

- COURSE SYLLABUS -

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
DIVISION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
15901 - PHI 153 – 005
FALL 2018

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Office Hours (open door policy):
 10:30am-1pm Mondays
 12:30pm-4pm Tuesdays
 Personal appointment

Location of class: Ferguson # G78
Time of class: Monday evenings:
6:45pm- 9:15pm
27 August 2018 – 10 December, 2018
Office location: Ferguson # G76

“Philosophy begins in wonder.
And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a concern with the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, this course focuses on issues concerning philosophical theories of knowledge and reality, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. Possible topics: the nature of philosophy, the problem of skepticism and knowledge, mind and personal identity, and the nature and existence of God. Emphasis is on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking.

II. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

A. Problem Learning Outcomes:

- This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

B. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

- Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues.
- Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
- Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.

- Ability to formulate, express, and support opinions on the philosophical issues covered in this course.
- Knowledge of cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

III. GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:

A. Course Policies and Requirements:

- 20% Mid-Term Exam (Exam 1): 1 October
- 20% D2L Discussion Board: 10 weekly responses & replies
- 20% Final Exam (non-cumulative) (Exam 2): 10 December
- 20% Epistemology Paper (5-7 page paper): 31 October
- 20% Video Debate Analysis (5-7 page paper): 28 November

- B. Attendance is expected.** A complete attendance report may be filed with the student's dean and the registrar with the final course grade. *In fact, more than one absence, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*

Please do not miss class! In view of your interests, too much is at stake.

- C.** All students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a *cogent documented* excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.
- D.** Because of the nature of these exams over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your *best* interest to attend class and proactively engage material, especially since each exam counts 20% towards your final grade.

E. Required Books:

Brooke Noel Moore & Kenneth Bruder, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 9th edition (New York: McGraw Hill), 2014 . ISBN: 978-0-07-803835-8.

1. This book will stimulate our thoughts regarding *ultimate questions* like:
 - a. Where did we come from? (*origin*)
 - b. What are we? Who are we? (*identity*)
 - c. Why are we here? (*meaning*)
 - d. How should we then live? (*morality*)
 - e. What's gone wrong with the world? (*evil*)
 - f. What can be done to fix the problems of the world? (*hope*)

Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, revised edition (Penguin Books), 2005. ISBN 978-0143036531.

- a. You will be tested on major themes of this book on on final exam.

F. Exam Information:

- Each exam may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short discussion, and/or essay. You need scantron (882E) and blue books for mid-term exam. Please bring writing utensil and scantron. I will not be in a position to keep additional writing utensils, and 882E scantron. For final exam, 882 E scantron, and number 2 pencil needed.
- Each exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings as dictated on course schedule or as directed by professor.
- The final exam will not be cumulative.
- I will additional required readings as deemed appropriate on D2L discussion assignment
- Take good notes. Recordings of any sort are NOT allowed for class lectures (except for ADA compliance).
- Any student *who has* to miss the mid-semester or final exam must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to re-take the exam **within** two class days. Otherwise, you will receive no credit (00). If you miss the final exam, contact me to take the exam immediately; otherwise, you receive no credit for the exam (00).

G. Paper:

- During the unit on Epistemology, students will construct a written assignment that will dovetail with the specific epistemological theories covered in that section of the course. The assignment will be a single essay that is step driven and may be described to the students in the manner seen below. While the sample directions below break the assignment into steps, this is a single essay and will be uploaded for each objective.
- Student Directions:

Following the unit on Epistemology, each student will complete and turn in a written assignment. The stylistic requirements for the assignment will be the completion of a four to five page essay that is stylistically clean and displays academic citation of all source material. The work will be typed and will include a works cited page. While the content requirements have been broken down into a

series of steps that build upon one another and thus highlight our learning process (see below), this is to be written as a single, cohesive essay. The content steps are:

As you have been introduced to a number of epistemological theories during the last several weeks, you are to choose **TWO of those theories and provide a critical evaluation of each theory.** Upon identifying and explaining each theory, you will then critically evaluate each theory.

Next, you will transition from a direct analysis of an epistemological theory to an indirect analysis of a third theory. In this case, you are to either design your own cartoon or find a cartoon online that you believe comments on a third epistemological. After providing the cartoon, you will write an analysis of this image in which you identify and explain how the cartoon, in terms of its context and assumptions, comments on this third epistemological theory.

Finally, you will conclude your paper with a personal discussion in which you identify the epistemological theory that you find most convincing and then critically explore how your choosing that theory will impact your own ethical self-awareness in different contexts and your cultural self-awareness as it is tied to such issues as civic responsibility or understanding your role in a regional, national, or global community.

