Class Time: TR 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Classroom: Paul L. Boynton Building 212 (BO 212)

Dr. Owen M. Smith

Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies

OFFICE: Paul L. Boynton Building 208B (BO 208B)
OFFICE HOURS:
    MONDAY 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
    TUESDAY 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
    WEDNESDAY 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
    THURSDAY 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
    and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS: omsmith@sfasu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: (936) 468-2367

Prerequisites for Course: None

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

Required Textbook:

Course Requirements:
Examination 1: The Philosophical Enterprise, Rational Discourse, and the Foundations of Epistemology – 35% of final course grade
Examination 2: Epistemology – 35% of final course grade
Examination 3: Philosophy of the Person and Philosophy of Mind – 30% 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.

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 Credit Justification:
Typically meets three times each week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, complete two exams, a final exam, an epistemology essay and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Course Policies:
1. Class Attendance and Conduct
   a. Since in-class exercises and discussions of course material are an essential part of the course work, each student is required to attend every class session. Students are required to be punctual in their attendance and to remain in class until the end of each class session, with the exception of breaks announced by the instructor. Behavior that is disrespectful to the instructor or to other students is not acceptable during class.
   b. 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 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.
   c. Attendance will be taken each class session either verbally or in the form of an attendance sheet to be signed by each student. Each student is responsible for making sure that his/her attendance has been recorded for each class session. Attendance at a class session may be recorded only during that session.
d. Students are not permitted to use cell phones or other electronic devices such as laptop computers during class or to have cellphones on their desks or laps during class sessions; during all class sessions, including examinations, these devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. The instructor may also require students to remove their personal possessions, such as backpacks, from their desktops during class. A penalty of one (1) partial absence will be assessed for each violation of this policy.

e. Excessive absences will result in a failing course grade. Students who arrive late to class or leave class early are assigned partial absences; for every two (2) partial absences, one (1) full absence will be assessed against a student's attendance record. A student who accumulates more than six (6) absences during the semester are subject to receiving a variety of penalties up to and including a final course grade of “F.” Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record and recognizing when their final course grade is endangered by excessive absences. Students who miss class sessions owing to late registration will not be charged with these absences provided that they meet with the instructor in the first three weeks of the semester to discuss the syllabus and review missed material.

f. Students are responsible for all material addressed and all exercises performed in class regardless of their attendance record. Students who miss class are encouraged to obtain notes from a classmate and review these notes with the instructor.

2. Office Hours
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office during his regularly scheduled office hours. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office during regularly scheduled office hours do not need to make an appointment; the instructor will meet with students on a first come, first served basis.
   b. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office outside of regularly scheduled office hours must make an appointment with the instructor ahead of time.
   d. Students can contact the instructor outside of regularly scheduled office hours by email at the instructor's university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu), by telephone at the instructor's office phone number (936-468-2367), or by using the email function or the instant message function on the university's Desire2Learn (D2L) website.

3. Examinations
   a. The instructor will provide fair notice of each examination and will clearly identify the material for which students will be responsible. It is the instructor's custom to schedule extra office hours prior to each examination and to hand out a study guide containing sample problems and exercises.
   b. Students are required to follow all directions provided on the examinations. Failure by a student to follow directions on an examination may result in penalties being assessed against that student’s examination grade. Partial credit will be awarded on the examinations. Students should attempt to respond to every problem and essay topic on the examinations; even if a student does not finish a response, s/he will earn points for work shown.
   c. Any student who anticipates missing an examination is required to make every reasonable effort to notify the instructor prior to the examination. Following a missed examination, a student is required to contact the instructor in writing prior to the next class session, circumstances permitting, to request a make-up examination. The instructor may refuse to administer make-up examinations to students who, in his judgment, have not met these requirements. Under ordinary circumstances, the instructor does not administer make-up examinations once the original examination has been graded and returned to the class.
d. A student who wishes to take a make-up examination must submit a written request to the instructor identifying the course in which the student is enrolled, the number and date of the missed examination, and the reason for missing the examination. This document must be submitted to the instructor at the time of the make-up examination; make-up examinations will not be administered to students who have not submitted a written request.

e. The instructor will administer make-up examinations without penalty only to those students who could not take an examination at the designated time owing to serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes to take a make-up examination without a grade penalty must attach to his/her written request some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the original examination. The instructor may, at his discretion, administer a make-up examination with a substantial grade penalty to students who fail to take an examination at the designated time without an acceptable excuse.

f. The format, time, and circumstances of make-up examinations are at the discretion of the instructor.

g. The third examination will be administered during the final examination period. Students who have multiple examinations on the same day during the final examination period and wish to reschedule the final examination in this course are required to consult the instructor before the beginning of the final examination period. In no case will the instructor administer the third examination prior to the end of classes.

4. 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>.

c. 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 (0.0) for that item.

d. 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 will receive 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.

5. 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/>.
6. **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.

7. **Midterm Grade:** In accordance with university policy, students will be assigned a midterm grade in this course. This grade will be based upon 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.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Week 1 (August 27 – August 29): Orientation; The Philosophical Enterprise – Reflections on philosophy
Week 2 (September 03 – 05): The Philosophical Enterprise – Formal definition of the term “philosophy;” Critical Thinking: The Prerequisites of critical thinking
Week 3 (September 10 – September 12): Critical Thinking – Central activities of critical thinking; Rational Discourse: The First canon of rational discourse
Week 4 (September 17 – 19): Rational Discourse: The Second and third canons of rational discourse
Week 5 (September 24 – 26): Rational Discourse: The Fourth canon of rational discourse; Foundations of Epistemology I
Week 6 (October 01 – 03): Foundations of Epistemology II; **FIRST EXAMINATION**
Week 7 (October 08 – 10): The Central Problem of Epistemology; Descartes' Dream Argument; Putnam's Brain in a Vat Thought Experiment; Descartes' Evil Demon Thought Experiment
Week 8 (October 15 – 17): Locke's Inverted Spectrum Thought Experiment
Week 9 (October 22 – 24): Skepticism
Week 10 (October 29 – 31): Solipsism
Week 11 (November 05 – 07): Problem of Identity – Foundations; **SECOND EXAMINATION**
Week 12 (November 12 – 14): Cartesian insights and Proposed solutions;
Week 13 (November 19 – 21): Philosophy of Mind – Turing’s Imitation Game Thought Experiment
Week 14 (November 26 – 28): **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
Week 15 (December 03 – 05): Gilbert Ryle’s Philosophy of Mind; Searle’s Chinese Room Thought Experiment

**THIRD EXAMINATION: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 8:00 – 10:30 A.M.**