



Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301- 18938

Instructor: James Travis Ross, MA

Spring 2017, Distance Education (3 Credit Hours)

Learning Web Page:
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Course Description:

This course is a study of the major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications (Texas ACGM). 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.

PREREQUISITE(S):

- ENGL 1301 or higher

HCC CORE CURRICULUM:

This course satisfies the **Philosophy, Language, and Culture** component area or the **Component Area Option** in the HCC Core Curriculum. If you are not sure that you need this course to graduate, please consult with your advisor.

Course Goals:

Students should be able to fulfill all of the SLOs (Student Learning Objectives) described below:

Student Learning Outcomes:

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.

Learning Objectives:

1.1 Acquire a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they represent, geographical location, and historical periods.

1.2 Learn historically significant questions of philosophy, definitions of special terms, and concepts of knowledge, ethics, and human condition.

2.1 Cultivate reading comprehension of philosophical writings.

2.2 Distinguish various approaches to interpretation, including conceptual analysis, testing for validity, determining if sound or not sound.

3.1 Articulate the relevance of philosophy and philosophical questioning to everyday life.

3.2 Consider how philosophy may or may not apply to differing ways of thinking and cultural influences.

4.1 Inventory, Summarize, and Assess correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of ideas.

5.1 Create and cultivate alternative philosophical positions on presented course content.

5.2 Develop coherent arguments for chosen positions, bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression and disciplined thinking.

Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *distance education* course that uses *Canvas*. The *Canvas* login page is:

<https://hccs.instructure.com/login/ldap>

Your Canvas Online username is the same as your HCC email. Your password is the same password you use to log in to HCC Webmail. For any questions about your Canvas ID or password, please go check online [here](#).

IMPORTANT: Canvas works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download it free, [here](#). (Please check your Operating System to see if you have Firefox in your applications.)

Adopted Texts:

Sartre, Jean-Paul // ***Existentialism and Human Emotions***
Carol Publishing Group, 1984//ISBN 0806509023

Descartes, Rene // ***Discourse On Method and Meditations On First Philosophy***//Hackett Publishing 4th Edition, 1999//ISBN 0-87220-420-0

Grube// ***Plato: Five Dialogues***//Hackett Publishing, 2nd Edition, 2002
ISBN 978-0-87220-633-5

All other readings will be made available online on the Eagle2 website for the course.

Course Calendar:

Week Number	Activities and Assignment	Objectives and Details
1		
Feb. 13 – 19	What is Philosophy? Read Plato's <i>Apology</i> (pp. 21-44 of the Plato textbook) Apology Response due Feb. 18	Course Intro. Lecture Available Feb.19 Apology Response due Feb. 18 <i>Apology</i> Lectures available Feb. 19
2		
Feb. 20 – 26	Read Plato's <i>Crito</i> (pp. 45-57 of the Plato textbook) Crito Response due Feb. 24 Read Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (selections from the <i>Republic</i> pdf on course website)	Crito Response due Feb. 24 Lecture on <i>Crito</i> available Feb. 25 Lectures on Plato's Metaphysics available Feb. 26
3		
Feb. 27 – Mar. 5	Read Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (pdf file available on the course website) Aristotle Response due Mar. 4	Lecture on Aristotle's Metaphysics available Feb. 27 Aristotle Response due Mar. 4 Lecture on Aristotle's Ethics available Mar. 5
4		
Mar. 6 – 12	EXAM ONE DUE Mar. 12	Lecture on Medieval Philosophy available Mar. 6 EXAM ONE DUE Mar. 12
5		
Mar. 13 – 19	SPRING BREAK	NO ASSIGNMENTS THIS WEEK
6		
Mar. 20 – 26	Read Rene Descartes' <i>Meditations I & II</i> (pp. 59 – 69 of the Descartes textbook) Read David Hume's <i>An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (pdf files available on the course website) Descartes/Hume Response due Mar. 26	Lectures over Descartes available Mar. 20 Descartes/Hume Response due Mar. 26
7		

Week Number	Activities and Assignment	Objectives and Details
Mar. 27 – Apr. 2	Read Kant's <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (pdf file available on the course website) EXAM TWO DUE Apr. 2	Hume Lectures available Mar. 27 Kant Introductory Lecture available Mar. 29 Lecture on Kant's Ethics available Mar. 30 EXAM TWO DUE Apr. 2 LAST DAY TO DROP APRIL 11
8		
Apr. 3 – 9	Read Friedrich Nietzsche (pdf files available on the course website) Nietzsche Response due Apr. 8	Lecture on early 19 th -century Philosophy available Apr. 3 First Nietzsche Lecture available Apr. 5 Nietzsche Response due Apr. 8 Second Nietzsche lectures available Apr. 9
9		
Apr. 10 – 16	Read Jean-Paul Sartre's <i>Being and Nothingness</i> (pdf file available on the course website)	Lecture on Phenomenology (Husserl/Heidegger) available Apr. 10 First Sartre Lectures available Apr. 13
10		
April 17 – 23	Read Jean-Paul Sartre's <i>Existentialism</i> (pp. 9-51 of the Sartre textbook) Sartre Response Due Apr. 17	Sartre Response Due Apr. 17 Second Sartre Lecture available Apr. 18
11		
Apr. 24 – 30	Read Simone de Beauvoir's <i>The Ethics of Ambiguity</i> (pdf files available on the course website) de Beauvoir Response due Apr. 29	de Beauvoir Response due Apr. 29 De Beauvoir Lectures available Apr. 30
12		
May 1 – 7	Read Mahatma Gandhi <i>Selected Political Writings</i> (pdf file available on the course website) Read Martin Luther King and Malcolm X (pdf file available on the course website) Nonviolence response due by May 6	Nonviolence response due by May 6 Lectures over non-violence available on May 7
13		