This work is to be done in your words. All sources must be properly cited. Plagiarism, which is your responsibility to know what it is and how to avoid it, is totally unacceptable. Strict plagiarism policy is upheld. No "cut-in-paste" from internet. This paper is due **31 October** by 11:59pm and is to be uploaded to D2L.

H. Video Debate:

- You will watch **ONE** of the following five video debates and offer a 5-7 page critical review. Cover sheet is required. 12 size font. Romans/New Times. Proper grammar, citations, and punctuation are expected. If any other sources are consulted, bibliography is required.
- Summarize each major argument from both sides and offer a thoughtful response/critique using the philosophical tools you have gained in this class. Look for logical fallacies as studied in chapter 1 and consider the seven-fold criteria for evaluation:

Logical Coherence
Empirical Adequacy
Existential Relevance
Viability

Workability
Explanatory Power
Ethical and Aesthetic Values

- This paper is to be in your own words; plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever.
- All five debates are offered on youtube.com. Choose only one! You can use the details below to find the youtube debates. This paper is due on Wednesday night by **11:59pm on 28 November** on D2L. No late papers will be accepted.
- The first debate is John Lennox vs. Richard Dawkins Debate: *Has Science Buried God?* Oxford Museum of Natural History hosts this debate. John Lennox of Oxford explains how science points to an intelligent creator and Richard Dawkins of Oxford offers a counterargument. This paper is due **28 November** by 11:59pm and is to be uploaded to D2L. This debate is 1.21 hours long.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVEuQg_Mglw.
- The second debate is theist William Lane Craig vs. atheist Paul Kurtz: *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?* This debate took place at Franklin & Marshall College. This debate is 1:39 long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2 L by **28 November** by 11:59pm.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr_RzS-579o&t=5s.
- Third debate is Does God Exist between William Lane Craig vs. late antitheist Christopher Hitchens. This 4 April 2009 debate took place at Biola University in California. This debate is 2.12 hours long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2L by **28 November** by 11:59pm.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o&t=69s>.
- Fourth debate is “Is There a God?” between famed bioethics philosopher Peter Singer vs. Oxford scholar John Lennox which took place in 2017 at the Town Hall at Melbourne, Australia with Fixed Point Foundation. <https://youtu.be/HoTILnpd3q8>. The debate is 1:46 hours long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2L by **28 November** by 11:59pm.
- Fifth debate, “Is there Meaning in Evil and Suffering?” at Faith and Science Lecture Forum that took place in Atlanta, Georgia. After Dr. Ravi Zacharias, a theist, offers a presentation affirming meaning, God, and evil, it follows with a panel response by a Hindu philosopher, an atheist physicist, and a theist.
https://youtu.be/O0_pFDPPx8. This debate is 2.44 hours long and is to be uploaded to D2L by **28 November** by 11:59pm.
- Plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever. Your review and critique is to be in your own words.

- Anticipate computer problems. Don't wait till last minute to upload your paper.
- Save your papers repeatedly. Upload working copies to your electronic email account in case something terrible happens to your computer.
- Watch presentation early, write summary notes, and reflect upon contrasting views presented.

I. Discussion Board Responses:

- I will upload lecture material and pertinent questions each and every Wednesday on D2L. As a result, you will offer a minimal of 500 word response to 10 of the entries I upload.
- Each entry will graded with a potential possibility of earning 10 points. Thus, 10 points per entry could earn total of 100 points (A+).
- To be sure, this does not mean that each entry guarantees 10 points. Each entry must be excellent to earn 10 points.
- Proper grammar, citation, and punctuation.
- No plagiarism whatsoever.
- No extensive quotes.
- Use skills of analysis and thoughtful reflection.
- Any qualitative feedback you offer to the other entries *within the week they are posted*, might qualitatively contribute to your overall grade for this assignment.
- You have one week to offer a thoughtful, philosophical response from the day it is posted for each entry. No exceptions. No exemptions.
- Lastly, you are not to be impolite or hostile to me or fellow students in any of your responses or replies. If you are, you will receive 0 for the entire discussion board.

IV. GENERAL RULES:

- No use of cell-phones, text-messaging, games, I-Pods (or equivalent), social utilities, or internet in class. No use of any technological device (unless ADA) that may be a distraction to the learning process. Laptops used exclusively for class-notes are acceptable. Please silence cell-phones before class. **If you**

use the computer for other purposes than taking notes, then you will be asked to leave class.

