

Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301-40308 Spring 2015 (3 Credit Hours) HCC – Central College Education Development Center, A218 M, W 8:30 – 10:00 AM Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD Spring Branch Campus, Room 900-D nathan.smith2@hccs.edu 713-718-7258 Office hours: by appointment only

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*.

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:

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 fundamental and may appear abstract the overall focus will be on understanding for life 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 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.

Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online 2*. The *Eagle Online* login page is:

https://eo2.hccs.edu/login/index.php

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 <u>here</u>.

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download it free, <u>here</u>. (Please check your Operating System to see if you have Firefox in your applications.)

Required Texts:

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

Course Calendar:

For a continuously updated calendar with specific instructions and due dates for assignments, please see the Eagle Online course shell for this course.

January 21	Syllabus and Class Introductions
	Introduction to Philosophy
January 26	Aristotle, Metaphysics I: 1-2
	Introduction to Logic
January 28	Validity, soundness, and deductive arguments
	*"What is philosophy?" assignment due
February 2	Fallacies, inductive arguments, and science
	Epistemology
February 4	Plato, "Allegory of the Cave" and Philosophy of Knowledge (book of notes)
	*Logic Exercises due
February 9	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, Ch. 1 (Student Presentation)
February 11	Russell, Problems of Philosophy, Ch. 6 (Student Presentation)
February 16	NO CLASS, President's Day
February 23	Review and Quiz 1
	Philosophy of Religion

- February 25 Anselm, "The Ontological Argument", Aquinas, "Five Ways," and *Existence of God* (book of notes)
- March 2 Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" (Student Presentation)
- March 4 Daly, "After the Death of God the Father" and Pascal, "The Wager (Student **Presentation**)
- March 9 Review and Quiz 2

*Paper 1 due

Philosophy of the Mind

March 11 Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness" and *Philosophy of Mind* (book of notes)

March 15-22 SPRING BREAK

- March 23 J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes"
- March 25 Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to Be a Bat?" (Student Presentation)
- March 30 Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (Student Presentation)
- April 1 Review and Quiz 3

Free Will

- April 6 Peter Van Inwagen, "The incompatibility of Freedom and Determinism," and *Free Will* (book of notes)
- April 8 A.J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"

*Paper 2 due

- April 13 Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (Student Presentation)
- April 15 Daniel Dennett, "My Brain Made Me Do It" (Student Presentation)
- April 20 Review and Quiz 4

Morality

- April 22 Plato, *The Euthyphro* and *Morality* (book of notes)
- April 27 Hume, "Morality is Based on Sentiment" and Sidgwick, "Egoism and Self-Love"
- April 29 Mill, On Utilitarianism (excerpts) (Student Presentation)

May 4 Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (excerpts) **(Student Presentation)**

- May 6 Review and Quiz 5
- May 13 Final Exam

Grading Components and Weights:

Quizzes x 5 (25 points each): At the end of the 5 major units from the course, there will be an in-class quiz covering vocabulary and short-answer questions on that portion of the course.

Short Assignments x 2 (25 points each): Early in the course, there will be two short assignments that must be completed at home and handed in during class. The first is a reflection on the question, "what is philosophy?", the second is a logic assignment, identifying premises and conclusions of arguments.

Papers x 2 (100 points each): There will be two papers of 2-3 pages in length, focusing on one of the topics from the course. You should demonstrate an understanding of the core concepts, positions, arguments, and criticisms; you will engage with specific passages from the reading; you will provide examples that apply these concepts to your life or to contemporary issues; and you will distinguish views and provide original commentary on the positions presented.

Final Exam (100 points): The final exam will consist of 4 short answer questions and 2 essays. It will be written in class during the day of the scheduled final exam. You will be provided possible questions in a review at the beginning of the course, but the final exam must demonstrate critical thought and a synthesis of the material covered in the course.

Attendance (25 points): Attendance will be taken daily. Each absence will result in a loss of 2 points.

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 500. The term grade legend follows:

2 points per semester hour

1 point per semester hour

- A = 90% to 100% (450 to 500 point) 4 points per semester hour
- B = 80% to 89.9% (400 to 449 points) 3 points per semester hour
- C = 70% to 79.9% (350 to 399 points)
- D = 60% to 69.9% (300 to 349 points)
- F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 299 points) 0 points per semester hour

FX (Failure due to non-attendance)0 points per seme	ester hour
IP (In Progress) 0 points per seme	ester hour
W (Withdrawn) 0 points per seme	ester hour
I (Incomplete) 0 points per seme	ester hour
AUD (Audit) 0 points per seme	ester 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.

All work for the course must be received by the last day of class, May 6. Any work submitted after that point cannot count toward your final grade without a legitimate legal or medical excuse. An incomplete will be given only in cases where a student has encountered a serious legal or medical issue that prevents them from complying with the above requirements.

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at <u>http://hccs.askonline.net/</u> 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 materials covered in-class and online during their absences, and it is the student's responsibility to contact and consult with the instructor for make-up assignments. In addition, any student who is absent on posted exam dates should be prepared to schedule the make-up of missed examinations on the first day of returning to class. Make-up examinations are taken by appointment at the campus Testing Center. This scheduling cannot occur during class time. Any other assignments not turned in on time (due to absences) must also be either turned in, or scheduled for late submission on the first day of returning to class. Finally, there will be no extension of due dates and/or make-ups for Online Requirements. Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.

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 2015 is on March 24 at 4:30 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:

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 Central College.

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.