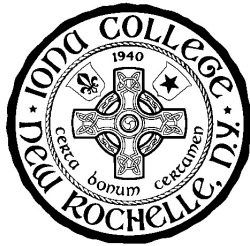


DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

IONA COLLEGE



PHL 319 A

Philosophy of Reality

Spring 2010

Tues & Thurs 2–3:18 Doorley 117

Dr. Adam M. Goldstein

Spellman 205

agoldstein@iona.edu

Tues & Thurs 3:30–5:30

(914) 637-2717

<http://www.iona.edu/faculty/agoldstein>

This course focuses on both theory and practice of ontology, the study of what there is. A range of theories about the basic categories into which beings fall will occupy us for the first two-thirds or so of the class. The latter part of the class will be focused the practice of ontology. Students will design an ontology for some domain of beings of his or her choice.

2- PHL 319: Philosophy of Reality

Course Texts

There are no texts to be purchased for this course. All readings will be available on the course web site, at

<http://www.iona.edu/faculty/agoldstein>

Evaluation

Course readings Students are required to complete all assigned course readings in time for the appropriate class meetings. Consult the schedule of course readings and assignments below. No particular grade weight is assigned to course readings; but students that do not keep up will most likely not be able to complete graded assignments, and will not be able to make good contributions to class discussion. If it becomes apparent that the class as a whole is not consistently keeping up with the readings, random quizzes will be instituted.

Students are expected to bring a copy of the reading being addressed in a given class session with them to that session. Failing to do so will result in a penalty to a student's class participation grade.

Attendance (10% of the grade) Students are required to be present and on time for every class meeting, and to remain for the full class period. Please inform Dr. Goldstein if there is some reason you cannot or did not attend class on a given day. Student athletes must present written documentation of their participation to Dr. Goldstein if they wish for their participation in these events to be given consideration when determining their attendance grade. The same is true of those who have missed class due to a medical or family emergency. The College's attendance policies, stated in the most recent edition of the *Iona College Undergraduate Catalog*, will be strictly adhered to. See Table 1 below for more information about how attendance will affect a student's grade. Students absent nine or more times will be failed in the course with a grade of "FA." Absences for athletic events and

in general other events that are not emergencies will not be excused for the purpose of assessing whether a student fails the course with an “FA” grade.

Table 1: How will absences affect my grade?

Absences	Penalty to att. & part. grade (units: letter grades)
0–3	none
4–5	-2
5–6	-3
7–9	-4
≥ 9	FA course grade

Class participation (10% of the grade) Students must engage in an active manner with the course material during class in order to understand it. At a minimum, a student must be an engaged listener, prepared to respond to questions asked by the instructor or comment on classmates’ contributions. Students should aim, however, to originate lines of thought or questioning in class. As mentioned above, students failing to bring the appropriate reading material to class will receive a penalty to their participation grade.

It is clear that no one reading the newspaper, text messaging, surfing the WWW, or holding private conversations with other students can be engaged with course material during class. *Cell phones and other telecommunications devices may not be used for talking or text messaging during class; and the use of those devices or others such as computers for activities not immediately relevant to the activities in class is strictly forbidden.* Accordingly, using these devices for such purposes *even once* will result in a penalty to a student’s class participation grade. Students will not be warned or notified when such penalties are applied. Those whose distracting and uncivil activities become a problem during a particular class session or who engage in a pattern of such activities will be asked to leave that class session, and will be referred to the Dean or other campus services that aim to help students struggling with college-level work.

4– *PHL 319: Philosophy of Reality*

All students begin the semester with attendance grade of “B.” By actively contributing to class and by avoiding the use of cell phones and the like, students can attain a higher grade by the end of the semester.

Remark about elective courses In an elective class such as this one—that is, a class other than the Philosophy Department core classes, PHL110 and PHL210—it is expected that students come to class ready to engage with the readings and issues of the course so that class meetings may be conducted as a seminar. As a class, students should be able to pose questions on their own, and attempt to answer them; raise issues, and argue about how they might be resolved; and turn to the course instructor for clarification—or to stir up further controversy over the course material. Class discussions should make ample reference to the readings in the interest of interpreting and evaluating them.

