STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Introduction to Philosophy
PHI 153.505
Fall 2017

Dr. Kim Díaz

OFFICE HOURS:
  MONDAY 12:00 –3:00 p.m. (online)
  E-MAIL ADDRESS: diazk3@sfasu.edu

Course Meeting Time and Place: Since this course meets entirely online, no class time or classroom has been assigned to this course.

Prerequisites for Course: None

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

Required Textbook:

All students must purchase access to an electronic version of the course textbook, including interactive content designed to help you comprehend the material, by contacting the publisher directly at <http://shop.mheducation.com/highered/product.M0078038340.html> or by purchasing a code at a local textbook store.

Course Requirements:
· Factual Quizzes – 20% of final course grade
· Thinking Skills Quizzes – 20% of final course grade
· Unit Discussions – 40% of final course grade
· Dropbox Assignments – 20% of final course grade
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.

General Education Core Curriculum:
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register your LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveText registration, please be sure to check your junk mail folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to LiveText this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to LiveText. Not every assignment will be collected for assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in LiveText this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in LiveText</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Epistemology Paper</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 2017 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Epistemology Paper</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 2017 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Epistemology Paper</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 2017 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
<td>Epistemology Paper</td>
<td>Dec. 11, 2017 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To measure the success of student acquisition of these mandated skills, students will construct a written assignment during the unit on epistemology that will dovetail with the specific philosophical theories covered during this unit of the course. This assignment will be a step driven single essay. Specific instructions for this assignment may be found in the course policies section of this syllabus. Completion of this assignment is required by the university and is an integral component in the successful completion of this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
1. Students will acquire factual information concerning the nature of philosophy and the practice of critical thinking.
2. 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.
3. 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.

**Course Policies**

1. **Student Conduct:** 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 (cf. 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 course requirements may be referred to the iCare Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

2. **Office Hours**
   Students may meet with the instructor during office hours by using the instant message function on the university’s Desire2Learn (D2L) website. The instructor will respond within ten (10) minutes to instant messages sent during her office hours.
3. **Getting Started Module – Mandatory Assignments**
   a. In order to be eligible to participate in required course activities, all students must complete three (3) mandatory assignments at the beginning of the semester. Each of these assignments may be found in the Getting Started module in the Content Browser section of the D2L site for the course.
   b. The first mandatory assignment is the Syllabus Quiz, which is a short quiz based on the syllabus and designed to make sure students have essential information concerning the course. Students must pass this quiz with a score of 100% and will be permitted to take this quiz as many times as necessary to achieve this score. Students who fail to earn the required score on the Syllabus Quiz will become ineligible to participate in all further course activities, including quizzes, discussions, and dropbox assignments. Although the Syllabus Quiz is a mandatory course assignment, your score on the Syllabus Quiz will NOT factor into your final course grade.
   c. The second mandatory assignment is participation in the Getting Acquainted Exercise, in which students participate in an online discussion designed to familiarize them with the discussion function of the D2L site for the course. Students must make at least four posts to this discussion: an initial post introducing themselves to the rest of the class and at least three posts responding to introductions posted by other students. The Getting Acquainted Exercise is a mandatory course assignment; students who fail to meet the requirements for participation in this exercise will be excluded from the group discussions required for each unit of the course. Although the Getting Acquainted Exercise is a mandatory course assignment, this assignment is ungraded and will NOT factor into your final course grade.
   d. The third mandatory assignment is the Discussion Instructions quiz, which is a short quiz that covers material from the Discussion Instructions document and the Unit Discussion Grading Rubrics document. This quiz is designed to familiarize students with the requirements of the unit discussions as well as strategies for performing well on these course requirements. Students must pass this quiz with a score of 100% and will be permitted to take this quiz as many times as necessary to achieve this score. Students who fail to earn the required score on the Discussion Instructions Quiz will become ineligible to participate in the four unit discussions in the course. Although the Discussion Instructions Quiz is a mandatory course assignment, your score on this quiz will NOT factor into your final course grade.
   e. **The deadline for each of these assignments is 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 4, 2017.** Any student who wishes an extension on any of these mandatory assignments must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.

4. **Factual Quizzes**
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to take an open-book quiz to demonstrate comprehension of basic information contained in the unit readings and course lectures.
   b. Each Factual Quiz will be worth a total of five (5) points and will typically consist of a combination of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
   c. Quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   d. Students may attempt each Factual Quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will be the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.
   e. At her discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a Factual Quiz during the designated period owing to serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on this type of quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.
5. **Thinking Skills Quizzes**
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to take an open-book quiz to demonstrate more complex, higher-order thinking skills to demonstrate understanding of the theoretical material contained in the unit readings and course lectures. The questions in the Thinking Skills Quizzes are more difficult than those in the Factual Quizzes, and students are urged to approach them thoughtfully.
   b. Each Thinking Skills Quiz will be worth a total of five (5) points and will typically consist of a combination of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
   c. Quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   d. Students may attempt each Factual Quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will be the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.
   e. At her discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a quiz during the designated period owing to serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.

