“THE QUESTION OF TRUTH”

Instructor: Dr. Daniela Vallega-Neu  
Email: dneu@uoregon.edu  
Office hours: M/W 3:00-3:50 and Tuesdays by appointment in PLC 328  
Time and Place of class meetings: M/W 16:00-17:50 in 111 Lillis Hall

Course Description:  
This course will focus on concepts of truth in the Western tradition. We will examine first main metaphysical concepts of truth in texts by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and Descartes. This will lead us to consider as well metaphysical issues like the soul, being, God, perception, thought and language in relation to things and ideas, as well as the traditional distinction between mind and body. We will end the course by looking briefly at Nietzsche’s critique of the metaphysical concept of truth and then consider a pragmatist conception of truth (William James).  
Class time will consist in short lectures, close readings of primary texts, and class discussions on main concepts and ideas.

Required Texts:  
--Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*. (Available on Blackboard)  
-- William James, “Pragmatism’s Conception of Truth”. Chapter VI of *Pragmatism* (New York: 1907). (Available on Blackboard)

Course Requirements:  
a) Mid-term paper 6 pages  40%  
b) Final paper 6 pages  40%  
c) Participation, in-class work, self-tests, reading quizzes  20%

Explanation of requirements:  
Mid-term and final paper:  
The mid-term and the final paper will test your comprehension of the philosophers we discussed. You will be given a number of guiding questions you need to answer in writing (typed). The papers need to be about 6 pages long. Papers need to be formatted with font Times New Roman 12 (normal), double spaced, and with one inch margins. Add a cover page with your name, the title of your paper, and course information.  
You are required to answer the guiding questions with reference to the original texts (this means with references to books/articles and the page or section to which you are referring to). Central
concepts need to be explained in detail (either in the text or in footnotes). Quotations of central phrases or passages are encouraged but need to be followed by your own explanation of what the quoted passage says. Use one of the standard citation styles (Chicago, MLA, APA).

Participation points:
You will get participation points for regular class attendance, for completing in-class writing assignments, short homework assignments, and for contributing significantly to class discussions. Participation points will be added up at the end of the term and converted into grades.

Course Policies
1. Handing in an assignment late will lower your grade. Homework that is more than a week late will not be accepted, unless this was for demonstrable (documented) reasons beyond your control.
2. In order to avoid disruptions in class you are asked to avoid exiting and entering the classroom while lectures and discussions are going on.
3. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to keep up with the course material. Instead of basing your journal on what was said in class, you need to summarize the assigned reading for the day you missed.
4. The uses of electronic devices like laptops, cell phones, iPods, iPads, Blackberries, etc. during class is not allowed unless you needs a specific device because of a disability. If the latter is the case, please let me know.
5. Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.
6. You are expected to follow the rules of academic honesty. Failure to do so will result in failure of the whole course (“F”).

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

In order to find out how to avoid plagiarism, see http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

Fabrication: Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Cheating: Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Assistance/Resources:
If you need a special learning assistance, (for example, use of electronic devices, extended time in exams) please notify me right away and contact the Accessible Education Center.

Accessible Education Center (AEC): coordinates services, provides advocacy and support to students with documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and provides assistance to the general campus community in responding appropriately to requests for accommodations based on disability.

Location: 164 Oregon Hall
Web page: http://aec.uoregon.edu/
Phone: 541-346-1155
Email: uoaecc@uoregon.edu
**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**
M, Sept. 24: Introduction to the course. [**For next class, read Plato’s Republic**]
   [Homework: Read the rest of Republic sections (509c-519d) over the weekend.]

**Week 2**
   [Reading Quiz]
W, Oct. 3: Plato’s *Republic*. Continuation of last class. [Self-test]

**Week 3**
M, Oct. 8: Introduction to Aristotle. Preparatory discussion of the concept of soul and the distinction between form and matter. *De Anima* Book II, Chapter 1, 412a3-413a3; Chapter 2, 413a20; Chapter 5, 416b32-418a3, 424a17.
W, Oct. 10: Aristotle’s accounts of truth in *De Anima*. Book III, Chapter 3, 427a17, 428a5, 428b17, 429a10-429b29, 430a10;

**Week 4:**
M, Oct. 15: Chapter 6, 430a18; Chapter 7, 431a1, 431b20-431b24; Chapter 8 431b20-431b24.
Week 5:
M, Oct. 22: Aquinas, De Anima, Question One, articles 1-3. [Reading quiz]
W, Oct. 24: Aquinas, De Anima, Question One, articles 4-6 and 8-10.

Week 6:
M, Oct. 29: Aquinas, De Anima, Question One, articles 11-12. [Mid-term paper assignment.]
W, Oct. 31: No class!

Week 7:
M, Nov. 5: Introduction to Descartes. “Rules for the Direction of our Native Intelligence.”
Rules 1-7. [Mid-term paper due!]
W, Nov. 7: “Meditations on First Philosophy.” Meditation One.

Week 8:
M, Nov. 12: “Meditations on First Philosophy.” Meditation Two.
W, Nov. 14: Continuation. “Meditations on First Philosophy.” Meditation 3. [Self-test]

Week 9:
W, Nov. 21: Continuation of last class. [Final take-home essay assignment]

Week 10:
M, Nov. 26: William James: “Pragmatism’s conception of Truth”. [Reading Quiz]
W, Nov. 28: Continuation and review.

Final paper due: Wednesday, Dec. 5 in the Philosophy Department PLC 338