



Pearson, James

PHI215

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY I

William Jewell College

12-01-2011 – 12-14-2011

What suggestions do you have to improve the course?

- I thought that some of the professor's expectations about students' philosophical knowledge (e.g. clear understanding of what metaphysics is, etc.) were slightly too high for a survey class that includes first-semester freshmen students. I appreciate that it is difficult to be fair to less experienced students while still challenging older, more experienced students.
- Study guides to help students focus on the major points from each philosopher.
- Dr. Pearson has very high expectations, which is good, except that sometimes they seemed to be a bit unrealistic. This is a 200 level philosophy course, and for some students it is the first philosophy course they have taken and the only philosophy class they will ever take. It's hard to reach students where they're at, especially when they're all at different levels of ability and interest, but the course could have been improved, I think, if the instructor's expectations, both for the level of our submitted work and level of class participation, had been more realistic.
- Less reading. And adding study groups.
- Maybe more time in class, because we would run out of time during lectures a lot, and unfortunately had to move on the next day.
- I think we had some difficulties covering all of the material in class. I definitely noticed this in History of Philosophy 2 when I took it with Dr. Sperry. Some of this is due to people not completing their reading but sometimes I think it is because some of the reading selections are almost impossible to cover in class. I think a few shorter reading selections with increased depth in those selections would be helpful.

What aspects of this course were most beneficial to you?

- I appreciated the very timely and detailed feedback on our exams. It was also helpful that the professor kept an open dialogue with the students.
- Comparing the changes in philosophy over time.
- Occasionally we discussed ways in which the thought of various philosophers intersected with one another. These discussions were particularly helpful to me, and it would have been even more helpful if we had done more of this kind of work. In general, the opportunity we had in class to discuss and ask questions were beneficial to me.
- Lecture.
- Definitely the class lectures. They really helped clear up the reading and increased my understanding of the text.
- I like the exam structure in the class. I also thought the class discussion were generally productive.

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- Occasionally expected students to know or infer information with more ease than was the case.
- Sometimes we did not review every topic as much as I would have liked.
- Again, I think just the standards that Dr. Pearson seemed to think us capable of reaching were a bit too high.
- None.
- If I had to choose one... He likes to go off on tangents. Which is fine, it just didn't really help the whole time thing mentioned in #48.
- I think he could have done better at making sure the students did the reading for each class and encouraging participation.

What were the instructor's major strengths?

- Very engaging in lectures. Provided timely feedback.
- It was clear that the instructor was well informed about the topics covered in class and helped answer questions asked throughout the semester.
- Dr. Pearson is very accessible and he's very good at making the texts he teaches accessible too. He displays a level of thoughtfulness about his teaching that makes him an effective instructor.
- Very good at explaining subject matter.
- Very enthusiastic. I could tell he loved the course subject, which in turn made me love and appreciate philosophy. This class definitely made me become philosophy major.
- I thought that he was generally clear in the explanations of complex philosophical ideas, which is probably the most important part of the course.

Comments: Use the space provided in the text area below for your comments.

- Really great class. I hope Pearson is able to stay around for my next 3 and a half years here.
- Jewell should find a way to keep Dr. Pearson around. He is an excellent teacher and would benefit the college and the philosophy department immensely.