



# Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 1301 Introduction to Philosophy  
CRN: 20713

Fall 2018, Regular 16 Week Semester Web-  
Enhanced (3 Credit Hours)

West Houston Institute Room 202

T TH 9:30 am - 10:50 am

Instructor: J. Christopher Jenson, Ph.D.

Learning Web Page: <https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/jason.jenson>

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Office hours: by appointment  
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## Course Description:

This course 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.

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.

PREREQUISITE(S):

- ENGL 1301 or higher

## 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

## Required Reading:

This is a zero cost course. All reading assignments will be available in the form of pdf documents available for download or links to various websites. **Click the Course Schedule Link on the Canvas course page to find links to pdf file and websites for assigned 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. The reading material will also provide background information, and aid in the quality of informed discussions. Quizzes on reading will be counted towards your assignments grade.

## Assessments and Grading:

There are three types of assignment.

Attendance	25% of total course grade
Response Assignments & Reading Quizzes (Canvas)	45% of total course grade
Essays	30% of total course grade

## Grading Policy

The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100%	4 GPA points per semester hour
B = 80% to 89.9%	3 GPA points per semester hour
C = 70% to 79.9%	2 GPA points per semester hour
D = 60% to 69.9%	1 GPA point per semester hour
F = 0% to 59.9%	0 GPA points per semester hour
FX (Failure due to non-attendance)	0 points per semester hour
IP (In Progress)	0 points per semester hour
W (Withdrawn)	0 points per semester hour
I (Incomplete)	0 points per semester hour
AUD (Audit)	0 points per semester hour

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.

NOTE: Philosophy Tutoring is available at <https://hccs.upswing.io> **Please use it if you need it.**

## **Attendance:**

Philosophy cannot be done by simply memorizing facts. The history of philosophy can be thought of as one long conversation. In order to do philosophy, one must participate in this conversation by discussing philosophical issues in class. ***It is vital that you attend class.*** The lectures will go well beyond assigned reading. **You will get 2 excused absences no questions asked, no explanation necessary.**

Any additional absences will only be excused for emergency situations or official HCC events and I will require appropriate documentation. For example, a doctor's note excusing you on the day and time of class (NOTE: HIPAA guidelines protect the privacy of you and other's medical information. I am not asking for specifics of illness or other personal information. I am asking that your medical professional provide a note saying you could not attend class as a matter of a Doctor's directive); a letter from a court magistrate requiring your appearance on the day and time of class; a letter from a coach/director of an official HCC event explaining your absence on the day and time of class; a towing receipt with location and time for your broken down car; a letter/flyer from a funeral home; and so on. Oversleeping, missing the bus/ride, needed at home, personal appointments, vacations, etc., do not count as emergencies.

Your attendance percentage will be calculated using the following formula: (number of class sessions attended)/(total number of class sessions - excused absences). That percentage will be weighted as **25% of your overall course grade.** Your two free excused absences will be applied to your score at the end of the semester.

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. 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 Calendar:**

Find last day for refund and withdrawal dates here. <http://www.hccs.edu/student-experience/events-calendar/academic-calendar/>

## **Response Assignments & Reading Quizzes:**

Each week you will usually complete one or two response assignments in ASSIGNMENTS on CANVAS. The responses will ask you to construct an argument, write a few paragraphs on an assigned activity, such as watching a YouTube, listening to a podcast, doing logic puzzles, or taking interactive quizzes. All instructions are found in ASSIGNMENTS on Canvas.

Reading quizzes are composed of multiple choice and true/false questions about the week's assigned readings. These are designed to encourage you to read the assigned reading and highlight important people, concepts, and definitions. These will be taken online on Canvas.

Unless stated otherwise, **all Response Assignments ARE DUE SATURDAY by 11:59 pm.** (NOTE: Canvas time stamps your submissions. Do not wait until the last minute. Give yourself plenty of time to make sure your assignment is submitted properly so that the time stamp shows that you have completed the assignment on time.) Any assignment submitted after this time will be considered late. **Reading Quizzes will generally be due 1 minute prior to the class session for which the reading was assigned.** Reading quizzes are weighted much less heavily than response assignments. See a detailed reading schedule on Canvas. Together these assignments and quizzes will be weighted at **45% of your overall course grade.**

## **Argument Essays:**

An argument essay involves summarizing an argument from a philosopher or other thinker and developing your own arguments in response. You will write 2 argument essays. Each essay will be approximately 1000 words long (3 typed double-spaced pages). The second argument essay will count as your final exam for the course. Topics, instructions, tips, and due dates will be posted on Canvas. Argument Essays will be weighted at **30% of your overall course grade.** **The second argument will be due Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 11:59 pm and will not be accepted late.**

## **Late Work:**

Learning a high degree of professionalism ought to be one of your goals during your college career. Getting your work done on time is and should be a priority. I understand that things happen, though. **Late response assignments or essays must be submitted no later than two weeks after the original deadline, and will be marked down 15%.** Reading quizzes will only be accepted late in the case of excused absences. **No late work will be accepted after the last day of instruction which is Friday, December 7, 2018.**

## **Academic Dishonesty**

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 will not have an opportunity to resubmit their work and they will 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.

## Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online Canvas*. The *Eagle Online Canvas* login page is:

<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/>

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/). (Please check your Operating System to see if you have Firefox in your applications.)

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

## Course Schedule:

A detailed schedule of reading assignments, response assignments, quizzes and essays will be provided on Canvas under the "Course Schedule" Link. The following is a rough outline of topics covered.

Week 1	Syllabus and What is Philosophy?
Weeks 2-4	Logic & Critical Reasoning
Weeks 4-5	Moral & Epistemic Relativism

Weeks 5-7	Theories of Knowledge
	Midterm Essay Due
Weeks 7-9	Personal Identity and the Self
Weeks 9-11	The Mind/Body Problem
Weeks 12-14	Free Will
Week 14-15	The Metaphysics of Time
	Final Essay Due Dec. 9

### **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.

### **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.

For information on student services including counseling, academic advising, financial help, child care, library services, etc. I encourage you to go to the student handbook website <http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-handbook/>

### **Students with Disabilities:**

The HCC Disabilities website is located at the following url: [www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/](http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/). 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.

### **Title IX Policy:**

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: The Office of Institutional Equity, <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/institutionalequity/title-ix-know-your-rights/title-ix-complaint-form/>

### **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/>.

## **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.