



Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301 – 10953

Fall, First 8 Weeks, 2018

Syllabus

HCC Online

Instructor: Dr. Sally Parker-Ryan

Fall, First 8 Weeks, 2018	HCC Online
Email: sally.parkerryan@hccs.edu	PHONE: 214-830-6172 (I will endeavor to return messages within 24 hours)
Semester Credit Hours: 3	Type of Instruction: Online
Contact Hours: 48 approx. All online.	Course Length: 8 weeks
Aug. 27 – Oct. 21, 2018	Delivery: via <i>Eagle Online</i>
Learning Web:	https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/sally.parkerryan

Online Learning Management Software:

This is an entirely *web-based* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online*. The *Eagle Online* login page is:

<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/login/ldap>

You MUST HAVE an HCC email account. It is crucial that you regularly check your HCC email account, or set a rule to send it to your primary email account. I will communicate with you

ONLY via this email address (i.e. not via any alternative email addresses you may have). You will be able to email me through our Eagle Online Course page, and it will go through your HCC email address.

Your 'home' campus is HCC Online: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/about-us/>

The Student Services page links you to everything you need to know about online courses, especially to the Mandatory Online Orientation, and to the HCC Online Student Handbook: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/student-services/>

For Technical Support, go to: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/technical-support/>

Course description:

(Prerequisite: ENGL 1301 or higher)

This course is a study of the major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications (Texas ACGM). It provides a theoretically diverse introduction to the study of ideas, including arguments and investigations about abstract and real phenomena, particularly in the areas of knowledge, ethics, and religion (HCC Course Catalogue). This course stresses the HCC Core Objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

HCC CORE CURRICULUM COURSE:

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.

In keeping with the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Curriculum Board, this course will provide a solid foundation in the following Core Objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

NOTICE: Students who have questions about whether their enrollment in this course will satisfy their degree objectives should immediately see an HCC academic advisor who can review their academic degree plans.

Course Goals:

To examine some of the major thinkers and schools of thought through the history of philosophy, from the ancients through to contemporary authors. We will look at some traditional philosophical problems such as: How do we acquire knowledge? What is consciousness? Do we have free will? – and more. We will identify argument structures and

critically examine the arguments proposed for and against particular views, and in the process gain invaluable skills in clear thinking, and understanding complex arguments. The aim is to emerge with sharper critical thinking abilities and excellent analytic skills.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Read, analyze, and critique** philosophical texts.
- 2. Demonstrate knowledge** of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
- 4. Present** logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
- 5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills** in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
- 6. Evaluate** the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

Learning Objectives

Acquire a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they represent, geographical location, and historical periods.

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

Cultivate reading comprehension of philosophical writings.

Distinguish various approaches to interpretation, including conceptual analysis, testing for validity, determining if sound or not sound.

Articulate the relevance of philosophy and philosophical questioning to everyday life.

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

Inventory, Summarize, and Assess correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of ideas.

Create and cultivate alternative philosophical positions on presented course content.

Develop coherent arguments for chosen positions, bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression and disciplined thinking.

Critique chosen positions and adequately **Defend** against possible objections, both theoretical and applied.

Course Materials:

I will make all of the *required readings* available via links in Eagle Online to Open Access material. I do, however, recommend buying the following book, as it's inexpensive and very useful:

Weston, Anthony. *A Rule Book for Arguments*, Hackett Publishing, 4th Edition, 2009. ISBN 978-0-87220-954-1 (or any edition you can get), available at: <http://hccs.bncollege.com>

HCC Writing Centers: On-Campus Tutoring & help with writing assignments: The Houston Community College Writing Centers provide a student-centered environment where professional tutors support student success for all HCC students. The primary goal of the Writing Centers is to offer free, convenient, and personalized assistance to help students improve their writing at any stage of the writing process required in any courses at HCC. Tutors will also assist students with their job application letters, resumes, and scholarship/transfer essays.

Each session lasts about 30 minutes. Students should bring the professor's assignment sheet or notes about the requirements, a printed rough draft, their textbook, if necessary & a flash drive.

