



Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1301

Instructor: Vanessa Voss

Web-Enhanced (3 Credit Hours)

Email: vanessa.voss@hccs.edu

Learning Web Page:

<http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/vanessa.voss>

Office hours: Central: MW 4:30-5:30, Adjunct
Workroom (SJC 355)

Course Description:

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.

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.

Course Goals: The basis for inquiry in this course is drawn from history, theories, their application, methods of reasoning, and carried forward to more recent thinkers and issues. Included is the growing emergence of women's, minority, and non-western voices in philosophy. Accordingly, this course should not be construed as history-bound, or strictly western in its perspective. Its thematic elements are contemporary, including the nature and abiding presence of philosophizing in human discourse, and this discipline's impact on current developments in science, the humanities, and political/social order in world cultures.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

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).

Adopted Texts:

Plato: Five Dialogues

deBotton: Consolations of Philosophy

Descartes: Meditations (Foundations of First Philosophy)

Gandhi: Selected Political Writing

Grading Components and Weights

1. Quizzes/Homework (50 points total)
2. 2 Short Essays (3 pages, 25 points each, 50 points total)
3. Presentation (50 points)
4. 2 Exams: Midterm and a Final (50 points each, 100 points total)

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 250. The term grade legend follows:

GRADE RANGE %	
90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
Below 60	F

GRADING FORMULA: You will have the opportunity to earn up to a total of 250 points. There will be two tests, two short papers, one presentation, and homework covering the reading.

Grade Range with Point System:

225-250 points	A
200-224 points	B
175-199 points	C
150-174 points	D
Below 149 points	F

You will be given at least one week of notice the test being due. The test will be done in class.

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at <http://hccs.askonline.net/> Please use it if you need it !!

Academic Honesty: As a student at HCC, you are expected to exhibit honesty, integrity and high standards in your academic work. Members of the college community benefit from an open, honest educational environment. We are all responsible to encourage and promote academic integrity, a code of moral and artistic honesty. Students should refer to the Student Handbook for policies and procedures on Cheating and Plagiarism. All papers will be turned in through Turnitin.com. **If you plagiarize, you will be caught. I WILL GIVE YOU A ZERO IF YOU ARE CAUGHT COPYING PAPERS!!!! I AM SERIOUS!!!!**

Make-up Policy: Test must be taken at the specified time. Documentation and proof must be given for emergencies in order to get an exception. I do not accept late work unless you have an emergency which you document.

Course Calendar:

Week 1-2: What is Philosophy?

Readings: David Foster Wallace, "This is Water"

Week 3-6: Socrates and Plato

Readings: Plato, *The Apology*

Week 7-8: Turn to Modern Philosophy: Descartes

Reading: Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Week 7: Philosophy of Religion, Cosmological Argument

Reading: Arguments for God's Existence

MIDTERM

Week 8-11: The Cosmological Argument, Teleological Argument and Darwin

Reading: Handout from Philosophy of Religion Textbook, Gould PDF

Week 12-15: Gandhi and the Ethics of Civil Disobedience

Reading: Gandhi, "Selected Political Writings"

Short Essay 2 assigned/due

Week 16: **FINAL**

Presentation Calendar will be filled out and posted/passed out when the sign up period is over

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". 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.

A student wishing to make up any work MUST bring a note from a doctor or talk to me about their situation face-to-face. Students who miss class are responsible for the materials they missed. I WILL NOT RESPOND TO EMAILS ASKING ME ABOUT MISSED WORK AND TOPICS DISCUSSED IN CLASSES MISSED. ASK OTHER STUDENTS IN THE CLASS ABOUT WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN CLASS. Please make sure you speak to another student in class to catch up on notes or updates from the class you missed. Students who miss more than 6 classes, and have never once signed the in-class role sheet which I will pass out from time-to-time, might receive an FX, even if they are passing the class. Please keep track of your absences: it is in your interest to do so.

EMAIL POLICY: Students may only email me about three things. 1) Questions about the meanings of the readings/confusion about the readings 2) Questions about the meaning of the writing assignments and 3) to arrange a face-to-face meeting with me. I will NOT reply to any emails about absences, but I will reply to requests to meet face-to-face concerning absences. I will NOT email about missed assignments and missed lecture. Emails asking about “what was missed” will be ignored. Ask for a face-to-face meetings instead.

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](#).

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.