6. **Unit Discussions**
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to participate in a group discussion to explore the unit material in greater detail. Specific requirements for participation in group discussions will be addressed during the Getting Started module for the course.
   b. In order to be eligible to participate in the group discussions, each student must (i) pass a quiz on the requirements for participating in group discussions and (ii) participate in the Getting Acquainted discussion. Students who have not completed both these requirements will not be permitted to participate in the group discussions. The deadlines for these requirements are 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 4, 2017.
   c. Student participation in group discussions will be graded on a ten (10) point scale. Students will be graded on the clarity, thoughtfulness, and collegiality of their discussion posts as well as on the number of their discussion posts.
   d. Discussions will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   e. Because student contributions to group discussions must be made in a timely manner, no extensions will be granted by the instructor regarding participation in a group discussion.

7. **Dropbox Assignments**
   a. During each unit of the course, each student will be required to complete one (1) Dropbox assignment to demonstrate his/her understanding of the unit material. Each Dropbox assignment will consist of a written essay, typically based on one of the boxed exercises found in the course textbook. Specific instructions and requirements will be provided for each Dropbox assignment.
   b. Dropbox assignments will be graded on a five (5) point scale. The rubrics used in grading Dropbox assignments are listed in the instructions for each Dropbox assignment.
   c. Dropbox assignments must be submitted through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
d. At her discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot complete the designated dropbox assignment during the designated period owing to serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a dropbox assignment must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the dropbox assignment.

8. **Core Assessment Assignment (= Dropbox Assignment 3)**

a. During the unit on epistemology, students must submit a core assessment assignment in order to assess their mastery of the competencies associated with the Language, Philosophy, and Cultural Foundation Component Area of the Core Curriculum. This assignment is mandatory and must be completed by every student.

b. The stylistic requirements for the assignment will be the completion of a four (4) to five (5) page essay that is stylistically clean and displays academic citation of all course material. The work will be typed and include a works cited page. While the content requirements have been broken down into a series of steps that build upon one another and thus highlight our learning process (see below), this assignment is to be written as a single, cohesive essay.

c. Step 1: As you have been introduced to a number of epistemological theories during the last several weeks, you are to choose TWO of those theories and provide a critical evaluation of each theory. Upon identifying and explaining each theory, you will then critically evaluate each theory. (This will tie into the Written Communication and Critical Thinking rubrics.)

d. Step 2: Next, you will transition from a direct analysis of an epistemological theory to an indirect analysis of a third theory. In this case, you are either to design your own cartoon or find a cartoon online that you believe comments on a third epistemological theory. After providing the cartoon, you will write an analysis of this image in which you identify and explain how the cartoon, in terms of its context and assumptions, comments on this third epistemological theory. (This will connect with the Critical Thinking and Written Communication rubrics, and will tie the visual to the written element.)

e. Step 3: Finally, you will conclude your paper with a personal discussion in which you identify the epistemological theory that you find most convincing and then critically explore how your choosing that theory will impact your own ethical self awareness in different contexts and your cultural self awareness as it is tied to such issues as civic responsibility or understanding your role in a regional, national, or global community. (This will tie to the Critical Thinking, Written Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility rubrics.)

f. As you can see from the description, this assignment interconnects with the Core Curriculum Objectives and will be used as part of the core assessment process. Therefore, you need to make yourself familiar with and work towards accomplishing those goals as found on the rubrics for Critical Thinking, Written Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility; these rubrics can be found at [http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/114.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/114.asp). These rubrics will be used to assess your essay.

g. Students who submit an essay that fulfills all the requirements of this assignment will receive a full score of five (5) points on this course requirement.

h. Because submission of the core assessment assignment is required for the core assessment process, which is not conducted by the course instructor, no extensions will be granted by the instructor regarding the core assessment assignment.
9. **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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

10. **Academic Integrity**
   a. Academic integrity is a 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.
   b. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: 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 one’s 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 read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp).
   c. Please note that quoting or closely paraphrasing the textbook or course lecture without citation is plagiarism and will be penalized.
   d. Students are required to be familiar with all items they submit in fulfillment of course requirements. If in the instructor’s opinion, a student does not demonstrate sufficient familiarity with any such item, the instructor may reject the item and assign the student a score of zero (0) for that item.
   e. Students in this course are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism in this course is subject to receiving a final course grade of “F.” Moreover, the student will be required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s personal file.
   f. A student who considers the instructor’s determination of academic dishonesty to be in error may take advantage of an appeals process described in full at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf).

11. **Grades**
   a. Midterm Grades: In accordance with university policy, students will be assigned a midterm grade in this course. This grade will be based on all course requirements completed prior to midterm. A student’s midterm grade is no guarantee of the student’s final course grade. A student with a passing midterm grade may still fail the course; a student with a failing midterm grade may still pass the course.
b. As course requirements are graded, the instructor will publish student grades to the D2L site for the course; if a grade has not been published on the D2L site for the course, the grade is not yet available. The instructor does not generally respond to requests to specify the date by which a particular course requirement will be graded, provide unpublished grades to students, compute current course averages for students, or compute the scores required by students on remaining course requirements to achieve a particular final grade in the course.

c. Withheld Grades: 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.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**
- **Getting Started Module:** August 28 – September 4
- **Unit One - The Philosophical Journey:** September 5 – September 22
- **Unit Two - Mind and Body:** September 25 – October 9
- **Unit Three - The Search for Knowledge:** October 10 – November 13
- **Unit Four - Ethics:** November 14 – December 8

**NOTE:** For a more detailed list of the activities and due dates associated with each unit, please refer to the Course Timeline, which is available in the Course Content section of the D2L page for the course.