Stephen F. Austin State University
Division of Multidisciplinary Programs
PHI 153.502: Introduction to Philosophy
{Fall -- 2017}

Instructor: Dr. [Mr.] Kelly Joseph Salsbery

[Please address me as Dr. Salsbery, Professor Salsbery, or simply as Professor. Please do not address me as Mr. Salsbery.]

Office hours:

- Online (using Pager in D2L): TBA
- In person (Boynton 208D): Monday/Wed. [2:00-4:00 pm] and Tuesday/Thursday [3:30-5:30 pm]
- I am also available by appointment.

Contact information: The best way to contact me is through the "Mail" function within D2L. You can also contact me by regular email at ksalsbery@sfasu.edu. My office phone number is 936-468-2042. Please note that I cannot return long-distance phone calls.

Course description
An introduction to philosophy through the examination of prominent philosophical problems, topics and theorists.


- You can purchase a code from the on-campus bookstore or from the nearby Jack Backers bookstore that will enable you to purchase access to an electronic version of the textbook, including interactive content (called “LearnSmart”) designed to help you comprehend the material.
Program Learning Outcomes:

This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will acquire factual information concerning the nature of philosophy and the practice of critical thinking.
- Students will gain an understanding of certain fundamental philosophical problems and historically prominent conceptual systems associated with the philosophical disciplines of philosophy of the person, epistemology, and ethics.
- Students will come to recognize the importance of basic philosophical issues and distinctions in their own lives, and to analyze and evaluate the choices they make in regard to these issues.

Core Curriculum Objectives

PHI 153 is part of the university's Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

More detailed information concerning the core outcomes to be assessed in this class can be found following the Course Policies section of the syllabus.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

>> N.B. See the Course Timeline for a more detailed schedule.

Week #1 -- August 29-September 4
Getting Started - Introductory material, Get Acquainted Exercise and Discussion Instructions Quiz.

Week #2-4 -- September 5-22
Unit One: The Philosophical Journey

Lecture and textbook reading assignment on The Philosophical Journey; Unit 1 quizzes, discussion, dropbox assignment, Connect assignment, and additional online work.
Week #5-7 -- September 5-October 13
Unit Two: Mind and Body

Lecture and textbook reading assignment on Mind and Body; Unit 2 quizzes and discussion, dropbox assignment, Connect Assignment, and additional online work.

Week #8-11 -- October 16-November 10
Unit Three: Epistemology - The Search for Knowledge

Lecture and textbook reading assignment on Epistemology; Unit 3 quizzes and discussion, dropbox assignment, Connect Assignment, and additional online work.

Week #12-14 -- November 13-December 8
Unit Four: Ethics

Lecture and textbook reading assignment on Ethics; Unit 4 quizzes and discussion, dropbox assignment, Connect Assignment, and additional online work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

N.B. The Discussion Instructions quiz and the Get Acquainted Exercise are gateways to the graded unit discussions. They do not count toward your final grade.

- **Factual Quizzes: 20% of your total grade [200 points]**
  - There will be an open-book quiz during each unit to test your basic comprehension of the readings and lectures. You may attempt each quiz twice.

  - Quizzes will be available through the Quizzes tool in D2L. They can also be reached by a link from the Content Browser.

  - Each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade [50 points].

- **Thinking Skills Quizzes: 20% of your total grade [200 points]**

  - There will be an additional open-book quiz during each unit to enable you to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills with regard to the readings and lectures. You may attempt each quiz twice.

  - Bear in mind that these quizzes are more difficult than the factual quizzes.

  - Each Thinking Skills Quiz is worth 5% of your final grade [50 points].
- **Dropbox Assignments**: 20% of your total grade [200 points]
  - There will be one dropbox assignment during each unit to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the material in greater depth.
  - Each assignment will be based on one of the Boxed Exercises in your textbook.
  - There is a set of general requirements for all the Dropbox Assignment as well as specific requirements for each individual Dropbox Assignment. Pay close attention to these requirements; they are designed to help you earn a higher grade.
  - Dropbox Assignments are graded on a scale of 0-50. Each one is worth 5% of your final grade [50 points].

- **Discussion Participation**: 40% of your total grade [400 points]
  - Students are required to participate in graded group discussions during each of the four units. Your discussion grade is not solely based on the number of posts but on their clarity, thoughtfulness, and collegiality.
  - There are detailed discussion requirements available in the Getting Started module; you will need to pass a quiz on these requirements before you can participate in the first graded discussion.
  - Your participation in each discussion is graded on a scale of 0-100. Each one is worth 10% of your final grade [100 points].
  - The Get Acquainted discussion (in the Getting Started module), while required, is not graded; in addition to offering you an opportunity to get to know your classmates, it also offers you the opportunity to become experienced in using the discussion function in a low-stress situation.

- **Connect Exercises**: Up to +4% [40 points] extra credit with respect to your total grade.
- **Possible Additional On-line Work involving D2L or other online material (TBA)**

- **A note on deadlines**: Extensions may be available on individual assignments; contact the instructor if you have an extenuating circumstance. However, because of the group nature of the discussions, extensions are not available on discussions.
Notes on grading of written assignments (essays and reflection papers)

- The Reflection Papers will be graded on the basis of the following factors:
  - the accuracy of the course material that you apply in answering the question
  - your demonstration of the critical thinking skills that you will learn as part of the first unit
  - the organization of your material and your use of specific detail.

- Although I do not grade specifically on the basis of grammar, spelling, or punctuation, I expect your reflection papers to be written in such a way that they can be clearly understood. Errors that interfere with clarity will count against you. Keep in mind that trying to impress your instructor by using long words can backfire. To borrow an example from *The Wizard of Oz*, it's much better to spell and use "good deed-doers" correctly than to mangle "philanthropists."

You can find detailed rubrics for the Reflection Papers in the Getting Started folder in the Content Browser.

COURSE POLICIES

**Academic integrity** is the responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf),

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
Please note that quoting or closely paraphrasing the textbook or lecture without citation is plagiarism and will be penalized. Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive a grade of F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student's permanent file. If you feel that the instructor's determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeals process described in full at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

Disability accommodations: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Withheld Grades [Semester Grades Policy (A-54)]
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Acceptable Student Behavior
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.