

SYLLABUS

Academic Discipline

Philosophy

Course Title

Survey of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

Course Rubric and Number

PHIL 2317 – 55663

Location and Meeting Days and Times

Spring Branch Campus, Room 319

Tuesday, Thursday – 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM

Course Semester Credit Hours (SCH)

3 SCH – Second Start

Contact Hours

48 Contact Hours

Course Length

12 weeks

Type of Instruction

Lecture and Web-Enhanced

Instructor Contact Information

Nathan D. Smith, PhD, Instructor

Department of Philosophy

E-Mail: nathan.smith2@hccs.edu

Instructor Office Location and Hours

Campus: Spring Branch

Office : Spring Branch 900-D

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday, by appointment.

Course Description

Study of major philosophers and philosophical systems from ancient, through medieval, to modern times. (Texas ACGM – Approval Number: 38.0101.55 12)

An historic survey of critical and reflective thinking as applied to the basic problems of existence and the meaning of human life and institutions; begins with the Renaissance, continues with the major philosophers of the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and ends with an examination of the analytic and existential philosophers of the 20th century; a study of the nature of philosophy as applied to the development of the scientific method, the existence of god, and the political structures of society.

(HCC Catalog) CORE CURRICULUM COURSE

CORE Requirements, Certificates, AA-Degree Plan, and Transfer Information

Fulfills critical thinking requirement for select four-year college majors, including many business and communications programs; and also Fulfills philosophy requirement for various academic and professional four-year college majors, and HCC Philosophy AA-degree plan. HCC CORE Humanities Area, Multicultural Area, or Elective.

Prerequisites

College Reading Level, English 1302

Course Goals

This course will focus on the set of modern philosophical issues commonly grouped under the heading “Philosophy of Mind,” though the focus on these issues will be historical, beginning with the 17th century and leading up to the 20th century. Today, philosophers who study the mind find themselves working collaboratively with cognitive scientists, psychologists, linguists, and even computer scientists. The issues studied in this field include, but are not limited to, a definition of consciousness, an answer to the mind-body problem (whether and how the mind is different than the body), the nature of mental states, content, functions, or processes, personal identity, and free will, as well as more general metaphysical and epistemological issues, such as, the nature of substance, distinctions between substances and their properties, the nature of perception and cognition, subjective vs. objective knowledge, and the extent and certainty of reductive explanation.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1. Recall and Identify** the major thinkers, schools, core philosophical questions, terms and concepts found in philosophy, cross-culturally construed, from 1600 C.E. to the contemporary world.
- 2. Interpret and Explain** core questions and concepts of modern and contemporary philosophical genesis in terms that illustrate a comprehensive critical understanding of each.
- 3. Apply** core questions and concepts of modern and contemporary philosophical genesis to contemporary issues and personal experience.
- 4. Compare and Contrast** related core questions and concepts of modern and contemporary philosophy, and the correlative thinkers and schools with which they are commonly associated.
- 5. Justify** a sound philosophical position on a topic, or topics of modern, or contemporary human interest in the areas of knowledge, ethics, or human condition that **Integrates** and **Logically Demonstrates** a **Synthesis** in thought.

Course Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Acquire** a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they

represent, geographical location, and historical periods from 1600 C.E. forward.

1.2 Learn historically significant questions, definitions of special terms, and concepts of knowledge, ethics, and the human condition.

2.1 Cultivate reading comprehension of writings specific to the broad array of approaches to and styles of modern and contemporary philosophy.

2.2 Distinguish various approaches to modern and contemporary philosophy, including their means of interpretation, conceptual analysis, testing for validity, determining if sound or not sound.

3.1 Articulate the relevance of modern and contemporary philosophy and questioning to everyday life.

3.2 Consider how modern and contemporary philosophy may or may not apply to differing ways of thinking and cultural influences.

4.1 Inventory, Summarize, and Assess correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the modern and contemporary period.

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.

CORE Curriculum Competencies

This course stresses the HCC CORE Competencies of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy.

Course Calendar

See Blackboard Online Course Calendar - Check course calendar regularly for updates and revisions. Depending on class learning progress, your instructor reserves the right to either accelerate, or slow the completion of course curriculum *per the* Calendar tool.

