

Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301-62636

Fall 2013 (3 Credit Hours)

HCC – Northwest College

Spring Branch Campus, Room 319

T, Th 8:00 – 9:30 AM

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD Spring Branch Campus, Room 900-D

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713-718-7258

Office hours: Tuesday – Thursday, 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. 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 special section focuses on logic, emphasizing the methods of correct reasoning and critical thinking, definition, deductive and inductive inferences, fallacies, language analysis, scientific inquiry, and organizing both written and oral arguments. 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*. The *Eagle Online* logon page is:

https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php

Your Eagle Online ID is now the same as your HCC User ID which is used for Online Registration (for example: W0034567). If you don't know your HCC User ID, you can <u>retrieve</u> <u>it here</u>. Your default Eagle Online password at the beginning of the term is: "distance". This password is independent of your Online Registration password or Blackboard Vista password. You will be required to change your password when you first log in.

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download is free, <u>here</u>.

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.

- August 27 Syllabus, What is philosophy?
- August 29 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I: 1
- September 3 Plato's, Apology of Socrates
- September 5 Apology of Socrates
- September 10 Philosophical Arguments: validity and soundness
- September 12 Philosophical Arguments: deductive arguments and fallacies
- September 17 Philosophical Arguments: inductive arguments and other arguments

Skepticism

- September 19 Philosophy of Knowledge, Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave'
- September 24 Descartes' Meditation I

September 26 Russell, Problems of Philosophy, 1

- October 1 Hume, *Enquiry*, 4.1
- October 3 Russell, Problems of Philosophy, 6
- October 8 Mid-Term Exam Review
- October 10 Mid-Term Exam

Foundationalism and Non-Foundationalism

- October 15 Descartes, Meditations II
- October 17 Descartes, Meditation III
- October 22 Hume, *Enquiry*, 5.1
- October 24 Russell, Problems of Philosophy, Ch. 5
- October 29 Non-Foundationalism

The Philosophy of Mind

- October 31 David Chalmers, "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience"
- November 5 David Lewis, "An Argument for Identity Theory"
- November 7 The Turing Test and the Chinese Room
- November 12 Artificial Intelligence and morality

Free Will

- November 14 Hume, Enquiry, 8.1
- November 19 Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"
- November 21 Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
- November 26 Chisholm, continued
- December 3 Daniel Dennett, "My Brain Made Me Do It"
- December 5 Final Exam Review

December 12 Final Exam

Grading Components and Weights:

Team Review Folder Project (x 2) 50 points each – You will select a team of 5 or 6 students to work with. You and your team will compile a review folder for the mid-term and final exams. These "folders" can be turned in in class or online on the day of the mid-term and final exams. It will include: 1) a glossary of philosophical terms and 2) prepared outlines for exam questions. You will receive a grade for completion of the group folder. **Preparing for SLOS 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Group Peer Evaluation, 100 points – Each person in the class will submit an evaluation rubric for each member in that person's team on the last day of the course. Your score on this element will be based on your team members' evaluation of you together with my own observations and attendance records.

Mid-term Exam, 100 points – Define philosophical terms and concepts central to ethics; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; apply ethical concepts to personal experience and contemporary issues; and evaluate arguments and positions in ethics. **Assessing SLOs 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Final Exam, 100 points – Define philosophical terms and concepts central to ethics; explain core concepts and arguments from assigned readings; apply ethical 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**

Optional Assignment 1, 100 points – The type of assignment you complete and the due date for completion of the assignment is up to you (within parameters explained online). You can: be scored for in-class participation (which means that you must be prepared to answer questions and participate in discussions in class); do an outline summary of one of the required readings to be posted on the course web page prior to the date the reading is assigned; or make a short in-class presentation (10 minutes) on the reading topic for the day. You must select your optional assignments and a due dates for each of them in order to be counted as present in the course. Preparing for SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 5

Optional Assignment 2, 100 points – This assignment and due date are up to you (within parameters explained online). For this assignment you can: write a traditional paper on a topic of your choosing; complete a book review of an approved book related to the topics of the course; or literature review. **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)

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 2013 on Friday, November 1 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 Northwest College, Mahnaz Kolaini at 713.718.5422.