- No smoking or use of tobacco will be permitted in the classroom.
- All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.
- Lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.
- No reading of newspapers, magazine, kindle books, and other materials for other classes.
- Respect your classmates and professor.
- If you have to step out to the restroom be sure to do so quietly.
- Do not bring attention to yourself.
- No use of profanity.
- Respect and tolerance for all views shared among us all. Let's learn from each other.
- Attendance is expected. *In fact, more than one absent, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of "F" for this course.*
- I will be taking attendance at beginning of class. It is imperative that you be present and on-time.
- If you are late to class you must inform me at end of class or you will be counted as absent.
- If you are more than fifteen minutes late to my class, then you will be counted as absent.
- If you are gone more than 15 minutes from class, then you will be counted as absent.
- For every three times you are tardy to class (under 15 minutes), your excessive tardiness will be counted as one absence.

V. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

- Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?
- Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: "*What do I see?*" The more observations you make, the better your

interpretation of the author's position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, "What does it mean?"

- After you outline the author's position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, "What is the issue?" Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?
- You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.
- Consider forming study groups to prepare for quizzes and exams.
- Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.
- Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a "morning person", then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).
- Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).

- Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:

Read Thoughtfully
Read Repeatedly
Read Patiently
Read Selectively
Read Imaginatively
Read Purposefully
Read Acquisitively
Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler's informative work, *How to Read a Book*.

- 10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:
 1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.
 2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.

3. Be undivided! Do not separate one are of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.
4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!
5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depress from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.
6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.
7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy-for if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.
8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.
9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.
10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

Class meeting	Topic	I will be introducing you to some important ideas from the following books and authors:	Reading Assignment Each reading is due by beginning of class time.
27 August	Introduction to Class: What is Philosophy? What is a worldview? 7 fold criteria for analysis		<i>Power of Ideas:</i> Chapters 1-2
3 September	Presocratic Philosophy	<i>Plato’s Republic</i> <i>Presocratic Philosophy</i>	<i>Power of Ideas,</i> <i>Chapters 3-4</i>
10 September	Metaphysics & Epistemology: Ancient (Plato; Aristotle), Medieval (Plotinus; St. Augustine; St. Aquinas)	<i>Plato’s Republic</i>	<i>Power of Ideas,</i> <i>Chapters 5-6</i>
17 September	Metaphysics & Epistemology continued: Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, & Neo-Platonism Berkeley; Leibniz; Spinoza; Locke; Hume; Kant; Reid	Descartes’ <i>Meditations</i>	Power of Ideas, Chapters 7-9. Review chapters 1-9 for mid-term exam
24 September	Introduction to Continental Philosophy	Be on Time to Class	Review chapters 1-9 for mid-term exam.

1 October	Mid-Term Exam Bring scantron 882 E and # 2 pencil to class		<i>Review chapters 1-9 again</i>
8 October	Reflect upon epistemological positions Metaphysics & Epistemology lectures continue	<i>Begin Reading Amusing Ourselves to Death</i>	Be working on your epistemology paper!
15 October	Ethics Introduced		<i>Power of Ideas, chapter 10</i>
22 October Last day to drop course is Wednesday, October 24	Virtue/Consequential Ethics Consequential Ethics; Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill); Egoism; Relativism; Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice (Carol Gilligan)	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	Selection 10:6: Utilitarianism (beginning on pg. 299) Selection 10.7 Friedrich Nietzsche: <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> (beginning on pg. 301). Be working on epistemology paper.
29 October Epistemology Paper Due by 11:59pm on 31 October	Continuation of Ethics Existentialism/ Nihilism	Augustine Pascal Kierkegaard Camus Sartre Jaspers Heidegger Nietzsche	<i>Power of Ideas, chapter 11</i> Epistemology Paper Due to D2L by 11:59pm on 31 October
5 November	Introduction to Philosophy of Religion: Existence of God: Arguments; Evidences; Existential; Religious Experience	Thomas Aquinas' <i>Five Ways</i> ; St. Augustine Anselm Descartes Leibniz Pascal C.S. Lewis William Lane	Chapter 13 Read selection 13.2 <i>Summa Theologica</i> by St. Thomas Aquinas

A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor's discretion.

B. I'm here for you. It is best to contact me by e.mail to make an office appointment.

C. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic honesty in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp,

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another person in another in act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive an F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student's permanent file. If you feel the instructor's determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeal process described in full at

[www.http:// www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp).

D. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

E. Students with Disabilities:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”

~ Dr. Seuss