

# MIND BENDING

Prepare to enter the Twilight Zone

# PHILOSOPHY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION

FASCINATING

## STAR SHIP SOCRATES

Phil 1301 Class # 14253  
Spring, 2019

## LAUNCH TIME

Mondays & Wednesdays  
9:30 - 10:50 am  
Mission Dates: January 14 - May 11

## TARDIS ROOM

Spring Branch Campus  
Room 214

## CAPTAIN

Cinnamon Jenson  
Learning Web Page: <https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/cinnamon.jenson>  
Email: [cinnamon.jenson@hccs.edu](mailto:cinnamon.jenson@hccs.edu)  
Office hours: Spring Branch,  
Commons Building room 801  
Monday- Thursday 1-3 pm

## OUR MISSION

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

## OPERATING MANUAL

Nichols, Smith, Miller (eds). 2009.  
Philosophy through Science Fiction: A coursebook with readings. Routledge: New York.

## YOUR DUTIES

Attendance and participation	30%
Weekly Response Assignments	40%
Four Argument Essays	30%

## CENTRAL CONTROL

Additional readings, assignment descriptions, due dates, and schedule are on CANVAS (Eagle Online). All assignments will be submitted via Canvas.

Set your Canvas Notifications to receive emails, comments on assignments, announcements, etc.



**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY:  
AN EXAMINATION OF PHILOSOPHY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION.**

**Houston Community College**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

I am excited to introduce you to some of the most interesting and thought-provoking topics from the field of Western Philosophy. Throughout this course, we will examine some topics in Western philosophy concerning the nature of knowledge, personal identity, and the mind. This class examines philosophy topics through Science Fiction movies, books, and other media. We examine arguments so that you can practice developing skills of critical thinking that you will use for the rest of your life.

**Texas ACGM Course Description:** This course is a study of the major issues in philosophy and the work of major philosophers. Topics include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications. It provides a theoretically diverse introduction to the study of ideas, including arguments and investigations about abstract and real phenomena, particularly in the areas of knowledge, ethics, and religion (HCC Course Catalogue). This course stresses the HCC Core Objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

**FULFILLS HCC CORE CURRICULUM DEGREE REQUIREMENT:** This course satisfies the Philosophy, Language, and Culture component area or the Component Area Option in the HCC Core Curriculum.

**PREREQUISITES:** Prerequisites: ENG 1301 or higher.

**COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO):**

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

**PHILOSOPHY COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. **Demonstrate knowledge** and an understanding of arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy. You will be able to **define**, **explain**, and **critique** arguments foundational arguments from notable philosophers and the problems they were grappling with in three fields of philosophy (Logic, Philosophy of Mind, and Epistemology).
2. **Analyze and critique** philosophical texts in ways that demonstrate an awareness of argument structure and the evaluation of philosophical claims. You will be able to **assess** the validity, soundness, assumptions, consequences, and fallacies in philosophers' arguments and popular media. **Parse** and **Outline** arguments. **Identify** informal fallacies in your experiences. Practice critical thinking skills that will improve personal empowerment, engage in civic duty, think independently, and defend against faulty reasoning.

3. **Present** logically persuasive arguments orally and in writing that are relevant to philosophical issues covered in course material.

You will be able to **express, support, and defend** your position in your assignments and discussions while acknowledging its weaknesses and realizing that your position is *fallible* (that is, it can and should change given new evidence and information). Hopefully, you will begin to feel comfortable making decisions in spite of an uncertainty of knowledge.

4. **Evaluate** personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world in terms of the philosophical issues raised in course material.

Practice *civic engagement* in activities and group work to synthesize your philosophy theories and ethical beliefs with others, and to **apply** these concepts to your experiences. This is a safe class environment: Critique the argument, not the person.

5. Additional skills will center on *professional development* in writing professionally, interpersonal communication skills and public speaking, researching, and using proper citation.

