered by No more precise a time-frame is possible since the amount of time spent on each topic depends on the interests of the students in the course and on the issues that arise.

Grading

Marks will be assigned on a letter basis and may be converted to a percentile grade as follows:

100 - 90 = A+, 90 - 85 = A, 85 - 80 = A-, 80 - 75 = B+, 75 - 70 = B,

70 - 65 = B-, 65 - 60 = C+, 60 - 55 = C, 55 - 50 = D, 50 - 0 = F. 2

Students are encouraged to discuss their examinations and papers with the instructor

TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

I. Persons

Science Fiction

-

I, Robot (1950) pp. 147-169

-

Nelson, 1975) pp. 96-105 (reversal of sensations)

Philosophy

- G. Berkeley, *On the Principles of Human Knowledge*
- Hilary Putnam Brains in a vat http://ieas.unideb.hu/admin/file_2908.pdf.
- I. Kant: "I *The Critique of Pure Reason* transl. NK Smith (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929) pp. 41-62.

Optional Reading

- *All the Myriad Ways*
in *Galaxy*, Oct. 1968.
- <http://consc.net/papers/matrix.pdf>

IV. Language

Science Fiction

- *Imagination Unlimited* (NY: Berkley, 1952) pp. 5-13.

Philosophy

- *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Bk. III. chaps. 3 & 7
- L. Wittgenstein, Paragraph 1-47 in L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958) pp. 2-21.

V. Religion

Science Fiction

- *Star Short Novels* (NY: Ballantine, 1954) pp. 65-109. (to bTm[(to b54S0 1 249.41 330F00B460003072ibHll 0 0 1 284469.78 320

- *The Orchid Cage* transl. by C. Priest;
(New York: Daw, 1973) pp. 139-174.(to be announced)
- *Galaxy Science Fiction*, Oct. 1961

Philosophy

- ~~KLOR~~~~SKL~~~~FDOIURP, D~~~~W~~ *The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* transl. LW Beck (NY: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959) pp. 9-22. (alternate translation available free on-line at http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political_Thought/Kant%20-%20groundwork%20for%20the%20metaphysics%20of%20morals%20with%20essays.pdf)
- James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism;" available at <http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil1100/Rachels1.pdf>

Deliberate Death:

Science Fiction/F2 12 Tf1 0 0 1 146.3 502.15 Tmnq98.02 541.66 63 502o/P 4MCID 9BDC BT71 0 0 1 146.3 50