"Philosophy begins in wonder.
And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a concern with the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, this course focuses on issues concerning philosophical theories of knowledge and reality, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. Possible topics: the nature of philosophy, the problem of skepticism and knowledge, mind and personal identity, and the nature and existence of God. Emphasis is on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking.

II. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

A. Problem Learning Outcomes:

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

B. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

- Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues.
- Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
- Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
III. GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:

A. Course Policies and Requirements:

- 20% Mid-Term Exam (Exam 1): 2 October
- 20% Second Exam (Exam 2): 6 November
- 20% Cumulative Final Exam (Exam 3): 11 December
- 20% Epistemology Paper: 16 October
- 20% Video Debate Analysis: 27 November (noon).

B. **Attendance is expected.** A complete attendance report may be filed with the student’s dean and the registrar with the final course grade. *In fact, more than one absence, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of “F” for this course.*

Please do not miss class! In view of your interests, too much is at stake.

C. All students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a cogent documented excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.

D. Because of the nature of these exams over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your best interest to attend class and proactively engage material, especially since each exam counts 25% towards your final grade.

E. Required Books:


1. This book will stimulate our thoughts regarding *ultimate questions* like:
   a. Where did we come from? (*origin*)
   b. What are we? Who are we? (*identity*)
   c. Why are we here? (*meaning*)
   d. How should we then live? (*morality*)
   e. What’s gone wrong with the world? (*evil*)
   f. What can be done to fix the problems of the world? (*hope*)

a. You will be tested on major themes of this book on second exam and could see it on final exam.

F. Exam Information:

- Each exam may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short discussion, and/or essay. You need scantron (882E) and blue books for mid-term exam. Please bring writing utensil and scantron. I will not be in a position to keep additional writing utensils, and 882E scantron. For final exam, all you need is 882 E scantron and number 2 pencil. I may request blue book for essay exams.

- Each exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings as dictated on course schedule or as directed by professor. Each exam will build upon one another.

- I may add additional required readings as deemed appropriate. I will inform you if the additional material will be added to quizzes or exams when I distribute the material in class.

- Take good notes. Recordings of any sort are not allowed for class lectures (except for ADA compliance).

- Any student who has to miss the mid-semester or second exam must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to re-take the exam within two class days. Otherwise, you will receive no credit (00). If you miss the final exam, contact me to take the exam immediately; otherwise, you receive no credit for the exam (00).

G. Paper:

- During the unit on Epistemology, students will construct a written assignment that will dovetail with the specific epistemological theories covered in that section of the course. The assignment will be a single essay that is step driven and may be described to the students in the manner seen below. While the sample directions below break the assignment into steps, this is a single essay and will be uploaded for each objective.

- Student Directions:

Following the unit on Epistemology, each student will complete and turn in a written assignment. The stylistic requirements for the assignment will be the completion of a four to five page essay that is stylistically clean and displays academic citation of all source material. The work will be typed and will 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 is to be written as a single, cohesive essay. The content steps are:

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.

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 to either design your own cartoon or find a cartoon online that you believe comments on a third epistemological. 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.

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 work is to be done in your words. All sources must be properly cited. Plagiarism, which is your responsibility to know what it is and how to avoid it, is totally unacceptable. Strict plagiarism policy is upheld. No “cut-in-paste” from internet. This paper is due **16 October** by noon and is to be uploaded to D2L.

H. Video Debate:

- You will watch **ONE** of the following three video debates and offer a 5-7 page critical review. Cover sheet is required. 12 size font. Romans/New Times. Proper grammar, citations, and punctuation are expected. If any other sources are consulted, bibliography is required.

- Summarize each major argument from both sides and offer a thoughtful response/critique using the philosophical tools you have gained in this class. Look for logical fallacies as studied in chapter 1 and consider the seven-fold criteria for evaluation:

  - Logical Coherence
  - Empirical Adequacy
  - Existential Relevance
Viability
Workability
Explanatory Power
Ethical and Aesthetic Values

➢ This paper is to be in your own words; plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever.

➢ All three debates are offered on youtube.com. Choose only one!

➢ The first debate is John Lennox vs. Richard Dawkins Debate: Has Science Buried God? Oxford Museum of Natural History hosts this debate. John Lennox of Oxford explains how science points to an intelligent creator and Richard Dawkins of Oxford offers a counterargument. This debate is 1:20. This paper is due 27 November by noon and is to be uploaded to D2L.

➢ The second debate is William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz: Is Goodness Without God Good Enough? This debate took place at Franklin & Marshall College. This debate is 1:39 long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2L by 27 November by noon.

➢ Third debate is Does God Exist between William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens. This 4 April 2009 debate took place at Biola university. This debate is 2.12 hours long. This paper is to be uploaded to D2L by 27 November by noon.

➢ Plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever. Your review and critique is to be in your own words.

IV. GENERAL RULES:

➢ No use of cell-phones, text-messaging, games, I-Pods (or equivalent), social utilities, or internet in class. No use of any technological device (unless ADA) that may be a distraction to the learning process. Laptops used exclusively for class-notes are acceptable. Please silence cell-phones before class. If you use the computer for other purposes than taking notes, then you will be asked to leave class.

➢ No smoking or use of tobacco will be permitted in the classroom.

➢ All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.

➢ Lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.

➢ No reading of newspapers, magazine, kindle books, and other materials for other classes.

