

Philosophy 205: Philosophy with Children

❖ Syllabus ❖

<i>Instructors:</i>	David Shapiro	<i>Quarter:</i>	Winter 2010
<i>Office Hours:</i>	M/W 11-12	<i>Meets:</i>	M/W BNS 115
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a workshop in doing philosophy with children. Students will be introduced to the methods and practices of doing philosophy with young people, eventually enabling them to facilitate philosophy for children sessions in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Philosophy for Children is an instructional theory and methodology for bringing philosophy into the lives of pre-college students. It emphasizes “doing philosophy” over “studying philosophy;” instead of reading Plato, for instance, young people explore the same sorts of questions that intrigued Plato through the creative use of literature, classroom games, and collaborative exercises. Philosophy for Children stresses the development of a “community of inquiry” in which budding philosophers are encouraged to ask their own relevant questions, to develop their views and articulate reasons for them, and to listen and learn from one another. In many ways, this course is an introduction to philosophy through children’s literature and classroom activities. Students successfully completing this course will have explored many of the perennial concerns of philosophy in a manner that is consistent approaches used to introduce pre-college students to philosophy and philosophical inquiry.

II. TEXTS:

- Photocopied handouts and perhaps electronic reserve materials.

II. TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

❖ *What is Philosophy? What is Philosophy for Children? What is a Community of Inquiry? What is the role of a philosopher in a classroom?*

- Carroll, Lewis, selection from *Alice in Wonderland*
- White, E.B., selection from *Stuart Little*
- Plato, “The Allegory of the Cave”
- Muth, John J, *The Three Questions*
- Gaarder, Jostein, selection from *Sophie’s World*
- Russell, Bertrand, from “The Problems of Philosophy”
- Lipman, Matthew, et al., selection from *Philosophy in the Classroom* (recommended bibliography)

❖ *Metaphysics with Children*

- Williams, Margery, *The Velvetine Rabbit*
- Lipman, Matthew, selection from *Pixie*
- Wiseman, Barbara, *Morris the Moose*
- Koss, Amy Goldman, selection from *The Ashwater Experiment*
- L’Engle, Madeline, *A Wrinkle in Time*
- Groening, Matt, *The Simpsons*
- selections from Martin, Robert M., *There are Two Errors in the Title of This Book*
- selection from “The Matrix”

❖ *Logic/Critical Thinking with Children*

- Lipman, Matthew, selections from *Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery*
- Rowling, J.K., selection from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
- selections from Cohen, Marin, *101 Philosophy Problems*
- selection from Lipman, Matthew, *Philosophy Goes to School*

II. TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS: (cont.)

❖ *Epistemology with Children*

- Steig, William, *The Real Thief*
- Tashlin, Frank, *The Bear That Wasn't*
- Lewis, C.S., selection from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
- Descartes, Rene selection from *The Meditations*
- Williams, Barbara, *Albert's Toothache*

❖ *Personal Identity Questions with Children*

- Kafka, Franz, *The Metamorphosis*
- Rodgers, Mary, *Freaky Friday*
- selection from "Harry Stottlemeier"
- selections from Martin, Robert M., *There are Two Errors in the Title of This Book*

❖ *Philosophy of Religion with Children*

- Steig, William, *Yellow and Pink*
- selection from "Contact"

❖ *Philosophy of Art with Children*

- Battin, Margaret, Fisher, John, Moore, Ronald, & Silvers, Anita, selections from *Puzzles About Art*

❖ *Ethics with Children*

- Estes, Eleanor, *The Hundred Dresses*
- LeGuin, Ursula, "Those Who Walk Away from Omelas"
- Lipman, Matthew, selection from *Pixie*
- Quinn, Daniel, selection from *Ishmael*
- Coles, Robert, selection from *The Moral Life of Children*
- Weill, Vivian, selection from *The Kindness of Children*
- Bulla, Clyde R., selection from *My Friend the Monster*
- Lipman, Matthew, selection from *Lisa*
- Banks, Lynn Read, selection from *The Indian in the Cupboard*
- Noddings, Nel, selection from *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*
- Banks, Russell, selection from *Rule of the Bone*

❖ *Questions about The Meaning of Life with Children*

- Mills, Claudia, selection from *Dinah Forever*
- St. Exupéry, Antoine de, *The Little Prince*
- Nagel, Thomas, selection from *What Does It All Mean?*
- Camp, Lindsey & Ross, Tony, *Why?*

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- A successful philosophy class is a shared enterprise, a *community of inquiry*, so please come to class, having done the readings and exercises, prepared to discuss the material.
- You are expected to do all the assignments, hand them in on time, and to participate in class to the best of your interest and ability.
- Your assignments will be:
 - shorter assignments (about 3 of these, each 2-5 pages)
 - in-class writing/presentations (pretty much daily)
 - a final paper/presentation
 - Participation in UW Pipeline Project (optional but recommended)

IV. GRADES:

This is a credit/no credit course. In order to get credit, you must complete all the assignments in a timely manner. Participation is important; our goal is to establish a classroom *community of inquiry*. It's incumbent

upon each of us to be fully participating members in that community. *Note that, unless special circumstances apply, you won't get credit for the class if you miss more than 4 of the meetings.*

Please let me know if you have any special needs in terms of classroom participation, paper-writing, and/or presentations. I am happy to accommodate you however we can.