

InterQuest

Introduction to Philosophy (PHL201)

Course of Learning Outline

Background: InterQuest (IQ) began as an effort to individualize philosophy instruction. For several years I had experimented with ways to connect the philosophic tradition with the personal belief systems of individual learners. In 1993 I met computer scientist John Sechrest who introduced me to an emerging technology, the world wide web. We immediately saw ways to use that technology to enable the personalized pedagogy that I sought. The result was one of the very first university courses to be fully taught on the web. IQ has grown and changed much in ten years, yet the core values of personalized pedagogy and social interaction remain strong.

The base premise for IQ is that every learner brings to their study a belief system to which they are committed. Such belief systems involve beliefs about the world, beliefs about knowledge, beliefs about value, and beliefs about action. Each of us has such a belief system. A reflective philosopher is someone who examines the contents of their own belief system; who tests the strength of their belief system; who compares their own belief system with alternatives; who traces the roots of their beliefs; who seeks connections between their own beliefs and the history of ideas; who works out the practical implications of their beliefs. A reflective philosopher is someone who is willing to revise their beliefs as their investigation calls for. It is this mode of reflective philosophy that IQ is designed to offer.

Learning Goals:

Self-Knowledge - InterQuest aims to enrich each learner's Self-Knowledge by active reflection into the contents, sources, connections, and implications of their personal belief system.

Disciplinary Knowledge - InterQuest aims to increase each learner's knowledge of the major figures, works, and movements of the Western philosophical tradition.

Persistent Knowledge (memory)- InterQuest aims to enhance each learner's memory of the major figures, works, and movements of the Western philosophical tradition. The uses made of the Biographical Precis and Rhetorical Precis forms are intended to construct persistent knowledge. The prime goal is that ten years after study, the learner will retain a working knowledge of major philosophers and their works. A working knowledge is one in which key terms and facts are recognized, leading to the recollection of major issues and ideas.

Learning Objectives:

*The successful student will be able to demonstrate in writing their knowledge of many major figures in the Western philosophical tradition.

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*The successful student will be able to demonstrate in writing their knowledge of several of the major works in the Western philosophical tradition.

*The successful student will be able to demonstrate in writing their insights as regards the contents, sources, connections, and implications of their personal belief system.

*The successful student will be able to demonstrate skills in writing concise intellectual summaries of people: the Biographical Precis.

*The successful student will be able to demonstrate skills in writing concise intellectual summaries of texts: the Rhetorical Precis.

*The successful student will be able to demonstrate skills in the discussion of philosophical issues with other learners.

*The exceptional student will be able to demonstrate in writing their knowledge of the diversity of the philosophical tradition.

Expectations:

Success in InterQuest requires frequent and consistent effort. Rather than a few large writing assignments with major grade value, IQ requires several short writing assignments each week. This creates two basic expectations for the learner:

- 1) **Effort:** Your decision to participate in InterQuest for credit implies that you will make an effort several times each week to read the assigned texts and complete the assigned writing assignments.
- 2) **Communication:** Your decision to participate in InterQuest for credit implies that should you encounter any obstacle that will slow or prevent your effort, you will communicate this with your instructor as soon as you know that the lapse will occur.

InterQuest is a reciprocal relationship. As a learner you have the right to expectations on the instructor and course. Two expectations that will be met are:

- 1) **Feedback:** The consistent work that you produce in InterQuest will be met by an effort to grade, comment on, and return your assignments in a timely manner.
- 2) **Flexibility:** The frequent assignments in InterQuest are designed as aids to learning, not obstacles to be overcome. If you have difficulties for any reason and communicate your concerns to the instructor in a reasonable time, you may expect a positive and helpful reply. "I am here to help you as a partner in a learning activity, not as a commentator in a credit game. Communicate

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your needs and I will work to find solutions.” ~Jon Dorbolo

Communication:

The major obligation in InterQuest is frequent and effective communication. It is up to the communicator to make sure that their messages are received (which you will verify by an appropriate reply). Never take for granted that a single email or phone call absolves your responsibility to communicate your concerns. Rather, you must be willing to try various communication approaches to be sure that they are received. My obligation as instructor is to reply to your concerns within a reasonable time (24 - 48 hours). I do try to reply to all emails in the same day, but I do travel and give frequent workshops. I always do make sure that I have access to my email within my travel venue.