#### ASSESSMENTS:

Attendance and participation	30%
Weekly Response Assignments (Canvas)	40%
Four Argument Essays (Canvas)	30%

#### ATTENDANCE, IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES, PARTICIPATION, DISCUSSION.

Philosophy is said to be one long conversation from Plato to you. By engaging in discussion, you add different perspectives to your knowledge. Philosophy is created by synthesizing ideas with others, applying philosophical themes to current issues, critiquing arguments, and by examining your reasons for your beliefs. Come to class prepared for discussion and civic engagement. If you come late to class, you may receive 80% attendance for that day. It is required that you participate in class activities.

#### READING.

One of the most important professional development skills you will achieve in college is reading comprehension and your ability to evaluate arguments, and reinterpret them in your own words. Please embrace this challenge! You are expected to carefully read the assigned material before class. It helps to take notes when you are reading, and to formulate argument outlines and objections.

#### REQUIRED READING:

Nichols, Smith, Miller (eds). 2009. *Philosophy through Science Fiction: A coursebook with readings*. Routledge: New York.

Download additional articles in CANVAS under MODULES.



## WEEKLY RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS, READING MATERIALS, AND HANDOUTS WILL BE POSTED IN “EAGLE ONLINE (CANVAS).” ALL ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO “ASSIGNMENTS” IN CANVAS.

Each week you will complete at least one response assignment. The responses may ask you to write a few paragraphs on an assigned activity, such as watching a YouTube, listening to a podcast, taking a unit quiz, doing logic puzzles, or explaining or creating arguments. All instructions are found in ASSIGNMENTS. Additional in-class quizzes or homework may be assigned. Extra credit opportunities may be available in the DISCUSSION BOARD, for up to 2 points total.

**All assignments are due on the last day of class.**

There are three types of Assignments:

1. Preparation/ Response assignments. **All assignments are due BEFORE CLASS.** They prepare you for class discussions. **You can submit late assignments up to 1 week with a 10% penalty.**
2. Reading Quizzes. **Reading quizzes are due before class. They have a hard deadline and will be closed before class. No reading quizzes will be accepted late.**
3. Unit quizzes. **You can submit unit quizzes up to 1 week with a 10% penalty. There are no in-class final exams.**

## ARGUMENT ESSAYS.

You will write 3-4 argument essays consisting of approximately 2 pages. An argument essay asks you to summarize a philosopher’s argument, critique the argument and then develop your own argument against it with proper citation. Each essay is designed to train you in a specific area of professional writing. **DO NOT USE WEBSITES** or outside resources. You must **CITE PROPERLY** whenever you explain a philosopher’s argument, use quotes, or summarize an article. **Late essays will receive a penalty of 10%.** You may edit and resubmit essays until the last day of class.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING EAGLE ONLINE (CANVAS):

You must set your Canvas notifications to accept emails.

Check Announcements in CANVAS often, especially if you miss class.

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online Canvas*. The *Eagle Online Canvas* login page is: <https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/>

Or, from the main HCC website ([www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu)) --> on the top vertical toolbar click “student sign-ins” --> Sign in using your user ID and password--> click “Eagle online (canvas)” tool. You will automatically be assigned Canvas page to each of your classes at HCC.

Your Eagle Online username is your HCC email address. Your password is the same password you use to log in to PeopleSoft, HCC Webmail, and Active Directory (computer terminal login). For any questions about your Eagle ID or password, please go check online [www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-e-maileagle-id/](http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-e-maileagle-id/).

NOTE: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download it free, [www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/](http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/).

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/technical-support/> or 713-718-5275

**NO COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES, RECORDINGS, ELECTRONICS, OR FOOD PLEASE.**

Cell phones are distracting to you, me, and your classmates.

**SCHEDULE:**

The schedule and reading materials are found in the **MODULES** section of CANVAS. **MODULES** will be your main portal that links to readings, assignment instructions, and handouts. Schedule is subject to change.