Consult Find-A-Tutor at <http://ctle3.hccs.edu/alltutoring/index.php?link=stu> for Writing Center locations and times. At HCC Writing Centers, each tutoring session becomes a learning experience.

Online Tutoring Assistance: <https://hccs.upswing.io/>

HCC Library Research & Writing: One of the best resources for research is your own library. Try this link for ideas: http://library.hccs.edu/research_writing

Also, make use of your HCC Library's Online Learning information and assistance: http://library.hccs.edu/for_students/distance

Notes on resources and supplementary reading: I also recommend, for each topic we cover, looking it up on either, or both, of the following online encyclopedias:

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) <http://plato.stanford.edu/> and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP) <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

Also very useful is the following philosophy website:

<http://www.philosophypages.com/index.htm> - this site has a dictionary, study guides,

history, individual philosophers as well as notes on logic and writing philosophy essays (in study guide section).

Don't forget to look for resources on the Philosophy discipline page of the Learning Web

<https://learning.hccs.edu/programs/philosophy>

Grading Components:

All grades will be calculated out 100, and then weighted according to the table below. Final scores are as follows:

A = 100- 90	90 – 100 points
B = 89 - 80:	80 – 89 points
C = 79 - 70:	70 – 79 points
D = 69 - 60:	60 – 69 points
59 and below = F	Below 60 points
FX (Failure due to non-attendance)	0 points
W (Withdrawn)	0 points
I (Incomplete)	0 points
AUD (Audit)	0 points

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.

8 Discussion Board Posts (I will count only your top 5 results)	40 %	For a possible 40 points (5x8 POINTS)
Essay	30 %	For a possible 30 points
Final Exam	30 %	For a possible 30 points

Discussion Board Posts (DPs)

(Addresses SLO 1, 2 & 3): You will be required to do TWO things: 1) respond to a question with a short post of a **minimum 250 words**, and 2) respond to a classmate's post with a **minimum of 100 words**. You can earn a maximum of 8 points per post, and **I will drop your lowest scores**, to count only the top 5 posts - and these will accumulate to represent 40% of your grade. You will post to the appropriate discussion via the class website. The post must be completed by the due date and time. **Late posts MAY be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Please contact me BEFORE the post is due to discuss.**

Essay

(Addresses SLO 2, 3, 4 & 5): (**Minimum 750 words** - you may write more if you wish) You will be required to write an essay, choosing from the questions offered. The essay should be typed, formatted to 12 point font, and you **must use MLA Style conventions** for citing works (see the Style Guides linked to in Eagle online).

I will also post links to sites that have proven very helpful to students for writing essays, and I will provide some other guidance materials. You should let me know if you need extra help with essay writing – I am very happy to help here as it is not easy to write a philosophy paper! But the skills you will acquire in learning how to communicate effectively in writing are invaluable to you in your professional life, so well worth improving. The Essay is worth 30 points or 30% of your final grade. **Late Essays MAY be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Please contact me BEFORE the post is due to discuss. Documentation may be required.**

Final Exam

(Addresses SLO 1, 3 & 5): An exam comprised of a series of short and/or long answer questions will be made available online in the Finals week. It will go online the morning of **WEDS Oct 17 and will be due THURS Oct 18 in the morning**. The Final Exam is worth 30 points, or 30% of your final grade. **NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

How to proceed with this course:

- Go to our course page on Eagle Online, make yourself familiar with it (**the course site doesn't open until the first day of class**)
- Watch videos on PLAGIARISM if you have not already.
- Post in the "Who We Are" Forum: to get to know each other AND this is what I count to mark you as "present" for the course. **You may be dropped if you do not post here in the first week!**
- For each week of the course, the basic procedure is to do the required reading, and then complete the assessment by the Sunday night of each week. There are new readings and an assessment for every week.
- The Calendar and Upcoming Events boxes to the right will alert you to upcoming Due Dates – keep an eye on these.
- The column on the left of your home page is where you can access all of the Discussion Forums, Essays and eventually the Exam.
- In the opening sections of the course, you will find links to your style-guides and other helpful links and guides.
- Browse the links in the RESOURCES section for hint and advice on essay writing – especially writing for philosophy.
- Be sure to understand what PLAGIARISM is – and do not commit it during this, or any other course.
- **Consult the Discussion Post and Essay Rubrics.** These tell you what is expected for each form of assessment, and will help you understand the grades you get (and how to aim higher!)