Heed the *law of information importance: the importance of a message is proportional to the frequency and variety by which it is communicated*. You will treat your own information as important when you increase the variety (e.g. email, phone, snail mail, see *Contacts* below) of communication along with the frequency (number of times) of communication.

On Being a Pest:

Sometimes learners qualify their questions and comments with apologetic comments such as “I don’t mean to be a pest, but....” Let me make this clear: you *cannot* be a pest by communicating your needs and ideas in this class. The only students who ever come close to being “pests” are the few who vanish without a trace. Make yourself present and known so that you will be participating as a full member of InterQuest.

Technical Matters:

InterQuest is a fully web-based course. It is a basic requirement that each learner has daily access to a reliable computer with a web connection. InterQuest is designed to accommodate multiple platforms and browsers. It should work for you. Internet technology, however, is an uncertain matter.

*If you have any technical problem, contact your instructor.

*Always write your assignments on a word processor, the copy & paste the text into the appropriate submission area.

*Always save a copy of your assigned writing.

My form commitment to you as a participant in InterQuest is this: no InterQuest learner ever has or ever will suffer grade loss because of sheer technical difficulties. If anything goes wrong with the technological or organizational aspects of the course, it is my obligation as instructor to

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specify a way in which you may continue to succeed anyway. But you have to let me know what you are experiencing in a timely fashion.

Assessment:

*The majority of the InterQuest grade comes from weekly writing assignments. In order to succeed in the course, you must be able to produce regular work.

*You will also be required to take weekly quizzes, leading to a midterm and final exam.

*Class discussion via the Class Discussion Forums is a required part of the final grade.

Reading:

Some of the readings are available online. Some of the readings are in the required text(s) that are available at the OSU Bookstore. See step #5 below to find out which book(s) are required for this term.

Contacts:

Your major contact point is your course instructor: Jon Dorbolo

Email: Jon.Dorbolo@oregonstate.edu

Phone: 541.737.3811

Mail: 4140 Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331-4502

Getting started:

#1. Make sure that you have OSU ONID and Blackboard access.(note: many of you are already accessing this from within Blackboard. Great! Please understand that some of these instructions are for folks who have not gained Blackboard access yet).

Oregon State University online services (including the Blackboard learning system) are administered through the OSU Network Identification system (ONID).

If are an enrolled OSU student you and *do not have* an ONID account, contact the computer consulting desk at consulting@oregonstate.edu.

If you *are not yet* enrolled at OSU and need an ONID account, contact the OSU office through which you will take the course; i.e. OSU Extended Campus (<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu>).

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If you ever have trouble using ONID or Blackboard, contact the computer consulting desk at consulting@oregonstate.edu or 541.737.3474 or <http://consulting.orst.edu>.

#2. If you *do not use* ONID as your email account, make sure to forward your email from ONID. All Blackboard course email goes through ONID. If you are using another email address, then you will not receive class email (that is not good). However, if you tell ONID to forward all of your class email to your preferred address, then all is well.

>Make sure that you have an ONID account (see #1 above)

>Go to <http://onid.orst.edu>

>Login in to ONID

>Select “Change Email Forward” (on the left menu)

>Enter the email address to forward email to (i.e. the email address that you want to use and receive mail at) by typing in the address, for example:

you@onid.orst.edu --> youraddress@yourmail.com.

>Select Change Email Forwarding

>Done.

#3. Complete the IQ Portfolio which is found on the course menu (the left hand column in the Blackboard course site).

#4. Study the Course Schedule. It is the first page that you get when entering the Blackboard course. Note that many of the assignments on the schedule are linked to the appropriate resources.

#5. Begin InterQuest by study the Philosophical Frameworks. This section is available in the student area of the website after the learner profile form and in the Blackboard Course Information area.

#5. Get the textbook(s) listed in the syllabus and the Blackboard course. The OSU Bookstore has the requires text(s).

<http://www.bookstore.mu.orst.edu/>

E-mail: TextOrder@Bookstore.mu.orst.edu

Voice: 1-541-737-1506 or 1-800-595-0357

Fax: 1-541-737-3171

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#7. Contact InterQuest instructor Jon Dorbolo for additional help:

Jon.Dorbolo@oregonstate.edu

541-737-3811