Though a good course meeting will have heated debate, the atmosphere ought always to remain friendly and open. At its best, philosophy is practiced in the tradition of Socrates, by a group of friends or close colleagues who pursue the problems of philosophy together. A chief result of this is that the practice of philosophy at its best is enjoyable. Accordingly our class sessions ought to be as well, echoing Nietzsche’s thought that maturity amounts to regaining the seriousness we had as children at play.

Quote Analysis (“QA”) essays (each is 5% of the grade) The aim of a Quote Analysis essay is to interpret a brief but important passage of the student’s choosing in the space of 600 words (at most). Five such essays are assigned; a student’s lowest QA essay grade will be dropped. Due dates for the QA essays are indicated below, on the Schedule of Readings and Assignments. Further details concerning these essays will be provided near the beginning of the term.

Ontology prospectus, sketch, and justification (each is 10% of the grade) Three components of the final ontology project will be due during the latter portion of the semester. 600 words should suffice to fulfill the aims

of each of these assignments, details concerning which will be provided well before they are due.

Final Project (35% of the grade) A final project synthesizing the QA essays and the ontology prospectus, sketch, and justification will be due by the end of the final exam period assigned by the registrar for the class. The Final Project will require 5,000 words or so. Further details concerning the final project will be provided early the semester, as the other assignments are meant to be integrated into it.

Policies

Minimal work for passing A student must turn in all work required in order to pass the class.

Submission of work No work will be accepted by email. This applies to late work as well as work turned in on time. Work emailed to the instructor will not be counted as evidence that it is complete. For instance, suppose a student emails the instructor a copy of an essay on or before its due date, in lieu of turning in the hard copy, for the purpose of showing that the work was completed on time. The essay is late: Penalties will accrue in accord with the policy described below, assessed at the time the hard copy is received.

Late work Unless the student can document a family or medical emergency that prevented him or her from turning in work on time, the late assignment will accrue a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade per day late until the paper is turned in or else the total penalties reduce the assignment grade to C-. Penalties for late work will not cause a student to fail the course, if those penalties make a difference between a passing course grade and a failing course grade. All assignments are due at the start of the class session on the assignment's due date. Students not present in class on the day an assignment is due will be expected to deliver the paper in hard copy to the

6– PHL 319: Philosophy of Reality

instructor during or before that class period: For instance, the student might leave the paper in the instructor's Philosophy Department mailbox the day before the paper is due, or give it to a friend or classmate to turn in during class.

Work due at a class meeting will be counted late if it is not turned in at the start of the meeting.

Academic Integrity

In the context of this class, a student plagiarizes by submitting work of which he or she is not the creator in fulfillment of an assignment which requires that he or she be the creator of work submitted. Plagiarism is morally wrong, destructive for the person that commits it and the Iona community, and is strictly forbidden in this class. Moreover, Dr. Goldstein particularly dislikes plagiarism and considers it his duty to punish it. Disciplinary action in accord with college policies on academic dishonesty, stated in the most recent edition of the *Iona College Undergraduate Catalog*, will be pursued against those found plagiarizing. Note that these policies allow that an instructor may fail a student for plagiarizing; and Dr. Goldstein believes that, except in a very few types of cases, failing a student is the appropriate remedy.

Schedule of Readings & Assignments

Week no.	Date	Readings and Assignments
01	Jan 19	Course introduction.
02	25	Carnap, “ESO.”
03	Feb 01	No new reading.
04	08	Quine, “Ontological Relativity,” “On What There Is.” Carnap QA due Friday.
05	15	No new reading.
06	22	Armstrong, from <i>A World of States of Affairs</i> . No class Thursday & Friday.
07	Mar 01	No new reading. Quine QA due Friday.
08	08	Lewis, from <i>On the Plurality of Worlds</i> . Armstrong QA due Friday.
	15	Spring Break. Yay! Be good . . .
09	22	Aristotle, from <i>The Categories & Metaphysics</i> . Lewis QA due Friday.
10	29	No new reading.
11	Apr 05	Basic Formal Ontology. Readings TBA. Aristotle QA due Friday.

8– *PHL 319: Philosophy of Reality*

Week no.	Date	Readings and Assignments
12	Apr 12	No new reading. Ontology prospectus due Friday.
13	19	Ontology in practice. Continues through to the end of the semester. Readings TBA.
14	26	Ontology Sketch due Friday.
15	May 03	Ontology Justification due Friday.
	TBA	Final project. Due by the end of the final exam period scheduled for the class by the registrar.