Instructional Methods and Internet Component

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Blackboard Vista*. The HCC *Blackboard Vista* logon page is:

<http://hccs.blackboard.com>

Your *Blackboard Vista* 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, there is a link on the logon page that you can click on to retrieve it. Your default *Blackboard Vista* password at the beginning of the term is: "distance". You will be asked to change it the first time you logon. **PLEASE SELECT A NEW PASSWORD YOU WILL REMEMBER!** This password is independent of your Online Registration password. It is your responsibility to change your password. Once logged on, you will come to a page that shows this course and all other courses in which you are

enrolled that have online sections, including those designated as either hybrid, or DE. To enter this course, simply click on the course name and you will be taken to the course homepage.

Text Information:

Required Texts:

Descartes, Rene // ***Discourse On Method and Meditations On First Philosophy***//Hackett Publishing
4th Edition, 1999//ISBN 0-87220-420-0

Hume, David // ***An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding***
Hackett Publishing
1st Edition, 1993//ISBN 0-87220-229-1

James, William // ***Pragmatism and Other Writings***
Penguin Classics, 2000
ISBN: 978-0140437355

Russell, Bertrand // ***The Problems of Philosophy***
Simon & Brown, 2011
ISBN: 978-1936041817

Sartre, Jean-Paul // ***Existentialism and Human Emotions***
Carol Publishing Group, 1984
ISBN 0806509023

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office, and to do so in a reasonable manner.

To visit the ADA Web site, log on to www.hccs.edu, click Future Students, then 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 your college.

District ADA Coordinator - Donna Price - 713.718.5165
Northwest ADA Counselor - Mahnaz Kolaini - 713.718.5422

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, and may cause the student to receive either an "F", or "I" in the course depending on your professor's stated requirements for the assignment and the weight it carries in determining your course grade. Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I" has been removed from a student's transcript. Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. See *Student Handbook*.

Attendance and Withdrawal Policies

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 IF, FOR ANY REASON, THAT STUDENT IS NO LONGER ATTENDING. NEW RULES ARE IN EFFECT THAT GREATLY CHANGE HOW AND WHEN THAT CAN BE DONE. YOU WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THIS COURSE BY YOUR PROFESSOR. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE POSSIBLE PENALTIES OTHER THAN LOSING ONE'S PAID TUITION THAT EVERY STUDENT MUST CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE WITHDRAWING. THESE INCLUDE:

- (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 2011 is Thursday, November 11, 2011 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". Your instructor will not withdraw you for non-attendance and will withdraw a student if and only if provided a written request from that student.

HCC Student Services Information

<http://northwest.hccs.edu/northwest/campus-services>

Grading Components and Weights

- **Participation (100 points)** – Calculated based on attendance, preparation for class (ability to answer when called upon), and contribution to in-class discussion.
- **Blackboard Discussion forums (4 x 50 points each)** – There will be online discussion topics. You are required to participate. To receive full credit, you must complete an initial post on the topic of at least 250 words, and then you must respond to at least 3 of your classmates. Prepares for Learning Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- **Examinations (3 x 100 points each)** – At the end of each learning section, we will have an online exam consisting of multiple choice, matching, and true/false questions. You may retake these tests up to a total of three times. Assessing Learning Outcome 1
- **Midterm Paper (150 points)** – Before the mid-term, you will be assigned a paper essay of 3-5 pages in length. You will choose one topic among options given, provide an interpretation of material related to that topic, apply issues to examples, and consider alternative positions. Assessing Learning Outcome 2; preparing for Learning Outcomes 3, and 4.
- **Final Paper (250 points)** – This paper will involve independent study of at least three of the modern and contemporary philosophers from our required reading. It will be due the day of the scheduled final exam. You will be given some topic guidelines and requirements for citations. Your paper should demonstrate the ability to apply concepts learned to original examples, consider alternative positions, compare and contrast various philosophical views, and justify a philosophical position. Assessing Learning Outcomes 3, 4, and 5.

* **Extra Credit** – You may earn 50 points extra credit for attending a number of on-campus student events, including: participation in a scholastic club, attending a speaker or films series event, or participating in a volunteer activity. In order to receive the extra credit, you must provide evidence of participation AND a one-page summary and reaction to your experience.

Minimum Writing Requirement (Per Philosophy Discipline)

4,000 Words (Required discussions, blogs, essays, exams)

Grading Policy

All grades will be figured according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 1000. The term grade legend and analysis are as follows:

- A = 90% to 100% (900 to 1000 point)
- B = 80% to 89.9% (800 to 899 points)
- C = 70% to 79.9% (700 to 799 points)

D = 60% to 69.9% (600 to 699 points)

F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 599 points)

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.

Tutoring Information

www.hccs.askonline.net