➢ Respect your classmates and professor.
If you have to step out to the restroom be sure to do so quietly.

Do not bring attention to yourself.

Attendance is expected. *In fact, more than one absent, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of “F” for this course.*

I will be taking attendance at beginning of class. It is imperative that you be present and on-time.

If you are late to class you must inform me at end of class or you will be counted as absent.

If you are more than fifteen minutes late to my class, then you will be counted as absent.

If you are gone more than 15 minutes from class, then you will be counted as absent.

For every three times you are tardy to class (under 15 minutes), your excessive tardiness will be counted as one absence.

V. **HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:**

- Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?

- Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: *"What do I see?"* The more observations you make, the better your interpretation of the author’s position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, *"What does it mean?"

- After you outline the author's position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, *“What is the issue?”* Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?

- You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.

- Consider forming study groups to prepare for quizzes and exams.

- Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.

- Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a “morning person”, then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).
Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).

Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:

Read Thoughtfully
Read Repeatedly
Read Patiently
Read Selectively
Read Imaginatively
Read Purposefully
Read Acquisitively
Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler's informative work, How to Read a Book.

10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:

1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.

2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.

3. Be undivided! Do not separate one are of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.

4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!

5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depress from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for
excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.

7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy—because if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.

9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.

10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”

~Friedrich Nietzsche
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>I will be introducing you to some important ideas from the following books and authors:</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 August</td>
<td>Class Cancelled because of Hurricane Harvey; Professor couldn’t get out of Houston</td>
<td></td>
<td>Power of Ideas: Chapters 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 September</td>
<td>Introduction to Course: What is a worldview? What is Philosophy? Development of Critical Thinking Skills; How to study philosophy</td>
<td>Plato’s Republic Presocratic Philosophy</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, Chapters 3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 September</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology: Ancient (Plato; Aristotle), Medieval (Plotinus; St. Augustine; St. Aquinas)</td>
<td>Plato’s Republic</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, Chapters 5-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 September</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology continued: Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, &amp; Neo-Platonism Berkeley; Leibniz; Spinoza; Locke; Hume; Kant; Reid</td>
<td>Descartes’ Meditations</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, Chapters 7-9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 September</td>
<td>Continental Philosophy: Critical Theory; Structuralism; Postmodernism; Post-Structuralism; American Pragmatism: Experience as the starting point; Analytic Fallacy (problem of reductionism)</td>
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<td>Review chapters 1-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 October</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam.</td>
<td>Be on Time to Class!</td>
<td>Bring scantron form 882 E &amp; # 2 pencil.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 October</td>
<td>Introduction to Ethics</td>
<td>Be on time to</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapter 10</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
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<td>16 October</td>
<td>Virtue Ethics, Deontological Ethics, Natural Law</td>
<td>Selection 10:2, Aristotle's <em>Nicomachean Ethics</em> (beginning on pg. 292)</td>
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<td>Epistemology Paper Due</td>
<td>Continue reading <em>Amusing Ourselves to Death</em></td>
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<td>23 October</td>
<td>Introduction to Ethics:</td>
<td>Selection 10:6: Utilitarianism (beginning on pg. 299)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Virtue/Consequential Ethics</td>
<td>Selection 10.7: Friedrich Nietzsche: <em>Beyond Good and Evil</em> (beginning on pg. 301).</td>
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<td>Consequential Ethics; Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill); Egoism; Relativism; Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice (Carol Gilligan)</td>
<td>Be working on epistemology paper.</td>
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<td>30 October</td>
<td>Continuation of Ethics</td>
<td><em>Power of Ideas</em>, chapter 11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Existentialism/ Nihilism</td>
<td>Refine and Review Epistemology Paper</td>
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<td>6 November</td>
<td>Second Exam</td>
<td>Be on time to class!</td>
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<td>13 November</td>
<td>Introduction to Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td><em>Re-read Power of Ideas</em>, Chapter 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td><em>Re-read Power of Ideas</em>, Chapter 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Existence of God: Arguments;</td>
<td>Read selection 13.2 <em>Summa Theologica</em> by St. Thomas Aquinas</td>
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<td>Evidences; Existential; Religious Experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analysis is due on 27 November in hard copy and copy to be uploaded to D2L</td>
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<td>No extensions granted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<td>20 November</td>
<td>No class! Thanksgiving Break!</td>
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<td>27 November</td>
<td>Problem of Miracles (Hume); The Problem of evil (Finite God; Author of evil; Natural evil; Gratuitous Evil); Why Isn’t God’s existence more obvious? Philosophy of Religion continues. Video Debate Analysis is due at beginning of class. Hard copy and copy to be uploaded to D2L No extensions granted.</td>
<td>St. Augustine Thomas Aquinas Pascal’s Pensees Re-read <em>Power of Ideas</em>, chapter 13. Read “Aesthetic Universals” by Denis Dutton</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 December</td>
<td>FINAL CUMULATIVE EXAM</td>
<td>6:45pm-8:45pm Bring scantron &amp; # 2 pencil</td>
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VII. OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:

A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor’s discretion.

B. I’m here for you. It is best to contact me by e.mail to make an office appointment.

C. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic honesty 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/academic_integrity.asp,

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 class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another person in another in 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 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.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive an 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 the instructor's determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeal process described in full at www.http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp.

D. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:

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.
E. **Students with Disabilities:**

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/).

**EXTRA NOTES:**

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”

~ Dr. Seuss