Week Number	Activities and Assignment	Objectives and Details
May 8 – 14	Term Paper Due May 11 FINAL EXAM due on May 12	Term Paper Due May 11 Final Exam must be completed on May 12 Must choose TWO essay prompts on the final exam (not just one, as on previous exams) and write TWO essays.

Grading Components and Weights:

The semester grade will be calculated by the following formula:

- Exam One – 20%
- Exam Two – 20%
- Final Exam – 20%
- Term Paper – 20%
- Writing Assignments – 20%

The following are brief descriptions of the required coursework (more information is available on the course website):

Writing Assignments: Occasionally, you will be required to turn in a 1-2 page summary for assigned readings. Due dates for these assignments are written on the course schedule above. The student will either receive 4 points, 3 points, or a 0 (no points) for these assignments. There will be eight of these, ***BUT the student is only required to complete five*** (for a total of 20 points towards the final average). **NOTE:** This means that five responses at four points each makes twenty points for your total score. You will not receive extra credit for doing extra assignments beyond the required five. These assignments help fulfill SLOs 2, 4, and 5.

Exams: There will be two exams during the semester and a final exam. These will consist of 1-2 essay questions that will require you to integrate, explain, reflect upon, and critique the material covered in class. Specific content of each exam will be made available in the form of an online review sheet. This assignment helps fulfill SLOs 1,2, and 3.

Term Paper: A term paper of three pages in length (12-pt. font, double spaced) will be due on **May 11**. This will be a thesis defense paper drawing from at least one of the assigned readings. Besides this, the topic or issue covered in the paper is entirely up to the student, but the instructor will offer some suggestions. This is not a book report! Although you will be required to demonstrate that you understand the material that you are covering, the main goal is to use some critical thinking and defend a philosophical position. A handout will be made available discussing writing tips for a good philosophy paper. Points will be deducted for grammatical and formatting errors. Students who have scored low on (or missed) an Exam will have the option of using this assignment as a replacement for the Exam (this means that the term paper will represent 40% of their final grade). The student must have a satisfactory attendance record (see above), write four pages (instead of three), and must use at least one additional outside source (any appropriate material not already assigned and/or covered in class). This assignment helps fulfill SLOs 2, 4, and 5.

Grading Policy:

A = 90% to 100%

B = 80% to 89.9%

C = 70% to 79.9%

D = 60% to 69.9%

F = 0% to 59.9%

FX (Failure due to non-attendance)

IP (In Progress)

W (Withdrawn)

I (Incomplete)

AUD (Audit)

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student must re-enroll to receive credit. COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses. FINAL GRADE OF FX: Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdrawal deadline may either be dropped by their professor for excessive absences or be assigned the final grade of "FX" at the end of the semester. Students who stop attending classes will receive a grade of "FX", compared to an earned grade of "F" which is due to poor performance. Logging into a DE course without active participation is seen as non-attending. Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class.

Students who receive financial aid but fail to attend class will be reported to the Department of Education and may have to pay back their aid. A grade of "FX" is treated exactly the same as a grade of "F" in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress. To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades "IP," "COM" and "I" do not affect GPA.

Late policy:

No late work will be accepted. The Term Paper assignment is the only exception to this rule (see above for the late policy on this assignment).

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at <http://hccs.askonline.net/> Please use it if you need it !!

Academic Honesty:

The instructor has a NO TOLERANCE policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. Not only will you receive a 'F' for the course if caught cheating or plagiarizing, but the Dean will also be notified of your actions. Don't cheat! It's not worth it.

Make-up Policy:

There will be no make-ups on exams except in cases of legitimate, documented emergency (note: Having a hangover or being in jail for DWI/DUI will not be considered a legitimate emergency). This policy applies to all exams (or possible quizzes). Make-ups *WILL* be accepted for missed reading responses, but it is up to the student to select and respond to a different reading (in essence come up with their own assignment). This make-up response must be

submitted to the instructor *BEFORE* the audio lecture for the reading selected is made available on the course website.

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. Your instructor will withdraw a student if and only if provided a written request from that student. 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) The Texas Legislature passed a law limiting new students (those starting college in Fall 2007) to no more than six total course withdrawals 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", which for Spring 2017 on Tuesday, April 11 at 5:00 PM. 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.

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 or the ADA counselor at your college campus. You can find a list of counselors [here](#).

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.