

# Freeing Imprisoned Minds

FSP114-07 (82853)

The College of New Jersey

**Mark Edwards, Ph.D.**

Tues/Fri, 8:30-9:50 am

Science Complex C-113

Fall 2013

## Course Description:

In the history of philosophy and theology, many important works have been written by authors who were behind bars. This course introduces students to a selection of these texts and the concerns they raise. Such texts deal, not only with classical problems in the history of philosophy, but also with concerns many of us share today. Questions to be addressed include: "What is the meaning of life?" "Where can I find happiness?" "What does it mean to live in freedom?" "What can be done about injustice and oppression?" Readings include works by Plato, Boethius, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., & Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

## Goals:

1. To foster interest in major questions in the history of theology and philosophy through authors who dealt firsthand with imprisonment and who wrestled with issues of justice & injustice, innocence & guilt, and truth & falsehood.
2. To learn how to critically engage ideas in college-level assignments according to college-level expectations
3. To encourage reflection upon the importance of social, environmental, and cultural factors in the history of philosophical thought and in the present formation of our personal identity.
4. To heighten awareness of injustice, to develop sympathies for those in need, and to learn attitudes and techniques for enduring our own hardships and helping others.

## Texts:

1. *The Last Days of Socrates*, Plato, Translation by Hugh Tredennick
2. *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius, Translation by David Slavitt
3. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
4. *Night*, Elie Wiesel
5. *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom
6. Additional selections provided electronically.

## Assignments:

- Being present and participating in class discussions.
- There are four assigned papers for this course. The first two (3-4 pages each) are intended to introduce you to the task of critical thinking and to academic writing at the college level. Writing prompts will be made available. The third and fourth papers (5-6 pages each) provide a chance to extend the length and depth of analysis while providing freedom to argue for original theses.
- A short presentation (10 min) in the final weeks on an author of their own choosing.
- A final exam covering materials from the whole course.

## Evaluation:

- 15%: Paper #1
- 15%: Paper #2
- 15%: Paper #3
- 15%: Paper #4
- 10%: Presentation
- 20%: Final Exam
- 10%: Participation

## TCNJ Goals & Expectations

### TCNJ First Seminar Program, Academic Learning Goals, Fall 2013:

- To foster intellectual curiosity in the students;
- To introduce students to college-level assignments and college-level expectations in terms of writing, reading, research, and oral presentations;
- To improve the students' ability to think critically about their world, their culture, and their own beliefs;
- To foster a student culture of intellectual engagement outside the classroom,
- To encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning;
- To introduce students to the concept of a well-rounded education based on a breadth of knowledge that goes beyond their immediate professional or academic field; and
- To accomplish the appropriate Liberal Learning domain goals and any appropriate interdisciplinary concentration goals for the course.

### TCNJ Attendance Policy:

Every student is expected to participate in each of his/her courses through regular attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions. It is further expected that every student will be present on time and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin. At the first class meeting of a semester, instructors are expected to distribute in writing the attendance policies which apply to their courses. While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, studio practice, field experience or other activities which may take place during class sessions. If these areas for evaluation make class attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities.

When a student must be absent from classes due to extended illness, a death in the family or similar genuine emergency, the Dean of Student Life should be informed immediately so that the appropriate notice can be provided to individual instructors. Students who must miss classes due to participation in a field trip, athletic event or other official college function should arrange with their instructors for such class absences well in advance. The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participants in such college functions. In every instance, however, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for makeup work.

### TCNJ Academic Integrity Policy:

The College of New Jersey is a community of scholars and learners who respect and believe in academic integrity. This integrity is violated when someone engages in any of the dishonest behavior described below.

*Academic dishonesty* is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his/her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

## SCHEDULE:

1. **COURSE INTRODUCTION & SOCRATES IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Aug. 27** Introduction  
  
**Fri, Aug.30** Plato, *Last Days of Socrates: Apology* (p.31-70)  
Plato, *Last Days of Socrates: Crito* (p.71-96)
2. **SOCRATES IMPRISONED, II**  
**Tues, Sept. 3** NO TUESDAY CLASS: Follow Monday Schedule  
  
**Fri, Sept. 6** Plato, *Last Days of Socrates: Phaedro* (p.97-199)
3. **GOD IMPRISONED & EXECUTED**  
**Tues, Sept. 10** Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25  
Gospel of John, Chapters 18-21  
Mark Taylor, *The Executed God*, Introduction (p.1-16)  
  
**Fri, Sept. 13** Prison Letters of Paul: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians,  
& Philippians  
Book of Acts, Chapters 12, 16, 21-28
4. **THE MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHER IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Sept. 17** \*\*\*\*Paper #1 Due\*\*\*\*  
Academic Integrity Presentation  
  
**Fri, Sept. 20** Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Books 1- 2 (p.1-58)
5. **THE MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHER IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Sept. 24** Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 3 (p.59-105)  
  
**Fri, Sept. 27** Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 4 (p.106-145)
6. **THE THEOLOGIAN IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Oct. 1** Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book 5 (p.146-175)  
  
**Fri, Oct. 4** Martin Luther, Writings from Wartburg Castle, Selections
7. **THE WRITER IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Oct. 8** John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, I  
  
**Fri, Oct. 11** John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, II
8. **THE PASTOR IMPRISONED**  
**Tues, Oct. 15** \*\*\*Paper #2 Due\*\*\*  
Bonhoeffer, *Who am I? A Poem*, (p.347)  
Bonhoeffer, *Christians and Pagans. A Poem* (p.348)  
Additional Selections  
  
**Fri, Oct. 18** Bonhoeffer, *Report on Prison after One Year...* (p.248-253)  
Bonhoeffer, *A Wedding Sermon from a Prison Cell*, (p.41-56)

Bonhoeffer, *Prayers for Fellow-Prisoners*, (p.139-151)

9. **THE JEW IMPRISONED & EXTERMINATED**  
Tues, Oct. 22 Elie Wiesel, *Night* (p.3-65)  
Fri, Oct. 25 Elie Wiesel, *Night* (p.66-120)
10. **THE RESISTER IMPRISONED**  
Tues, Oct. 29 FALL BREAK: No Class  
Fri, Nov.1 Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (p.17-138)
11. **THE PREACHER IN PRISON**  
Tues, Nov.5 Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (p.139-248)  
Fri, Nov. 8 Karl Barth, *Sermons from the Basel Prison*  
Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, "Freedom"  
Ch 7 (p.228-270)
12. **THE PACIFISTS IMPRISONED, I**  
Tues, Nov. 12 **\*\*\*Paper #3 Due\*\*\***  
Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*  
Martin Luther King, *I Have A Dream*  
Fri, Nov. 15 Ghandi, *How to Enjoy Jail & The Struggle*
13. **THE PACIFISTS IMPRISONED, II**  
Tues, Nov. 19 Nelson Mandela, *I Will Return*  
Aung San Suu Kyi, *The Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech*  
Poems from Guantánamo Bay  
Fri, Nov. 22 Class Presentations
14. **THE NAMELESS OTHERS, I**  
Tues, Nov. 26 Class Presentations  
Fri, Nov. 29 THANKSGIVING: No Class
15. **THE NAMELESS OTHERS, II**  
Tues, Dec. 3 Class Presentations  
Fri, Dec. 6 **\*\*\*Paper #4 Due\*\*\***  
Wrap Up
- TO BE ANNOUNCED: FINAL EXAM**