

## PHIL2300-003: BEGINNING PHILOSOPHY

MWF 11:00-11:50, Eng-Phil 260 (plus discussion sections, below)

### Instructor

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### Teaching Assistants

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### Discussion Sections

**2300-703** 1:00-1:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 150 (*Santos*)

**2300-704** 2:00-2:50 Fridays, Eng-Phil 150 (*Taylor*)

### 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

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

\*For details, see Course Requirements, below.

### Core Text

- Perry, Bratman, and Fischer (eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Sixth Edition (2013: Oxford: ISBN: 0-199-81299-3)

(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 Monday, February 17, and due Monday, March 3.
- Second paper assigned Wednesday, April 16, and due Wednesday, 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 5 for any reason.

## **Exams**

There will be two exams for this class, with the midterm held on Friday, March 7, and the final held Tuesday, May 13, 7:30-10:00 am. 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](http://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 grade will be deducted 1 percent. This is your only warning. Likewise, for every class you miss without authorized excuse, your final grade will be deducted 1 percent.

## **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

| Topic                                | Date       | Readings   | Assignments         |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--|---------------------|
| Introduction                         | (W) Jan 15 | <i>No Readings</i>   |                     |
| Arguments                            | (F) Jan 17 | <i>No Readings</i>   |                     |
| The Meaning of Life                  | (M) Jan 20 | <i>No Classes</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (W) Jan 22 | Albert Camus: "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Thomas Nagel: "The Absurd"               |                     |
|                                      | (F) Jan 24 | Richard Taylor: "The Meaning of Human Existence"                               |                     |
|                                      | (M) Jan 27 | Raymond Martin: "A Fast Car and a Good Woman" [WEB]                            |                     |
|                                      | (W) Jan 29 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (F) Jan 31 | Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics"  |                     |
|                                      | (M) Feb 3  | Thomas Nagel: "Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> " [WEB]                          |                     |
| Ethics                               | (W) Feb 5  | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (F) Feb 7  | Jeremy Bentham: "The Principle of Utility"; John Stuart Mill: "Utilitarianism" |                     |
|                                      | (M) Feb 10 | Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"                                |                     |
|                                      | (W) Feb 12 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (F) Feb 14 | Immanuel Kant: "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals"                        |                     |
|                                      | (M) Feb 17 | Onora O'Neill: "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"                    | Paper #1 Assigned   |
|                                      | (W) Feb 19 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (F) Feb 21 | John Rawls: "A Theory of Justice"  |                     |
|                                      | (M) Feb 24 | J.L. Mackie: "The Subjectivity of Values"                                      |                     |
|                                      | (W) Feb 26 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (F) Feb 28 | Gilbert Harman: "Ethics and Observation"                                       |                     |
|                                      | (M) Mar 3  | <i>(discussion)</i>  | <b>Paper #1 Due</b> |
| Midterm Review                       | (W) Mar 5  | <i>No Readings</i>   |                     |
| <b>Midterm Exam</b>                  | (F) Mar 7  | <i>No Readings</i>   |                     |
| Minds & Consciousness                | (M) Mar 10 | René Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I and II                                    |                     |
|                                      | (W) Mar 12 | David Armstrong, "The Nature of the Mind"                                      |                     |
|                                      | (F) Mar 14 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
| <b><i>Spring Break Mar 15-23</i></b> |            |  |                     |
| Minds & Consciousness                | (M) Mar 24 | A.M. Turing: "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"                            |                     |
|                                      | (W) Mar 26 | John Searle: "Minds, Brains, and Programs"                                     |                     |
|                                      | (F) Mar 28 | <i>(discussion)</i>  |                     |
|                                      | (M) Mar 31 | Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" [WEB]                             |                     |
|                                      | (W) Apr 2  | Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"; David                                  |                     |

|                       |            |   |                     |
|-----------------------|------------|---|---------------------|
|                       |            | Lewis, "Knowing What It's Like" [WEB]                                   |                     |
|                       | (F) Apr 4  | <i>(discussion)</i>   |                     |
| Personal Identity     | (M) Apr 7  | John Perry: "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality"           |                     |
|                       | (W) Apr 9  | Bernard Williams: "The Self and the Future"                             |                     |
|                       | (F) Apr 11 | <i>(discussion)</i>   |                     |
|                       | (M) Apr 14 | Derek Parfit: "Personal Identity"                                       |                     |
|                       | (W) Apr 16 | Daniel Dennett: "Where Am I?"   | Paper #2 Assigned   |
| Freedom & Determinism | (F) Apr 18 | Roderick M. Chisholm: "Human Freedom and the Self"                      |                     |
|                       | (M) Apr 21 | <i>No Classes</i>   |                     |
|                       | (W) Apr 23 | Peter Van Inwagen: "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will" |                     |
|                       | (F) Apr 25 | <i>(discussion)</i>   |                     |
|                       | (M) Apr 28 | David Hume: "Of Liberty and Necessity"                                  |                     |
|                       | (W) Apr 30 | Richard Taylor: "Freedom and Determinism" [WEB]                         | <b>Paper #2 Due</b> |
|                       | (F) May 2  | <i>(discussion)</i>   |                     |
| Final Review          | (M) May 5  | <i>No Readings</i>  |                     |

**Final Exam listed as taking place Tuesday May 13, 7:30-10:00 am.**