Units	Topic
Mission 1	Introduction to Philosophy * Thought experiments * Critical Thinking, Logic, validity, soundness * Informal Fallacies, Cognitive Biases
Mission 2	Exploring Personal Identity * Are you the same person you were yesterday? * Three theories of personal identity: Body, soul, memory.
Mission 3	Exploring Philosophy of Mind * Minds, Brains * Dualism vs. Physicalism * Artificial Intelligence, Robots * Consciousness
Mission 4	Exploring Knowledge (Epistemology) * Dreams, simulation theory * Rationalism vs. Empiricism * Science vs. Pseudoscience * Time travel

## STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

a.) HCC Policies:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-handbook/>

b.) FERPA Rights:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

HCC Students are expected to attend class regularly. A daily record of absences will be maintained throughout the semester. NOTE: It is the responsibility of the student to drop, or officially withdraw from this course.

**YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE DROPPED IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND THE FIRST TWO DAYS**

Additionally, system-wide rules affect withdrawals:

- (1) Students who repeat a course for a third, or more times, may face a significant tuition/fee increase at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities.
- (2) By Texas Legislature law a student may withdraw no more than six total course throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. There may be future penalties imposed.
- (3) No student may withdraw from a course following the set "last date to withdraw." After that date and time, a student can only be given a grade earned, or an "I" for incomplete. Incompletes must be made up by the end of the following long semester, after which they will automatically change to a grade of "F". Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I" has been removed from a student's transcript.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY:

An important skill that you need throughout your career is the ability to cite properly. The currency of academics is their ideas. That means that if you do not give credit to authors for their ideas, then you are stealing. I will provide instructions for citation and bibliography throughout your Argument Essay instructions. You may also use the APA manual online at: <http://www.apastyle.org/> or <http://PurdueOwl.org>. For proper grammar, use the Elements of Style by Strunk and White, online at: <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

See the following for additional information for what counts as plagiarism:

<http://plagiarism.org/> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/>

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. A student who is academically dishonest is claiming an advantage not available to other students. The instructor is responsible for measuring each student's individual achievements and also for ensuring that all students compete on a level playing field. Thus, in our system, the instructor has teaching, grading, and enforcing roles. You are expected to be familiar with HCC's policy on Academic Dishonesty located at <http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>. Pleading ignorance of the rules, including improper documentation (MLA, APA, etc.) is no justification for academic dishonesty.

**Students who plagiarize, collude, or cheat may or may not have an opportunity to resubmit their work and may receive a grade of 0 for the first assignment, an F in the course for a second assignment, and a report in our Maxient system which could lead to dismissal from the college.**

**Unless otherwise specified in the assignments, DO NOT USE OUTSIDE RESOURCES. Do not use any websites. This will only confuse you about the content, and deprive you of skills of critical thinking, reading comprehension and professional writing.**

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The HCC Accessibility website is located at the following url:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/accessibility/>. You will find information about the types of assistance offered to students with special instructional needs on that web page. You will also find contact information for your college's ADA compliance and accessibility office. For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165.

Spring Branch Counselor: Lisa Parkinson M.Ed., LPC Tel: 713-718-5422 or Tel: 713-718-5667

### TITLE IX. THIS IS A SAFE ENVIRONMENT:

Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a

sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex-including pregnancy and parental status-in educational programs and activities. If you require an accommodation due to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to: [Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu](mailto:Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu)

For more information see: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/institutionalequity/title-ix-know-your-rights/>  
The Office of Institutional Equity: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/institutionalequity/>

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT:**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources that HCC may possess.

#### **CAMPUS CARRY LAW:**

At HCC the safety of our students, staff, and faculty is our first priority. As of August 1, 2017, Houston Community College is subject to the Campus Carry Law (SB11 2015). For more information, visit the HCC Campus Carry web page at <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/police/campus-carry/>.

#### **EGLS3 – EVALUATION FOR GREATER LEARNING STUDENT SURVEY SYSTEM:**

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time near the end of the term, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and department chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

#### **PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN:**

**Supplemental Instructional Activities:** To be determined by the instructor if needed.

**Instructional Content:** SLOs are listed above. Faculty align their assignments with the SLO's when preparing their syllabi. These are addressed through a variety of assignments determined by the instructor.

#### **Evaluation Procedures:**

SLOs are determined to have been met upon successful completion by students of pre-determined outcome aligned assessments. Successful completion is a grade of 70 or higher.