

**Philosophy**

**Syllabus**

Instructor: Parish Conkling

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Office hours:

Introduction to Ethics – PHIL 2306

Fall 2016, Web-Enhanced (3 Credit Hours)

HCC

**Course Description:**

This is a systemic evaluation of classical and/or contemporary ethical theories concerning the good life, human conduct in society, morals, and standards of value (Texas ACGM). This course provides a practical, community-minded introduction to questions of character and human excellence in a multi-cultural, global environment. Traditional and contemporary views concerning the nature of goodness, happiness, duty, and freedom serve as points of departure for this largely thematic inquiry into right conduct and ways of thinking that leads to that conduct (HCC Catalogue). This course stresses the HCC CORE Objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

**PREREQUISITE(S):**

* ENGL 1301 or higher

**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.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.

2. Analyze and critique philosophical texts in ways that demonstrate an awareness of argument structure and

the evaluation of philosophical claims.

3. Present logically persuasive arguments orally and in writing that are relevant to philosophical issues covered in

course material.

4. Evaluate personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world in terms of the philosophical issues raised in

course material.

**CLASS COMPORTMENT:**

**This course is an introduction to a fundamental aspect of human existence—the search for meaning and wisdom in our individual and social realities. Philosophy is the oldest and most varied of any academic discipline, and the practice of philosophy demands exercise and development of the highest critical faculties. Thus we shall treat philosophy for both its historical and practical aspects, and will focus specifically upon a number of perennial philosophic questions that philosophers have raised for 2500 years, such as how do I know what is true?; what do “good” and “evil” mean?; what does it mean to say something is beautiful?; what is the good life?; what is the best form of governance for a society?**

**My experience with philosophy suggests that it is a far more enjoyable undertaking when students have read and re-read the material and are otherwise prepared with questions and ideas, but, just as importantly, are willing to be open to the ideas presented in the book, in lecture, and from one another; that is, students should engage the material both sympathetically and critically. I encourage you to seek me out with difficulties and puzzlements, to talk to each other and to friends, and to engage the ideas in their complexity. This is a class where your objections and ideas are welcome.**

**An important aspect of philosophic practice is the practice of dialogue, that is, the exchange of ideas between persons for the purpose of pursuing a common understanding.**

**To allow for the uninterrupted flow of ideas within our classroom, I will ask that students turn off all portable devices and refrain from texting and other such interactions. Laptops are allowed for the taking of notes only.**

**We will likely discuss many controversial or sensitive subjects. I ask that all students treat one another, and myself, with respect, even and especially during disagreement. This respect also includes being present in class on time, remaining for the entire class, and spending class time focused on the material at hand. (That said, I do understand that sometimes circumstances conspire to make us late.**

**Please come to class anyway, and, should you need to arrange to arrive late or leave early, I will gladly accommodate.)**

**A NOTE ON THE READINGS:**

**The readings for this course are difficult and require special effort. The texts will be taken as the basis for presenting, analyzing, and critically evaluating different philosophical problems. As a member of the class you have the obligation to be well prepared for and participate in every meeting. To be well prepared for this course you need to do more than just look over the assigned materials. Often you will have to read the text 2 or 3 times. You also need intelligent, critical reading of the texts; that is, you should:**

**a. Identify (and mark) the main thesis in the reading. If the thesis is not stated explicitly in the texts you must be prepared to defend your interpretation.**

**b. Identify the evidence or support given in favor of the thesis.**

**c. For every reference you make to the material, point to the exact place in the text.**

**d. Give a critical analysis of the evidence or support. Focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s position (e.g., Is the author consistent? Are there any unwarranted assumptions?)**

**e. Evaluate whether the consequences that follow from the argument are plausible.**

**f. Are there any other interesting observations or questions that might be worth discussing?**

**g. Are there any interesting connections to other readings or areas of the program? Or to ideas of your own?**

**You will have the opportunity to evaluate this course.**

**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](http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/student-e-maileagle-id/).

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download it free, [here](http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/). (Please check your Operating System to see if you have Firefox in your applications.)

**Adopted Texts [Selected by Instructor from the following]:**

*This course will consist entirely of readings which I will provide on your course site.*

**Grading Components and Weights [Selected by Instructor]:**

**Assessment:**

***Exam 1 – 20%***

***Exam 2 – 20%***

***Exam 3 – 20%***

***Group Project – 30%***

***Attendance/Participation – 10%***

**Grading Policy:**

The term grade legend follows:

A =  90% to 100%

B =  80% to 89.9%

C = 70% to 79.9%

D =  60% to 69.9%

F  =  0% to 59.9%

FX (Failure due to non-attendance)

IP (In Progress)

W (Withdrawn)

I (Incomplete)

AUD (Audit)

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.

*!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at* [*http://hccs.askonline.net/*](http://hccs.askonline.net/)***Please use it if you need it !!***

**Academic Honesty:**

**Learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and openness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the very purpose of the university and diminish the value of an education. Specific sanctions for academic dishonesty are outlined in the student handbook.**

**Make-up Policy:**

**Attendance in this class is extremely important. Since we are dealing with complex and difficult material, it is vitally important that you are in class and ready to participate daily. If you are unable to attend the class, it is your obligation to arrange with a classmate the acquisition of the day’s material. Do not contact me to ask if you have missed “anything important”. You are expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate in class discussion.**

**Exams will commence at the start of class. I expect everyone to arrive on time, prepared with the needed materials. I will lock the classroom door exactly ten minutes after the exam has begun. If you arrive after that, you will not be allowed to take the exam. I will allow make up exams for the following reasons ONLY:**

**Illness**

**Death of a loved one**

**Military exercises – etc.**

**Legal proceedings**

**If your absence is due to one of these reasons you must let me know WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE MISSED EXAM. After you provide proper documentation we will schedule your make up exam. If you fail to notify me within 24 hours, or your absence is not due to the above exceptions then YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAKE UP THE EXAM.**

**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 XXXXX 20XX on XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX XX at X:XX XX. 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:**

The HCC Accessibility website is located at the following url: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/accessibility/>. You will find information about the types of assistance offered to students with special instructional needs on that web page. You will also find contact information for your college’s ADA compliance and accessibility office.   
  
For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165 or the ADA counselor at your college campus. You can find a list of counselors [here](http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/accessibility/ada-counselors/#d.en.176881).

**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.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1:

Introduction

Week 2:

logic

Week 3:

Fallacies

Week 4:

the Euthyphro

Week 5:

Metaethical Positions and Exam 1

Week 6:

Cultural Relativism/Objectivism

Week 7:

Kant

Week 8:

Morality and Religion

Week 9:

Utilitarianism

Week 10:

Exam 2 – Group project work day

Week 11:

Virtue Ethics

Week 12:

Ethics of Care

Week 13:

Social Contract Theory

Week 14:

Thanksgiving

Week 15:

Applied Ethics

Week 16:

Exam 3

Finals Week

Dec. 5-8th