Course description
An introduction to philosophy through the examination of prominent philosophical problems, topics and theorists. We will examine responses to the following questions:

- What is philosophy?
- How is rational discourse conducted?
- How do we justify our knowledge claims?
- What does it mean to be a human being?
- How do we decide the right thing to do?

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 knowledge concerning critical thinking, epistemology, philosophy of the person, and ethics.
- Students will gain familiarity with certain fundamental philosophical questions and historically prominent conceptual systems, as well as an understanding of the progression of ideas within philosophical disciplines.
- 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.
- Students will acquire the skill of recognizing and exploring philosophical concepts and assumptions as dramatized in fictional narratives.

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.

Course Materials
All necessary texts will be provided online through the D2L website for the course.

Grading Criteria
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural event reflections</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussion/presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Cultural event reflections
Throughout the semester, I will let you know about upcoming events that you can attend on campus, such as talks by guest speakers, dramatic productions, and panel presentations. You are required to attend two such events and to write a short reflection about each one, using a template that I will supply, in which you relate the event to something you are learning about or have learned about in this class. The template for the reflections will be available on the D2L website for the course. The **first reflection is due by midterms; the second, before Thanksgiving.**

Group discussion/presentation
During each of the three major units (Epistemology, Mind/Body, and Ethics), we will spend time in class watching a pop culture product, such as a television show, that relates directly to the material we are covering at the time. The class will be divided into three groups; each group is responsible for explaining to the class how one of these pop culture products relates to the material. Each group will be assigned a discussion space on D2L to use in sharing ideas and planning a group presentation; the group will also have early access to the video online. Questions will be provided by the instructor to help guide each group in analyzing the episode. The presentation may take any format the group chooses, as long as it is not obscene or offensive, such as a PowerPoint, a game, or a skit. It is essential to engage your classmates during the presentation. The class day before each presentation will be a Prep Day; all the students in the group who are presenting, and only those students, will come to class for a final rehearsal of your presentation.

- The **discussion portion** of the assignment will be individually graded on the basis of your contributions to the online space in preparation for the presentation. It is worth 10 points.
- The **actual presentation** will be graded on the correctness and completeness of the references to the source material and on your success in engaging your classmates actively during your presentation. It is worth 10 points.
- All group members are required to complete a **questionnaire** describing their experience with their fellow group members.
- **Note:** You must be in attendance on the day of your group’s presentation, or you will receive a zero for this portion of the assignment. Therefore, if you know that there is a day when you will not be able to be in class, let me know by the second week of classes, before groups are assigned.

Examinations
Midterm
The midterm exam will be held on Tuesday, October 15. It will cover Rational Discourse, Epistemology, and the first part of the Mind-Body Problem. The exam format will be multiple-choice. Bear in mind that the exam will include questions based on your classmates’ presentation on epistemology.

Final
The final exam will be held on Tuesday, December 10. It will cover the Mind-Body Problem and Ethics. The exam format will be similar to the midterm. Once again, the exam will include questions based on your classmates’ presentations on the mind-body problem and ethics.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 27-29</td>
<td>Syllabus; definition of philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 3-5</td>
<td>Rational Discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>September 10-October 3</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>October 8-November 7</td>
<td>The Mind-Body Problem</td>
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**The midterm will be held on October 15**

| 12-15   | November 12-December 6 | Ethics                      |

**The final exam will be held on Tuesday, December 10 from 10:45 a.m.to 1:15 p.m.**

**Tentative Presentation Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Film shown in class</th>
<th>Online discussion</th>
<th>Prep Day</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>September 19-October 1</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>October 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind-Body</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>October 24-November 5</td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>November 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>November 12-21</td>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>December 3</td>
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Additional Policies

- **Attendance is required.** A student who accumulates more than six absences, *whether excused or unexcused*, may receive a final grade of "F" for the course. The only time you need to present me with paperwork for an excused absence is when you miss a test; otherwise it makes no difference. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own absences and recognizing when their grade is endangered.

- **Missed examinations** must be made up as quickly as possible. Students with a serious and documented excuse may make up tests during the semester without penalty as long as they do so before the next class day. Students without an excuse have one week to make up tests, but there will be a 10% penalty per class day until the test is taken. The final must be taken on its scheduled date.

- **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/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-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.

  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/final-course-grade-appeals-by-students-6.3.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/final-course-grade-appeals-by-students-6.3.pdf).

- **Cell phones**
  - Cell phones and other electronic communication devices must be turned off during class. Any student whose cell phone rings during a regular class will be counted absent for that day. Any student who uses a cell phone to send or receive text messages during a regular class, or who uses a cell phone or any other electronic device in any other disruptive way, will be assessed two absences. Repeated offenses will incur further penalties.
  - Cell phones must be turned off and *stowed out of sight* during tests. Any student whose cell phone rings during a test or quiz or who looks at a cell phone during an examination must turn in whatever work has been completed (which will form the basis of the student's grade on that test) and leave the room.
  - Requests for exemptions from this policy may be granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor.

- **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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

- **Credit hours:** 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, and typically complete multiple 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. Online or hybrid version of Introduction to Philosophy contains extensive reading and written content which includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture course receive. Students engage in online modules for at least three hours per week. Students typically complete four discussion posts, multiple quizzes, four essays in addition to regular homework assignments. For every hour engaging with content, students spend at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.
• **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 iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

• **General Education Core Curriculum**
  The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: 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.

  By enrolling in PHI 153 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement, "To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making."