



Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301-13875

Fall 2016 (3 Credit Hours)

HCC Online

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD

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Course Description:

Introduction to the study of ideas and their logical structure, including arguments and investigations about abstract and real phenomena. Includes introduction to the history, theories, and methods of reasoning (Texas ACGM). A general introduction to critical and reflective thinking that emphasizes the philosophy of knowledge across the curriculum. Prepares students for postgraduate testing, such as the *Graduate Record Examination* analytical writing section or the *Law School Admissions Test*.

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:

The course takes several central philosophical problems as its point of departure for engaging in critical thought, analysis, understanding, and application of themes and concepts to understanding the world around us. Students will acquire a familiarity with logical terminology and reasoning and they will apply this to classic and contemporary texts in philosophy. While many of the themes of the course are very general and may appear abstract the overall focus will be on understanding the nature reality, knowledge, and right action.

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 Read** canonical texts in the philosophical tradition.
- 1.2 Analyze, discuss, and critique** philosophical texts through papers and discussion forums.
- 1.3 Analyze and critique** philosophical texts in papers and tests.
- 2.1 Learn** basic philosophical vocabulary, major arguments, and positions in central areas of philosophy.
- 2.2 Recognize** key concepts in regular quizzes.
- 2.3 Demonstrate understanding** of key arguments and claims made by philosophers studied in the course through papers and assignments.
- 3 Present** logically persuasive arguments in papers and tests.
- 4.1 Engage** in critical thinking through discussion forums, papers, and tests.
- 4.2 Demonstrate** critical thinking skills in all written work.
- 5.1 Consider** the impacts of philosophical ideas on personal and social responsibility in papers and discussion forums.
- 5.2 Apply** philosophical concepts discussed in the course to personal and contemporary issues, demonstrating a concern for social and personal responsibility in written work.

Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *Distance Education* course that uses *Eagle Online 2*. The *Eagle Online* login page is:

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

Your Eagle Online username is the same as your HCC Eagle ID (or User ID) which is used for Online Registration (for example: W0034567). 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 [here](#).

Required Texts:

All Readings are available on the course web site in pdf form.

Course Calendar:

*Unless otherwise noted all due times on **bold** dates are for midnight*

Module 1 The Philosopher's Toolkit

- Reading: Professor's Notes: Philosophical Arguments
Nils Rauhut, "Philosophical Toolkit" from *Ultimate Questions: Thinking about Philosophy* (Pearson)
Concepcion, "How to Read Philosophy"
- Quizzes: Syllabus Quiz – **September 25**
Quiz 1 – **October 2**
- Journal: See "Reading Journal" description page in Eagle Online
- Discussion: *See instructions online*

Module 2 The Existence of God

- Readings: Professor's Notes: The Existence of God
Chad Meister, "Philosophy of Religion: Sections 4 and 5," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; Peter Markie, "Evil and Omnipotence"; Mary Daly, "After the Death of God the Father"; William James, "The Will to Believe"
- Quiz: Quiz 2 – **October 16**
- Journal and Discussion TBD
- Paper: Paper 1 (3 pages), topic TBD – **October 21**

Module 3 Unit: Epistemology

- Readings: Professor's Notes: Epistemology

Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"; Descartes, *Meditations*, Meditations 1 and 2; Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, Chapters 1, 6 and 7

Quiz: Quiz 3 – **October 30**

Journal and Discussion TBD

Module 4 The Philosophy of Mind

Readings: Professor's Notes: The Mind-Body Problem

David Chalmers, "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience"; David Lewis, "An Argument for Identity Theory"

Quiz: Paper 4 – **November 13**

Paper: 2nd Paper (5 pages), topic TBD – **November 18**

Journal and Discussion TBD

Module 5 Morality

Readings: Professor's Notes: Moral Theories

Plato, "Euthyphro" (excerpts); Henry Sidgwick, "Egoism and Self-Love"; David Hume, "Morality is Based on Sentiment"; John Stuart Mill, "On Utilitarianism" (excerpts); Immanuel Kant, "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals" (excerpts)

Quiz: Quiz 5 – **December 2**

Journal and Discussion TBD

Multiple Choice Final Exam – **December 9**

Essay Final Exam – **December 8**

Grading Components and Weights:

Quizzes (x 5), 10 points each – Each section unit will require a quiz on the material covered in that section. You are responsible for having completed the assigned readings and understanding the key themes and concepts. You will be allowed 3 attempts per quiz.
Preparing for SLOs 1 and 2.

