Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: PHIL 490

Course Title: Thematic Seminar in Philosophy and Religious Studies

Number of Credit Hours: 3  Lecture Hours: 3  Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: This is the culminating course for Philosophy and Religious Studies majors. Each seminar is based upon a specific philosophic or religious issue which is studied in depth. Each student will research, write, and present a research paper. Crosslisted as RELI 490. A grade of “C” or better is required.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior standing or permission of the instructor.

Text(s): Most current editions of the following:

Reference Works:


O’Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. Other Peoples’ Myths: The Cave of Echoes.


The substantive readings for the course should come from contemporary journal articles in the area under study.

Course Objectives:

• To understand the discipline of philosophy or religious studies at the highest academic level.
• To be able to prepare an original journal quality article through rigorous scrutiny of published articles in a contemporary subject matter.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

• Read contemporary philosophical/religious studies writings for critical understanding.
• Formalize sophisticated philosophical/religious studies arguments.
• Analyze and provide criticisms of sophisticated philosophical/religious studies arguments.
• Provide solutions to difficulties that arise in arguments concerning philosophical/religious studies subject matter.
• Synthesize argument analyses, criticisms and
solutions into a polished, presentable form.

- Defend this position in a coherent, professional manner by responding to constructive criticisms from audience trained in the field.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):
- Review Literature
- Formalize and criticize arguments in literature
- Construct paper responding to problems and presenting original view
- Present and defend this paper at annual conference

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 15

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Mark L. Price

Date: March 14, 2006

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

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