



# Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301-44682

Fall 2014 (3 Credit Hours), Second Start

HCC – Central College

8:00 – 10:00 AM, M, W

Education Development Center, A218

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD

Spring Branch Campus, Room 900-D

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713-718-7258

Office hours: by appointment

## 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*.

Fulfills – unless otherwise noted – the HCC CORE Humanities Area credit (old system) or HCC Core Component Area – Philosophy, Language, and Culture or the Component Area Option.

May fulfill Ethics requirement for various academic and professional four-year college majors and Philosophy AA-degree Plan. **Students who are in doubt about their enrollment in this course should immediately see an HCC academic counselor who can review his or her AA-degree plan.**

## Course Goals:

While incorporating the general aims and purposes of Introduction to Philosophy, this course will provide a general introduction to logic, correct reasoning, and critical thinking, with a focus on the philosophy of religion, philosophy of mind, the metaphysical problem of free will, and the foundations of morality. The context of this inquiry is derived from the perspective of logic's practical applications in everyday language and problem solving.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. **Recall and Identify** the major thinkers, schools of knowledge, core philosophical questions, terms and concepts found in the history of ideas cross-culturally construed, from ancient times to the contemporary world.
2. **Interpret and Explain** core questions of knowing and concepts of human understanding in terms that illustrate a comprehensive grasp of each.
3. **Apply** core questions of knowing and concepts of human understanding to contemporary issues and personal experience.
4. **Compare and Contrast** related core questions of knowing and concepts of human understanding, and the correlative thinkers and schools with which they are commonly associated.
5. **Justify** a sound philosophical position on a topic, or topics of contemporary interest in the philosophy of knowledge that **Integrates** and **Logically Demonstrates** a **Synthesis** in thought.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- 1.1 **Acquire** a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools of knowledge they represent, geographic location, and historical periods.
- 1.2 **Learn** historically significant questions of knowing, definitions of special terms, the rules of logic, fallacies, correct reasoning, and critical thinking.
- 2.1 **Cultivate** comprehension of the rules of definition, deductive and inductive inferences, language analysis, and scientific inquiry.
- 2.2 **Distinguish** various approaches to interpretation, including conceptual analysis, testing for validity, and determining if sound or not sound.
- 3.1 **Articulate** the relevance of philosophical questioning and critical thinking to everyday life.
- 3.2 **Consider** how philosophy may or may not apply to differing ways of human understanding and cultural influences.
- 4.1 **Inventory, Summarize, and Assess** correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the philosophy of knowledge.
- 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.
- 5.3 **Critique** chosen positions and adequately **Defend** against possible objections, both theoretical and applied.

## **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 [here](#).

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online 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.)

## **Required Texts:**

All Readings are available on the Learning Web in pdf form.

## **Course Calendar:**

### ***Introduction to Philosophy***

September 22: Syllabus, Class Introductions

September 24: Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.1-2

September 29: Plato, *Apology of Socrates*

### ***Introduction to Logic***

October 1: Philosophical Arguments

### **What is Philosophy? Assignment due**

October 6: Philosophical Arguments

### **Divide into groups**

### ***Epistemology***

October 8: Russell, "Problems of Philosophy," Ch. 1

### **Logical Exercises Assignment due**

- October 13: Russell, "Problems of Philosophy," Ch. 6  
October 15: Russell, "Problems of Philosophy," Ch. 7  
October 20: Group project

### ***Philosophy of Religion***

#### **Readings:**

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, "5 ways"

Anselm of Canterbury, *Prosologion*

Pascal's Wager

J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"

Mary Daly, "After the Death of God the Father"

- October 22: Existence of God – Group 1  
October 27: Existence of God – Group 1  
October 29: Existence of God – Group 1

### ***Philosophy of Mind***

#### **Readings:**

J. J. C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes"

David Chalmers, "Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness"

David Lewis, "An Argument for Identity Theory"

Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"

John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

- November 3: Mind – Group 2  
November 5: Mind – Group 2  
November 10: Mind – Group 2

### **Paper 1 Due**

#### ***Free Will***

#### **Readings:**

A. J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity"

Peter Van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Freedom and Determinism"

Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"

Daniel Dennett, "My Brain Made Me Do It"

November 12: Free Will – Group 3

November 17: Free Will – Group 3

November 19: Free Will – Group 3

### ***Morality***

#### **Unit 4 Readings:**

Henry Sidgwick, "Egoism and Self-Love"

David Hume, "Morality is Based on Sentiment"

Euthyphro's Dilemma

Mill, *On Utilitarianism* (excerpts)

Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (excerpts)

November 24: Morality – Group 4

#### **Paper 2 Due**

November 26: Morality – Group 4

December 1: Morality – Group 4

December 3: Review for Final Exam

Week of December 8: **Final Exam**

### **Grading Components and Weights:**

**Assignments (x2), 50 points each** – The first assignment will be a written response to the questions, "What is Philosophy?" The second assignment will require you to write arguments in canonical form and identify them as strong, valid, weak, or invalid. This will be provided for you in a worksheet in class.

**Team Project 200 points** – Your team is responsible for presenting the material for the section that you have chosen to work on.

1. You will lead the classroom discussion of these topics, including a visual presentation of the material, questions posed for discussion in the classroom, and summary of the key points in the readings.
2. On the last day of your presentation, you will provide your classmates with a typed **Study Guide** for the final exam. This study guide will include: a glossary of key terms, a summary of the articles read, and answers to study questions.
3. At the end of the group project, you will submit a peer evaluation of your group members based on their contributions to the presentations and study guide. **Preparing for SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

**Written Final Exam, 100 points** – The final exam will consist of 4 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 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5**

**Paper 1, 100 points** – This paper will be 2-3 pages in length and will provide a detailed interpretation and discussion of the topic you have selected to work on with your team. 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. **Preparing for SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 5**

**Paper 2, 100 points** – This paper assignment is identical to Paper 1, but will focus on any other topic besides the one that you worked on with your group. **Assessing SLOs 2, 3, and 4**

### **Grading Policy:**

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 600. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (540 to 600 point)	4 points per semester hour
B = 80% to 89.9% (480 to 539 points)	3 points per semester hour
C = 70% to 79.9% (420 to 479 points)	2 points per semester hour
D = 60% to 69.9% (360 to 419 points)	1 point per semester hour
F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 359 points)	0 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.

### **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 at <http://hccs.askonline.net/> 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 Fall 2014 is on October 20 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](http://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.