

PHIL 1301: Intro to Philosophy

Fall 2016

Instructor: Daniel Padgett

Office: Pecan Hall 102

Office Hours: MW 9–12 (in PH 102), 2–3 (PH 102), 4:45–5:30 (LOH 215)

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to the study of ideas and their logical structure, including arguments and investigations about abstract and real phenomena. Includes introduction to the history, theories, and methods of reasoning. This course fulfills the Language, Philosophy, and Culture foundational component area and the Component Area Option of the core, and addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

2. COURSE OVERVIEW

Philosophy is a very broad discipline. Even so, the vast majority of philosophy can be listed as metaphysics (what the world is like), epistemology (what we can know or believe about the world), and ethics (how we ought to live). In this course, we will survey each of these areas of philosophy by looking at particular problems and questions. One aim of the course, then, is to acquaint you with the problems and questions that philosophers ask. A second aim of the course is to teach you critical thinking skills, which are the skills employed in answering and attempting to solve the questions and problems that philosophers ask. While the content of the course is important and will be tested, the skills you develop as a critical thinker are, arguably, more important (unless, of course, you plan on becoming a professional philosopher).

3. READINGS

There is no textbook for this course; all readings will be available on Canvas, either as a pdf or a link to a page that contains the reading. The readings for each class are listed below in the course outline. You are also encouraged to consult the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) and the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) to supplement your understanding of the material.

4. COURSE POLICIES, ATTENDANCE, AND GRADING

4.1. Course Policies. This syllabus is a supplement to the one found on Concourse. If there is a conflict between this syllabus and the one listed on Concourse, the policies on Concourse over-rule the ones listed here. Please refer to the concourse syllabus for official NVC course policies.

4.2. Syllabus Revisions. I am open to modifying the schedule (listed below) to help you better understand the material. On the first day of class (and perhaps at several points during the course) we will assess how the course is going and may make changes to the syllabus as necessary. Any changes will be communicated both in class and via Canvas (through an announcement or an email).

4.3. Attendance. This course is discussion-based. There will be times that I lecture for extended periods, but I aim for collaborative learning as much as possible. Because of that, attendance is expected and may affect your grade. As per Alamo College's Attendance Policy, I may drop you if you miss more than 12.5% of scheduled contact hours (which is just under four (4) classes). If you miss more than seven (7) classes, you will automatically fail the course. If you need to miss a class, send me an email stating the reason for the absence; I will decide whether it is a permissible absence. (Just so you know: "missing class" does not mean "missing the entire class"; showing up late or leaving early may warrant counting you absent for the day.)

4.4. Grading. Your final grades depends on your assignment, test, and final grades, provided you meet the attendance policy. Your grade is weighted as follows:

- Assignments: 25%
- Paper 1: 25%
- Paper 2: 25%
- Final Paper: 35%

Assignments. There will be six (6) in-class assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will be of various kinds: some may be quizzes while others are group projects. All of them will require knowledge of the assigned readings. Of these assignments, your five (5) highest grades will determine this portion of your overall grade.

Papers. There are two short (2–3 page) papers. The first paper is due one week after the first workshop; the second paper is due one week after the second workshop.

Final Paper. Details will be discussed in class and made available on Canvas.

Extra Credit. At my discretion, I may make available extra credit assignments.

4.5. Late or Missing Assignments. You are expected to turn in graded work by the due date. In general, late assignments will not be accepted and will be given an automatic zero. If you need an extension, you must ask at least 24 hours *before* the deadline and explain why you need an extension; I will determine whether to grant an extension on a case by case basis. (Don't assume you will be given an extension just because you asked for one.) With the exception of the final, I will allow you to submit one assignment late and without penalty for up to two days past the deadline; after that, you will lose 10% off of your grade for that assignment for each day it is late (i.e.: no penalty for submitting the assignment 0 to 2 days after the deadline, 10% off if it's 2 to 3 days late, 20% off if it's 3 to 4 days late, and so on).

4.6. Grading Scale.

- A 90–100%
- B 80–89.9%
- C 70–79.9%
- D 60–69.9%
- F Below 60% or by non-attendance

4.7. Academic Integrity. Discussion with others is encouraged: answering questions about a topic is often the best way to learn. However, assignments and tests are to be done individually. Collaborating on tests and assignments will be considered cheating. The appropriate steps will be taken for those suspected of cheating. For more information, see the Student Code of Conduct [here](#).

5. COURSE OUTLINE

Prior to class you should complete the assigned reading so that the terms we discuss are not entirely unfamiliar, and so that you can bring questions about the material as well. Note: *If any changes to the below schedule are necessary, I will communicate them to you in advance by email and in class.*

| Week of | Subject | Reading |
|---------|--|------------------------------------|
| | <i>Ethics</i> | |
| 8/22 | Intro to Course, Eating Dogs | Foer |
| 8/29 | Affirmative Action | Berry |
| 9/5 | Abortion | Thomson |
| 9/12 | Utilitarianism, Deontology | Hursthouse (pages 1-3), Mill, Kant |
| 9/19 | Virtue Ethics, Workshop | Hursthouse (rest of article) |
| | <i>Epistemology</i> | |
| 9/26 | Cognitive Bias | Fricker |
| 10/3 | Kinds of Knowledge | Stump |
| 10/10 | Skepticism | Hume, Greco |
| 10/17 | Defining "Knowledge" | Gettier, Zagzebski |
| 10/24 | Review, Workshop | (No new reading) |
| | <i>Metaphysics</i> | |
| 10/31 | Persistence | Hawley (Intro), Hawley (Ch 1) |
| 11/7 | Persistence, Time Travel | Wasserman, Lewis |
| 11/14 | Existence of God | Anselm |
| 11/21 | Systematic Metaphysics, No class Thursday | Leibniz |
| 11/28 | TBD, Workshop | |

FINAL PAPER: CHECK CANVAS