SIU's bland course description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the classical themes and issues of philosophy. Beyond a first acquaintance with the defining questions of various philosophical traditions, the course seeks to promote the skills of concept recognition and analysis of arguments. Emphasis throughout is upon developing the ability to think independently, cogently, and decisively about fundamental philosophical issues that arise from reflection on the nature of human existence, including questions about values, knowledge, and the meaning of life.

http://www.siu.edu/~corecurr/phil102.html

The course description for this class:

This course is, first and foremost, about thinking. Among all of the disciplines found at a university, it is philosophy that demands clear and cogent thinking above all else. In this class, you will learn facts about important philosophers. You will learn how to read a philosophical text and how to write philosophical papers. However, thinking is the primary objective of this class. We will engage some of the most vexing problems that humans have faced in their history and we will attempt to think through the cases that these philosophers have made for their answers to these questions.

We will approach this course through a (very selective) historical study of various philosophers and philosophies. Along the way, we will investigate a host of ‘traditional’ philosophic questions while focusing on the dual themes of ethics and epistemology.

Be prepared to work – and to think.

Course texts:


The Kant and Foucault essays will be handed out in class.
Grading and Requirements:

There will be four in-class exams in this class. Each exam covers approximately 1/4th of the course, and is non-cumulative. Various types of short answer questions will be coupled with two short (3-4 paragraph) essays. The essay topics will be provided in advance, while the short answer questions will not.

Each exam represents 20% of the final grade.

Reading quizzes, given randomly, to test reading comprehension and ‘encourage’ attendance. Cumulatively, the reading quizzes will represent 20% of the final grade. No makeups for these quizzes will be allowed.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Philosophy can be particularly difficult for the uninitiated, and the best means of mitigating this danger is continued attendance and participation. While I will not be taking attendance (via the reading quizzes) every day, the random occurrence of the quizzes should provide ample incentive for regular class attendance.

Each student is expected to come to class having read the text under discussion, and each student must bring his or her copy of the text to the class meeting.

Classroom Disruptions

I expect all students to come to class prepared to think and work. Ringing cell phones and other disturbances do not aid in the cultivation of a thoughtful classroom. Thus, you must turn off your cell phone when you come to class.

Other behaviors such as having conversations during class, or reading the newspaper, are disrespectful to me and to your fellow classmates. I will ask you to leave the classroom if I feel your disruptiveness is a detriment to the learning process.

Academic Honesty

Any attempt at academic dishonesty – ‘cheating’ – will result in a failing grade for the class as well as other possible sanctions. This is a non-negotiable policy.

See the section on Academic Honesty in the Student Conduct Code for more details.

Students with Special Needs / ADA Accommodation

Students who are part of DSS or Achieve are encouraged to tell me (privately or via e-mail) as soon as possible of their status and particular situation. I will handle each case individually and in light of the guidance from DSS or Achieve. However, I will not accept non-documented claims, nor will I consider claims that suddenly emerge at exam time. It is incumbent upon the student to inform me of any special needs at the beginning of the semester.
Week 1 (1/16-20):
M: No class (MLK Day)
W: Intro to class, syllabus, etc.
F: Plato, *Euthyphro* (Five Dialogues, 1-20)

Week 2 (1/23-27):
M: no new readings
W: Plato, *Apology* (Five Dialogues, 21-44)
F: Plato, *Crito* (Five Dialogues, 45-47)

Week 3 (1/30-2/3):
M: Plato, *Phaedo* (Five Dialogues, 93-154)
W: no new readings
F: no new readings

Week 4 (2/6-10):
M: Plato, *Phaedrus* (1-86)
W: no new readings
F: no new readings

Week 5 (2/13-17):
M: **Exam #1** (Plato)
W: Aristotle, Metaphysics I.1-2 (115-120), I.6 (125-128)
F: Aristotle, Physics II.1-3 (42-50), Metaphysics IX.1-2, 5-6 (180-185)

Week 6 (2/20-24):
M: Aristotle, Metaphysics XII.6-7, 9-10 (187-195)
W: Aristotle, De Anima II.1-4 (80-86), III.4,10 (97-103)
F: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics I.1-7 (196-207), II.1-7 (216-228)

Week 7 (2/27-3/3):
M: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics III.1-5 (228-241)
W: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics V.1-2,7 (241-247), VII.1-3 (257-263)
F: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics VIII.1-3 (263-268)

Week 8 (3/6-10):
M: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics X.6-9 (275-287)
W: **Exam #2** (Aristotle)
F: Descartes, Discourse on Method, Parts 1-3 (1-18)

Week 9 (3/13-17): Spring Break – No Classes

Week 10 (3/20-24):
M: Descartes, 1st Meditation (59-63)
W: Descartes, 2nd Meditation (63-69)
F: Descartes, 3rd Meditation (69-81)

Week 11 (3/27-31):
M: Descartes, 4th Meditation (81-87)
W: Descartes, 5th and 6th Meditation (87-103)
F: no class held
Week 12 (4/3-7):
  M: Hume, Enquiry I-V (1-25)
  W: no new readings
  F: Hume, Enquiry VI-VIII (25-53)

Week 13 (4/10-14):
  M: no new readings
  W: Hume, Enquiry X-XI (72-102)
  F: no new readings

Week 14 (4/17-21):
  M: **Exam #3** (Descartes / Hume)
  W: Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (handout)
  F: Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” (handout)

Week 15 (4/24-28):
  M: no new readings
  W: James, Lecture I (7-21)
  F: James, Lecture II (25-39)

Week 16 (5/1-5):
  M: James, Lecture III (43-57)
  W: James, Lecture VI (91-105)
  F: James, Lecture VIII (123-134)

Finals Week (5/8-12): **Exam #4** (Kant/Foucault and James) – Tuesday, May 9th at 5:50pm in Pulliam 0214