

PHIL2300-001: BEGINNING PHILOSOPHY

12:00-1:50 MTWRF, Eng-Phil 164

Instructor

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Office hours: MWF 2:00-3:00

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.

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">• Class discussion.• Four exams.
2) Develop an in-depth understanding of some of the central areas of philosophical research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class discussion.• Four exams.

*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.

Exams

This course has three exams, each of which is worth 30% of your final grade.

Participation

The final 10% of your course grade will be based on attendance and participation. For each class you miss without authorized excuse, you will lose 1% of your final grade, up to the 10% encompassed by your participation grade.

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 grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

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 & Arguments	Wed. June 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No readings
The Meaning of Life	Thu. June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Albert Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus”• Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd”• Richard Taylor, “The Meaning of Human Existence”
	Fri. June 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raymond Martin, “A Fast Car and a Good Woman” [WEB]
Ethics	Mon. June 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics”• Thomas Nagel, “Aristotle on <i>Eudaimonia</i>”
	Tue. June 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeremy Bentham, “The Principle of Utility”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism” • Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
	Wed. June 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork to the Metaphysic of Morals”
	Thu. June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onora O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems”
	Fri. June 11	Exam #1
	Mon. June 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, “A Theory of Justice” • J.L. Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values”
	Tue. June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilbert Harman, “Ethics and Observation”
Minds & Consciousness	Wed. June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I and II • David Armstrong, “The Nature of the Mind”
	Thu. June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.M. Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”
	Fri. June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs” • Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”
	Mon. June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know” • David Lewis, “Knowing What It’s Like”
	Tue. June 22	Exam #2
Personal Identity	Wed. June 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Perry, “A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality” • Bernard Williams, “The Self and the Future”
	Thu. June 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derek Parfit, “Personal Identity”
	Fri. June 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Dennett, “Where Am I?” • Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self”
Freedom & Determinism	Mon. June 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Van Inwagen, “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will”
	Tue. June 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Hume, “Of Liberty and Necessity” • Richard Taylor, “Freedom and Determinism” [WEB]
	Wed. June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Nagel, “Moral Luck”
	Thu. July 1	Exam #3