Please communicate with me if you are having problems with the work, or need some extra help – I am here to help you succeed, so let me know EARLY so we can work together on the problem. You can always email me or call me. I am available to talk about philosophy, to offer help and advice about the course, and to help you find ways to get the most out of your studies and to help solve problems that might get in the way of these. So, please don't hesitate to get in touch – I am online every day and will always try to get back to you within hours, most of the time.

Course Schedule:

Please note that this schedule is subject to change; although you will always be informed in adequate time if it does. **See schedule at the end of this syllabus.**

Pre-course reading: you should have already read this:

Russell, Bertrand. (1969), 'The Value of Philosophy', in *The Problems of Philosophy*, OUP: Oxford. Open-source: [Click here.](#)

If not, go ahead and read it now!

WEEK 1: Introduction

Required reading:

1. Plato, 'The Apology': [Click here.](#)
2. Week 1 Lecture Notes (online)

Topics: the point and purpose of philosophy; the method of philosophy, introduction to Plato and Socrates.

Assessment: You **MUST** post on the **Who We Are** discussion board. This lets me see whom to count as 'active' in the course. If you do not post here, **you may be dropped from the course.**

Discussion Post #1 (hereafter DP #): **Due: Sunday 10/07 by midnight.**

WEEK 2: Logic

Required reading:

1. Weston, Anthony. *A Rule Book for Arguments*, Hackett Publishing, 5th Edition, 2010. ISBN 0-87220-552-5 (**I have put the require sections online**)
2. Notes on Logic, Dr. Parker-Ryan. (online)

Topics: An introduction to formal logic: validity and soundness, some argument forms; Informal fallacies and clear reasoning.

Assessment: DP #2 (**Quiz instead**): **Due: Sun 09/09 by midnight.**

WEEK 3: Knowledge

Required reading:

1. Descartes, *Meditations 1 & 2* (online)
2. Locke, John (1690), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (online)
3. Week 3 Lecture Notes (online)

Topics: The Theory of Knowledge: do we have it? If so, how can we be certain? We will look at Descartes Skepticism and his Method of Doubt. Then we turn to Locke: a different view of how we acquire knowledge; The Rationalism-Empiricism divide.

Assessment: DP #3: **Due: Sun 09/16 by midnight.**

WEEK 4: Mind

Required reading:

1. Descartes, *Meditation 6* (online)
2. Turing's 'Intelligent Machines' and Searle's 'Minds, Brains, and computers' (online)

Topics: Philosophy of Mind: we know the brain is made of physical, biological matter, but what about the *mind*? If the mind is not made of physical matter, then what kind of thing is it? If it is made of physical matter, does it count as a kind of 'machine', like a computer?

Assessment: DP #4: **Due Sun 09/23 by midnight.**

WEEK 5: Review

Assessment:

- 1) Essay: **Due Sun 09/30 by midnight.**
 - 2) DP #5: **Note special due date: Monday 10/01**
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WEEK 6: Free Will

Required reading:

1. TBD (online)
2. Week 6 Lecture Notes (online)

Topics: Do we really have freedom of will? Or are we completely pre-determined by a kind of causal chain of events – so that we really have no say?

Assessment: DP #6: **Due Sun 10/07 by midnight.**

WEEK 7: Ethics

1. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, W.D.Ross (Trans), on MIT Internet Classics Archive, Book 1 & 2 (online)
2. Week 7 Lecture Notes (online)

Topics: How should we treat others? We explore the classic Aristotelian approach to an ethical life; known as 'virtue ethics'.

Assessment:

- 1) DP #7: **Note special due date of Friday 10/12**
- 2) DP #8: **Due 10/14 by midnight.**

WEEK 8: Finals

Assessment: Final Exam (Online) **Goes online: Weds 10/17 at 7am, and is due to be uploaded by Thurs 10/18 at 7am. NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED.**

Student Support

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources that HCC may possess.

