

BEGINNING PHILOSOPHY

2300-001: MWF 9:00-9:50, Eng/Phil 160

2300-003: MWF 11:00-11:50, Eng/Phil 153

Instructor

Darren Hudson Hick

www.tytoken.com

darren.hick@ttu.edu /

darrenhick@hotmail.com

Office: Phil 265F

Office hours: TR 10:00-11:30

Teaching Assistant

Michael Hunter

michael.hunter@ttu.edu

Office: Phil263

Office hours: MW 12:00-1:00

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.

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 Monday, October 5, and due Monday, October 19.
- Second paper assigned Friday, November 20, and due Friday, December 4.

Assignments submitted late without explicit extensions or authorized excuses will receive a penalty of one letter grade (10%) per class since the due date. (If the paper is submitted late but before the following class, it will be considered one class late.)

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, October 23, and the final held during the December 11-16 exam period (specific time TBD). The midterm is worth 20% of your final grade; the final is worth 25%.

Participation

The final 10% of your grade is your participation grade. Participation includes doing the assigned readings *before* the class in which the reading shall be discussed, taking active part in class discussion, and putting serious effort into your papers. Participation also includes attendance. Not including the midterm exam, we meet 40 times this term, but for every class you miss without authorized excuse, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point (that is, 1% of your final grade, up to the 10% encompassed by the participation grade). See also “Classroom Courtesy” below.

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 I see you text-messaging during class-time, your participation 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

DATE	TOPIC	READING(S)
Fri, Aug. 28	Introduction	<i>No readings</i>
Mon, Aug. 31	Arguments	<i>No readings</i>
Wed, Sept. 2	Why Philosophy?	Plato, "The Apology"
Fri, Sept. 4		Bertrand Russell: "The Value of Philosophy"
<i>Mon, Sept. 7 No Class</i>		
Wed, Sept. 9	The Meaning of Life	Albert Camus: "The Myth of Sisyphus"; Thomas Nagel: "The Absurd"
Fri, Sept. 11		Richard Taylor: "The Meaning of Human Existence"
Mon, Sept. 14	God	Saint Anselm: "The Ontological Argument"
Wed, Sept. 16		St. Thomas Aquinas: "The Existence of God"
Fri, Sept. 18		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Sept. 21		Bertrand Russell: "Why I Am Not a Theist"
Wed, Sept. 23		Blaise Pascal: "The Wager"
Fri, Sept. 25		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Sept. 28		The World & Our Knowledge of It
Wed, Sept. 30	Descartes (cont'd)	
Fri, Oct. 2	<i>Discussion</i>	
Mon, Oct. 5	John Locke: "Some Further Considerations Concerning Our Simple Ideas of Sensation" [WEB]	
Wed, Oct. 7	Locke (cont'd)	
Fri, Oct. 9	<i>Discussion</i>	
<i>Mon, Oct. 12 No Class</i>		
Wed, Oct. 14	The World & Our Knowledge of It	David Hume: "Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses"
Fri, Oct. 16		Hume (cont'd)
Mon, Oct. 19		<i>Discussion</i>
Wed, Oct. 21	Midterm Review	<i>No readings</i>
Fri, Oct. 23	Midterm Exam	<i>No readings</i>
Mon, Oct. 26	Personal Identity	John Perry: "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality"
Wed, Oct. 28		Bernard Williams: "The Self and the Future"
Fri, Oct. 30		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Nov. 2		Derek Parfit: "Personal Identity"
Wed, Nov. 4		Daniel Dennett: "Where Am I?"
Fri, Nov. 6		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Nov. 9	Ethics	Jeremy Bentham: "The Principle of Utility"; John Stuart Mill: "Utilitarianism"
Wed, Nov. 11		Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"

Fri, Nov. 13		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Nov. 16		Immanuel Kant: "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals"
Wed, Nov. 18		Onora O'Neill: "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"
Fri, Nov. 20		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Nov. 23		Aristotle: "Nicomachean Ethics"

Wed, Nov. 25 *No Class*

Fri, Nov. 27 *No Class*

Mon, Nov. 30	Ethics	Thomas Nagel: "Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i> "
Wed, Dec. 2		J.L. Mackie: "The Subjectivity of Values"
Fri, Dec. 4		<i>Discussion</i>
Mon, Dec. 7		David Gauthier: "Morality and Advantage"
Wed, Dec. 9	Exam Review	<i>No readings</i>