Being human involves both knowing and acting (at the very least, in addition to being or existing). In this course we will deal with several approaches to knowledge, from Cartesian Foundationalism to Naturalized Epistemology and Relativism. Some serious thinkers suggest we know very little or nothing (Socrates: “I only know that I know nothing”). Are we animals trapped in a struggle of survival in which human values and knowledge have a provisional or instrumental value, or are we rational agents capable of ascending to realm of values and concepts that yield what we normally call “knowledge” that transcends our animal or biological nature? What is “Rationality”? This course is designed to encourage students to become self-conscious thinkers, who can reflect critically about the nature of knowledge, reason, and value, in the context of the best reflection on these topics by leading thinkers from Descartes to Heidegger and Putnam.

In the second half of the course (Spring 2016) we will approach the concept of an examined life via the exploration of selected views of human values and conduct: 1) “Might Makes Right,” 2) “Divine Command,” 3) Kantian ethics, 4) Utilitarianism or Consequentialism, and 5) Ethical Relativism and Subjectivism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honors Fellows</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Dan Alvarez</td>
<td>DM 304A</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>305-348-2354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:alvarezd@fiu.edu">alvarezd@fiu.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Texts/Readings:
Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy (1641), Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521558181.
Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings of Martin Heidegger, Harper Perennial. ISBN: 978-0061627019. The required readings from Basic Writings are:
- Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth"
- Heidegger, "On the Origin of the Work of Art"
- Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism"
- Heidegger, "The Question concerning Technology"

Supplementary readings that will be made available online:
W. V. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” (1951), in From a Logical Point of View.
__________, “There is at least one a priori truth,” ibid. (1983).
Thomas Nagel, The Limits of Objectivity (1979)
Lao Tzu, selections from Tao te Ching
Other learning tools:
What the Bleep Do We Know
The Matrix
Waking Life

Requirements
1. Students will write two essays (3-4 pages per essay) on topics/questions distributed by the instructor. These questions will address the fundamental problems or issues presented by the course materials (60% of grade).
2. Presentation based on reading. Minimum of 2-3 pages. Student will present the main points of the reading for that day. This is an expository presentation dealing with the assigned text or article (20% of grade).
3. Gettier-type case. One (1) page example of a Gettier-type case (10% of grade).
4. Class participation and attendance (10% of grade).

Honors Convocation
Honors Convocation Week: TBA

University Requirements

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

FIU Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Honors College Student Handbook.

Academic misconduct includes:

- Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.
- Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source, and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.
- Unacceptable behavior – Students who show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors, are disruptive, or consistently violate course rules are subject to the sanctions of the Honors College.

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html

FIU Honors College Student Handbook – http://honors.fiu.edu/handbook0910.html

FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy – http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html
Disability Notice

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), if you have not done so already.” Please note that if you have a student who is registered with the DRC, you will receive notification about the student’s disability and a detailed description of accommodations the student will require.

Religious Observances

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.
GL Learning Outcomes for IDH 3034-5

- Global Awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
  - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.

- Global Perspectives: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
  - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

- Global Engagement: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
  - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems related to aesthetics, values, and authority.

Assignments must be able to assess the students’ ability to demonstrate these outcomes. We will be collecting them at the end of the academic year (spring).

**Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS)**
The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to “explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See [http://honors.fiu.edu/heart](http://honors.fiu.edu/heart/).

*************************

**Honors College Important Dates – Fall Semester**

- Convocation Week: TBA
- Excellence Lecture: TBA
- Fall Awards Assembly: TBA
Week 1  Introduction, Syllabus Requirements; Survey: Ways of Knowing  
Required Reading: Descartes, 1st Meditation; selected scenes from The Matrix.

Week 2  The Standard View  
Required Reading: Descartes, 2nd and 3rd Meditations

Week 3  The Limits of the Standard View  
Required Reading: Descartes, 3rd and 5th Meditations concluded; Nagel, “The Limits of Objectivity”; Gettier-Type Case.

Week 4  The Standard View Modified II  
Required Reading: Nagel, “The Limits of Objectivity” (continued).

Week 5  The Standard View Modified III  
Required Reading: Nagel, “The Limits of Objectivity” (concluded).

Week 6  The Standard View Challenged: Heidegger  

Week 7  Heidegger  

Week 8  Heidegger  
Required Reading: Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism.”

Week 9  The Standard View Challenged: W. V. Quine  
Required Reading: selections from Quine, “Two Dogmas,” Quine, “Epistemology Naturalized.”

Week 10  Putnam, “Two Dogmas Revisited,” and “There is at least one a priori Truth.”

Week 11  The Standard View Challenged: Nagel, Mind and Cosmos

Week 12  Nagel, Mind and Cosmos

Week 13  Nagel, Mind and Cosmos; J. P. Moreland, “Slouching Towards Theism: A Philosophical Note on Nagel’s Mind and Cosmos.”

Week 14  Lao Tzu, selections from the Tao Te Ching.

Week 15  Wither Knowledge, Wither Rationality