

PHIL2300-002: BEGINNING PHILOSOPHY

11:00-11:50 MWF, Eng-Phil 163

Instructor

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Office hours: TR 11:00-12:30

Course Description

This is a general introduction to philosophy, designed to acquaint students with certain significant problems as they are considered by major philosophical figures. These are not esoteric questions but instead ones central to ordinary human experience. Students will be encouraged to formulate and defend their own answers to these questions, using the concepts and methods of inquiry introduced in the course. This process will help improve students' abilities to think more critically and to communicate with greater clarity and precision.

This course satisfies the Texas Tech University core curriculum requirement in humanities.

Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: think critically, demonstrate an understanding of the possibility of multiple interpretations, cultural contexts, and values.

Humanities Core Curriculum Objective: The objective of the humanities in a core curriculum is to expand the student's knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature and philosophy, students will engage in critical analysis and develop an appreciation of the humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>Assessment Method*</i>
1) Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two essays.• Class discussion.
2) Develop an in-depth understanding of some of the central areas of philosophical research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two essays.• Two exams.• Pop quizzes.• Class discussion.

*For details, see Course Requirements, below.

Core Text

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Fifth Edition (2009: Oxford: ISBN: 978-0-1953-9036-0)

(Additional readings will be available in PDF format on my website, www.tytoken.com. These are indicated under the course schedule below as “[WEB]”.)

Course Requirements

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class:
A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73;
D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

Papers

There are two papers assigned during the course of this term. The first paper will be worth 20% of your final grade and will be returned to you with comments. The second paper will be worth 25% of your grade, but will not be returned to you unless specifically requested by you.

- First paper assigned Wednesday, February 17, and due Wednesday, March 3.
- Second paper assigned Friday, April 16, and due Friday, April 30.

Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per day since the due date. Final papers will not be accepted after Monday, May 3 for any reason.

Papers will not be accepted via e-mail or fax.

Exams

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Friday, March 5, and the final held during the May 6-11 exam period (specific time TBD). The midterm exam is worth 20% of your final grade, and the final exam is worth 25%.

Quizzes

There will be eight short pop quizzes held throughout the term, some during lecture and others during discussion sections. The six quizzes with the *highest* scores will make up 10% of your grade; the two quizzes with the *lowest* scores will be dropped. Quizzes will last approximately five minutes, and will focus on the readings assigned for the day the quiz is held, or readings from that week.

Special Accommodations

- Students with disabilities that require special class or exam accommodations must present a form from AccessTECH Disability Support Program specifying the details during the first week of classes. Their offices are located in 335 West Hall. See www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu.
- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

Classroom Courtesy

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If you are seen text-messaging during class-time, your course grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

The Writing Center

Particularly for new philosophy students, I strongly recommend that you work on your paper with a writing tutor. The Writing Center offers *free assistance* in room 175 of the Philosophy and English Building. See <http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>.

Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

Course Schedule

Introduction	Wed., Jan. 13	(no readings)
Arguments	Fri., Jan. 15	(no readings)
	Mon., Jan. 18	(no class)
The Meaning of Life	Wed., Jan. 20	Albert Camus: “The Myth of Sisyphus”; Thomas Nagel: “The Absurd”
	Fri., Jan. 22	(discussion)
	Mon., Jan. 25	Richard Taylor: “The Meaning of Human Existence”
	Wed., Jan. 27	Raymond Martin: “A Fast Car and a Good Woman” [WEB]
	Fri., Jan. 29	(discussion)
Ethics	Mon., Feb. 1	Aristotle: “Nicomachean Ethics”
	Wed., Feb. 3	Thomas Nagel: “Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> ”
	Fri., Feb. 5	(discussion)
	Mon., Feb. 8	Jeremy Bentham: “The Principle of Utility”; John Stuart Mill: “Utilitarianism”
	Wed., Feb. 10	Peter Singer: “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
	Fri., Feb. 12	(discussion)
	Mon., Feb. 15	Immanuel Kant: “Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals”
	Wed., Feb. 17	Onora O’Neill: “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems”
	Fri., Feb. 19	(discussion)
	Mon., Feb. 22	John Rawls: “A Theory of Justice”
	Wed., Feb. 24	J.L. Mackie: “The Subjectivity of Values”
	Fri., Feb. 26	(discussion)
	Mon., Mar. 1	Gilbert Harman: “Ethics and Observation”
Midterm Review	Wed., Mar. 3	(no readings)
Midterm Exam	Fri., Mar. 5	(no readings)
Personal Identity	Mon., Mar. 8	John Perry: “A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality”
	Wed., Mar. 10	Bernard Williams: “The Self and the Future”
	Fri., Mar. 12	(discussion)

[March 13-21: Spring Break]

Personal Identity	Mon., Mar. 22	Derek Parfit: “Personal Identity”
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	Wed., Mar. 24	Daniel Dennett: "Where Am I?"
	Fri., Mar. 26	<i>(discussion)</i>
Minds & Consciousness	Mon., Mar. 29	A.M. Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
	Wed., Mar. 31	John Searle: "Minds, Brains, and Programs"
	Fri., Apr. 2	<i>(discussion)</i>
	Mon., Apr. 5	<i>(no class)</i>
	Wed., Apr. 7	Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"
	Fri., Apr. 9	<i>(discussion)</i>
	Mon., Apr. 12	Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
	Wed., Apr. 14	David Lewis, "Knowing What It's Like"
	Fri., Apr. 16	<i>(discussion)</i>
	Freedom & Determinism	Mon., Apr. 19
Wed., Apr. 21		Peter Van Inwagen: "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"
Fri., Apr. 23		<i>(discussion)</i>
Mon., Apr. 26		David Hume: "Of Liberty and Necessity"
Wed., Apr. 28		Richard Taylor: "Freedom and Determinism"
Fri., Apr. 30		<i>(discussion)</i>
Final Exam Review	Mon., May 3	<i>(no readings)</i>

[Final Exams: May 6-11]