



**Division of Philosophy, Humanities and Library Sciences
Philosophy Department**

<https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/liberal-arts-humanities--education/philosophy/>

Phil 1301: Introduction to Philosophy | Lecture | # 12859

Spring 2020 | 16 Weeks (Jan. 21 – May 10)

Lecture | Alief Hayes Campus RM A409 | MoWe 11:00AM-12:20 PM

3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Jason C Jenson, PhD

HCC Email: jason.jenson@hccs.edu

Profile: <https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/jason.jenson>

Office Phone: 713-718-6771

Office: Alief Hayes Rd Campus, room C408

Office Hours: By appointment

Please feel free to contact me concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. Your performance in my class is very important to me. I am available to hear your concerns and chat about course topics.

Instructor's Preferred Method of Contact

Please contact me with questions or concerns via the Canvas Inbox email or at jason.jenson@hccs.edu. I will respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday; I will reply to weekend messages on Monday mornings.

About This Course

In this course we will be asking questions about our most basic assumptions about the world. These include questions like: Do we have free will? Do you have a nonphysical soul that will persist after your death? Could a digital computer have consciousness? What is the difference between knowledge and opinion? Are there objective truths about right and wrong? Philosophers aim to state their views about these questions as clearly and precisely as possible and to support them with well-reasoned arguments. We will investigate what great historical and contemporary philosophers have said about these questions and learn how to critically evaluate their claims.

My Personal Welcome

Greetings! I am delighted that you have chosen this course and I am excited to introduce you to some of the most thought-provoking topics that philosophers have grappled with. I am looking forward to getting to know you over the course of the semester. It is my goal that

you end this semester with a commitment to critical thinking and intellectual humility. I hope you will come away from this class courageous enough to face some life's biggest questions and curious to discover more.

Prerequisites and/or Co-Requisites

ENGL 1301

Canvas Learning Management System

This section of PHIL 1301 will use [Canvas](https://eagleonline.hccs.edu) (<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>) to supplement in-class assignments, quizzes, and activities. Please be sure you are able to access canvas and are familiar with it before the beginning of class. Please do not email for make-up due to vacations, home connectivity issues, home computer issues and so on. If you are having trouble with your computer, there are computers available at any public library and HCC campus.

HCCS Open Lab locations may be used to access the Internet and Canvas. **USE FIREFOX OR CHROME AS THE INTERNET BROWSER.**

Scoring Rubrics, Sample Assignments, etc.

Look in Canvas for the scoring rubrics for assignments, samples of class assignments, and other information to assist you in the course. <https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/login/ldap>

Instructional Materials

Textbook Information

The required text for this course will be:

Stich, Stephen and Tom Donaldson. *Philosophy: Asking Questions-Seeking Answers*, Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780199329960. It is available at the HCC Bookstore on campus and also for order online. <https://hccs.bncollge.com/shop/hccs-central/page/find-textbooks>. You will also find a copy of the textbook on reserve at the library.

Tutoring

HCC provides free, confidential, and convenient academic support, including writing critiques, to HCC students in an online environment and on campus. Tutoring is provided by HCC personnel in order to ensure that it is contextual and appropriate. Visit the [HCC Tutoring Services](#) website for services provided.

Libraries

The HCC Library System consists of 9 libraries and 6 Electronic Resource Centers (ERCs) that are inviting places to study and collaborate on projects. Librarians are available both at the libraries and online to show you how to locate and use the resources you need. The libraries maintain a large selection of electronic resources as well as collections of books, magazines, newspapers, and audiovisual materials. The portal to all libraries' resources and services is the HCCS library web page at <http://library.hccs.edu>.

Supplementary Instruction

Supplemental Instruction is an academic enrichment and support program that uses peer-assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success in historically difficult courses. Peer Support is provided by students who have already succeeded in completion of the specified course, and who earned a grade of A or B. Find details at <http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/supplemental-instruction/>.

Course Overview

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

Core Curriculum Objectives (CCOs)

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.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
2. Analyze and critique philosophical texts in ways that demonstrate an awareness of argument structure and the evaluation of philosophical claims.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments orally and in writing that are relevant to philosophical issues covered in course material.
4. Evaluate personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world in terms of the philosophical issues raised in course material.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)

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 Read canonical texts in the philosophical tradition.