The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars.

Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link:

[DE Student Handbook](#)

PLEASE ALSO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT POLICY ABOUT PLAGIARISM:

Academic Honesty:

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." Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. A student who is academically dishonest is claiming an advantage not available to other students. The instructor is responsible for measuring each student's individual achievements and also for ensuring that all students compete on a level playing field. Thus, in our system, the instructor has teaching, grading, and enforcing roles. You are expected to be familiar with HCC's policy on Academic Dishonesty located at <http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>

Pleading ignorance of the rules, including improper documentation (MLA, APA, etc....) is no justification for academic dishonesty.

Students who plagiarize, collude, or cheat may not have an opportunity to resubmit their work and they may receive a grade of 0 for the first assignment, an F in the course for a second assignment, and a report in our Maxient system, which could lead to dismissal from the college. Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. See Student Handbook. **Please be aware that ever-evolving applications exist that detect plagiarism, and your instructor will run your work through them.**

Be sure to watch the videos on plagiarism that I have placed on the Resources page of our class web site.

Withdrawal Policies:

HCC DE Students are expected to check in to the course site regularly, and to complete all work by noted due dates. **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 is **10/01 by 5pm** for this course. 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](#).

Title IX Discrimination: Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex including pregnancy and parental status-in educational programs and activities. If you require

an accommodation due to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to:
David Cross - Director EEO/Compliance - Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity
3100 Main - Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu (713) 718-8271

Open/Campus Carry of Handguns: At HCC the safety of our students, staff, and faculty is our first priority. As of August 1, 2017, Houston Community College is subject to the Campus Carry Law (SB11 2015). For more information, visit the HCC Campus Carry web page at <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/police/campus-carry/>.

EGLS3:

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.

HCC – Introduction to Philosophy – Fall Schedule

MONDAY (BEGIN WEEK)	WEEK No.	INFO.	READING: all on our website	TOPIC	SUB-TOPIC	SUNDAY (ASSESSMENTS DUE END OF WEEK)
08/27	1		To have already completed: The Value of Philosophy (Russell) The Apology (Plato)	Introduction to Philosophy	What is philosophy? What is the point of philosophy? Intro to Plato & Socrates	During this week, post your introduction, and share something about yourself with the class on 'Who We Are' on our class website. Discussion Post (DP) #1 due 09/02 by midnight
09/03	2	OFFICIAL DAY OF RECORD 09/03 – please be sure to have posted in Who We Are	Weston	LOGIC	Intro to some formal and informal logic: Validity and soundness, informal fallacies.	DP #2 due 09/09 by midnight.
09/10	3		Descartes and Locke	THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (EPISTEMOLOGY)	Descartes' Method of Doubt and Rationalism Locke's knowledge through the senses and empiricism	DP #3 due 09/16 by midnight
09/17	4		Descartes, Turing and Searle	PHILOSOPHY OF MIND	Is the mind made of a non-physical stuff? Or is it just identical with the brain?	DP #4 due 09/23 by midnight.

HCC – Introduction to Philosophy – Fall Schedule

09/24	5		Revise	REVIEW	Review and write Essay	ESSAY DUE 09/30 BY MIDNIGHT DP #5 Due (special due date of a Monday this week: 10/01 by midnight)
10/01	6	10/01 LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW	TBA	FREE WILL	How can freedom of the will fit into a world that is a closed physical system?	DP #6 due 10/07 by midnight
10/08	7		Aristotle	ETHICS.	How should one live one's life? What is the right thing to do?	DP #7 Due (special due date of a Friday this week: 10/12 by midnight) DP #8 due 10/14 by midnight
10/15 – 10/21 Last week of Instruction/ Finals.	8			Weds 10/17: EXAM GOES ONLINE AT 7AM FOR 24 HOURS. NO LATE EXAMS CAN BE ACCEPTED		Thurs 10/18: FINAL EXAM DUE TO BE UPLOADED via course link BY 7am All done! Congratulations!