Multiple Choice Final Exam, 50 points – An online final quiz will be generated using the questions from each of the unit quizzes. This final will consist of 50 questions and you will only be allowed 1 attempt. **Assessing SLOs 1 and 2**

Essay Final Exam, 50 points – The final exam will consist of glossary terms, short answer questions, and two essay questions. You will define philosophical terms and concepts; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; apply concepts to personal experience and contemporary issues; evaluate arguments and positions in ethics; compare, contrast, and critique ethical theories and arguments; and justify a position on ethical issues. **Assessing SLOs 3, 4, and 5**

Papers: Paper 1 (50 points), Paper 2 (100 points) each – Your paper will be based on specific questions related to the readings. These are not research papers, but they will ask you to analyze, critique, and evaluate content from the readings. Papers must be between 300 and 500 words (2-3 pages). They should have a beginning, middle, and end. And they ought to present a clear point of view. Other requirements will be made clear in the individual assignment. **SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5**

Discussion Forums (x 5), 20 points each – Each unit will have its own discussion forum you will be graded on your responses to questions and engagement with classmates. Discussions will be open for two weeks. You will be required to post one original post and reply to your classmates' posts. You will also be responsible for responding to questions to your own post. Please pay attention to closing dates on the discussion forums. **Preparing for SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

Reading Journal, 200 points – You will be required to maintain a reading journal. You should have a separate heading for each of the readings where you identify the key claims and outline the arguments made (you do not have to retain notes for the "Professor's Notes" readings). Some entries in the journal will require you to read back through your notes and respond to reflective questions on the nature of your reading and your progress in reading philosophy.

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 550. The term grade legend follows:

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A = 90% to 100% (495 to 550 point) | 4 points per semester hour |
| B = 80% to 89.9% (440 to 494 points) | 3 points per semester hour |
| C = 70% to 79.9% (385 to 439 points) | 2 points per semester hour |
| D = 60% to 69.9% (330 to 384 points) | 1 point per semester hour |
| F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 329 points) | 0 points per semester hour |
| FX (Failure due to non-attendance) | 0 points per semester hour |

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|------------------|----------------------------|
| 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.

Late policy:

Late work will be accepted with penalty, unless I have received a valid excuse or the student has arranged for late submission *prior to the deadline*. I will deduct a minimum of 10% of the grade from the first day the assignment is late and an additional 10% of the grade for every week it is late after that.

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available. Please see the website:

<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/tutoring/> **Please use it if you need it !!**

Academic Honesty:

The pressure to earn high grades and belief that *a good end can justify any means whatsoever* leads many students to try cutting corners by resorting to less than honest methods. Do yourself a favor by avoiding that trap. The HCC *Student Handbook* lists cheating, plagiarism, and collusion as scholastic dishonesty. It defines *plagiarism* as "the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit." It defines *collusion* as "the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work for credit." Work submitted for this course that is determined to be the result of either cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will earn a "0" for that assignment; two instances of cheating,

plagiarism, or collusion will result in an automatic "F." Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. *See HCC Student Handbook.*

Make-up Policy:

Students are responsible for submitting work on time. If a student is unable to submit work on time, it is the student's responsibility to contact and consult with the instructor for make-up assignments. Students may be able to obtain an extension on an assignment if they consult the professor first. However, such extensions must be agreed upon in writing prior to the due date of the assignment. Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.

Attendance and Withdrawal Policy:

Class attendance will be taken by **12:00 PM on Thursday, September 29**. *In order to be counted present in this course, you need to complete the syllabus quiz and respond to the introductions forum.*

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 is **Monday, November 7** for Second Start, Fall 2016. 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:

To visit the ADA Web site, log on to www.hccs.edu, click Future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165 or the Disability Counselor at Northwest College, Mahnaz Kolaini at 713.718.5422.