1.2 Analyze, discuss, and **critique** philosophical texts in class, including through student presentations.

- 1.3 Analyze** and **critique** philosophical texts in written work, including papers and tests.
- 2.1 Learn** basic philosophical vocabulary, major arguments, and positions in central areas of philosophy.
- 2.2 Define** key concepts in your own words and provide definitions in regular quizzes.
- 2.3 Demonstrate understanding** of key arguments and claims made by philosophers studied in the course through short answer questions and papers.
- 3 Present** logically persuasive arguments in presentations, papers, and tests.
- 4.1 Engage** in critical thinking through classroom discussion and presentations.
- 4.2 Demonstrate** critical thinking skills in written work.
- 5.1 Consider** the impacts of philosophical ideas on personal and social responsibility.
- 5.2 Apply** philosophical concepts discussed in the course to personal and contemporary issues, demonstrating a concern for social and personal responsibility.

Student Success

Expect to spend at least twice as many hours per week outside of class as you do in class studying the course content. Additional time will be required for written assignments. The assignments provided will help you use your study hours wisely. Successful completion of this course requires a combination of the following:

- Reading the textbook
- Attending class in person and/or online
- Completing assignments
- Participating in class activities

There is no short cut for success in this course; it requires reading (and probably re-reading) and studying the material using the course objectives as a guide.

Instructor and Student Responsibilities

As your Instructor, it is my responsibility to:

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how student grades are to be derived
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through learner-centered instructional techniques
- Provide a description of any special projects or assignments
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness, and making up assignments
- Provide the course outline and class calendar that will include a description of any special projects or assignments
- Arrange to meet with individual students before and after class as required

As a student, it is your responsibility to:

- Attend class in person and/or online

- Participate actively by reviewing course material, interacting with classmates, and responding promptly in your communication with me
- Read and comprehend the textbook
- Complete the required assignments and exams
- Ask for help when there is a question or problem
- Keep copies of all paperwork, including this syllabus, handouts, and all assignments
- Be aware of and comply with academic honesty policies in the [HCCS Student Handbook](#)

Assignments, Exams, and Activities

Response Assignments and Reading Quizzes

Response assignments 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, taking interactive quizzes, or in-class activities. All instructions are found in ASSIGNMENTS on Canvas. (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.)

Reading quizzes are composed of multiple choice and true/false questions about the 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. **Reading Quizzes will generally be due 1 minute prior to the class session for which the reading was assigned.**

Response Assignments: 20 points each (there will be 6 to 8 Response assignments)

Reading Quizzes: 5 points each (there will be 10 to 15 reading quizzes).

Essays

Philosophical essays involve summarizing an argument from a philosopher or other thinker and developing your own arguments in response. You will write 2 essays for 100 points each. Each essay will be approximately 800 words long (3 typed double-spaced pages). Topics, instructions, tips, and due dates will be posted on Canvas. You have the opportunity to revise and resubmit your first essay to improve your score up to one letter grade higher. No revisions will be accepted for the 2nd essay.

In-Class Activities

In addition to the essays and quizzes, there will be a variety of in class activities. These may be in the form of group work, class debates, small group discussions in addition to other activities to be determined by Professor Jenson.

Grading Formula

Attendance	25% of total course grade
Quizzes, Response assignments, and Essays	75% of total course grade

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.

No Student may withdraw from a course following the last date to withdraw (see academic calendar in the student handbook). Incompletes are only granted with 80% completion of the course, in cases of emergency. Incompletes must be made up by the end of the following semester, after which they will automatically change to a grade of "F."

Link to student handbook. <https://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook>

Course Calendar

Note: This course calendar is approximate only and is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes made will be announced in class and on Eagle Online Canvas in advance.

Week 1 – Welcome!

Weeks 2-4 – Logic and Critical Thinking

Weeks 4-6 – Personal Identity: Descartes, Locke, Butler, Reid, Parfit, & others

Weeks 6-9 – Mind & Body, Death & Immortality: Descartes, Ryle, Place, Putnam, Churchland, Kagan & others

Week 10-12 – Epistemology: Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Lynch & others

Week 14 – Free Will: d’Holbach, Hume, Frankfurt, James, & others

Week 15 – Objectivity in Ethics: Zagzebski, Benedict, Ayer, & others

Syllabus Modifications

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any time during the semester and will promptly notify students in writing, typically by e-mail, of any such changes.

Instructor’s Practices and Procedures

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. Late response assignments must be submitted no later than two weeks after the original due date and will be marked down 15%. The first essay may be turned in up to two weeks after the original deadline, but late essays forfeit the right to revise and resubmit 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 May 10, 2019.**

Academic Integrity

PLAGIARISM – (Reference Student Code of Conduct) “Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own work offered for credit. I take this very seriously. The first time you turn in work that is guilty of plagiarism your assignment will be given the score of zero and you will not be allowed to re-do the assignment. The second time you turn in work that is guilty of plagiarism you will be given a zero for the course. If you receive a zero for the course due to plagiarism, you will be reported to the Dean.

If you are unclear what constitutes as plagiarism, please visit our library website at the following address:

http://library.hccs.edu/research_writing/plagiarism

Here’s the link to the HCC information about academic integrity (Scholastic Dishonesty and Violation of Academic Scholastic Dishonesty and Grievance):

<http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>

Attendance Procedures

Attendance is required and does count towards your final course grade. I will take attendance within five (5) minutes of class start time. After this, your attendance will be marked “late”. Your attendance record will show in your gradebook section of canvas, so you are able to keep track. (That said, I do understand that sometimes circumstances conspire to make us late. Please come to class anyway, and, should you need to arrange to arrive late or leave early, I will gladly accommodate.) 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.

Student Conduct

An important aspect of philosophy discussion. Discussion works best when students come to class having read the assigned material and when many students participate.

To allow for the uninterrupted flow of ideas within our classroom, I will ask that students silence all portable devices and refrain from texting and other such interactions. Laptops are allowed for the taking of notes only.

We will likely discuss many controversial or sensitive subjects. I ask that all students treat one another, and myself, with respect, even and especially during disagreement. This respect also includes being present in class on time, remaining for the entire class, and spending class time focused on the material at hand.

PHILOSOPHY Program Information

Please refer to our Philosophy program page for information on student groups and organizations.

<https://learning.hccs.edu/programs/philosophy>

You can also follow our philosophy club Facebook site:

<https://www.facebook.com/HCC-Philosophy-Club-88672027009/>

HCC Policies

Here's the link to the HCC Student Handbook <http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/> In it you will find information about the following:

- Academic Information
- Academic Support
- Attendance, Repeating Courses, and Withdrawal
- Career Planning and Job Search
- Childcare
- disAbility Support Services
- Electronic Devices
- Equal Educational Opportunity
- Financial Aid TV (FATV)
- General Student Complaints
- Grade of FX
- Incomplete Grades
- International Student Services
- Health Awareness
- Libraries/Bookstore
- Police Services & Campus Safety
- Student Life at HCC
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Student Services
- Testing
- Transfer Planning
- Veteran Services

EGLS₃

The EGLS₃ (Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System) will be available for most courses near the end of the term until finals start. This brief survey will give invaluable information to your faculty about their teaching. Results are anonymous and will be available to faculty and division chairs after the end of the term. EGLS₃ surveys are only available for the Fall and Spring semesters. EGLS₃ surveys are not offered during the Summer semester due to logistical constraints.

<http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/egls3-evaluate-your-professors/>

Campus Carry Link

Here's the link to the HCC information about Campus Carry:

<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/>

HCC Email Policy

When communicating via email, HCC requires students to communicate only through the HCC email system to protect your privacy. If you have not activated your HCC student email account, you can go [to HCC Eagle ID](#) and activate it now. You may also use Canvas Inbox to communicate.

Housing and Food Assistance for Students

Any student who faces challenges securing their foods or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students at their college for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so.

This will enable HCC to provide any resources that HCC may possess.

Office of Institutional Equity

Use the link below to access the HCC Office of Institutional Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement (<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/>)

disAbility Services

HCC strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including long and short term conditions, mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please meet with a campus Abilities Counselor as soon as possible in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Ability Services. It is the policy and practice of HCC to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. For more information, please go to <http://www.hccs.edu/support-services/disability-services/>

Title IX

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:

David Cross
Director EEO/Compliance
Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity
3100 Main
(713) 718-8271
Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu
<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/title-ix-know-your-rights/>

Office of the Dean of Students

Contact the office of the Dean of Students to seek assistance in determining the correct complaint procedure to follow or to identify the appropriate academic dean or supervisor for informal resolution of complaints.

<https://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-complaints/speak-with-the-dean-of-students/>

Department Chair Contact Information

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