

Preliminary Syllabus - Philosophy 153.003 [PHI-153-003] ver. 1.0
Division of Multidisciplinary Programs
Introduction to Philosophy
SP, 2019
Tues & TH -- [TR], 2:00 -3:15 pm
Boynton 212

Instructor: Dr. Kelly J. Salsbery
Phone: 936-468-2042
E-Mail: ksalsbery@sfasu.edu
Office: Boynton 208D

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Socrates

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” -- Plato’s Apology (quoting Socrates).

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

You are both invited and encouraged to see me during office hours and/or by appointment.

Tentative Office Hours:
Tuesday: 3:30-5:30 pm
Wednesday: 11 am-Noon and 1-2 pm
Thursday: 11:00 am-1:00 pm
and by appointment

(Note: University Meetings or Personal Appointments may conflict with this schedule at times.)

(1) Course Description from the SFA General Bulletin: In addition to a concern with the goals, nature and methods of philosophy, focus 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 on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic and critical thinking.

(2) General Course Description: This is an introductory course in philosophy. In addition to some preliminary remarks concerning the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, this course will focus on issues concerning various philosophical theories of knowledge and reality (while drawing on many ideas from a variety of disciplines). The topics that we shall address include the nature of philosophy, the problem of skepticism and knowledge, mind and personal identity, the nature of reality, and the nature and existence of God. Moreover, these philosophical issues shall be addressed in a historical context. During the first half of the semester a significant amount of time will be spent addressing the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking. The ideas and issues in this course are admittedly controversial, and they often involve a strong emotional attachment. Although we may have a strong emotional attachment to certain positions, we need to learn how to reason clearly and critically about them. I believe that good philosophy requires clear, precise, and rigorous thinking (even with respect to our most cherished beliefs).
(3) Formal Course Objectives & Assessment

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.

Exemplary Educational Objectives:

1. Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues
2. Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements
3. Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy
4. Ability to formulate, express, and support opinions on the philosophical issues covered in the course
5. Knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will acquire factual knowledge concerning critical thinking and conduct of rational discourse.
2. Students will gain familiarity with certain fundamental philosophical problems and historically prominent conceptual systems associated with the philosophical disciplines of epistemology, philosophy of the person, philosophy of religion, 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.

This course can be both enjoyable and rewarding if one participates fully. Attendance and class participation are crucial to success in this class. (Hence, both attendance and class participation are required!!)

[Note: I reserve the right to alter any policies or conditions stated in this syllabus at any time during the semester should such alterations better facilitate meeting the objectives of the course.]

(4) General Course Objectives: I hope that you will become familiar with these important areas of philosophical concern, with the sorts of questions philosopher’s find important, and with the methods they employ to approach these questions. We will explore topics that have engaged philosophers, and anyone who has taken the time to reflect on them. Indeed, philosophical reflection and discussion can be a lot of fun. A significant amount of time will be spent discussing issues in class. Hopefully, analysis and presentation of arguments, discussion of issues, and writing will help you to further develop your writing and reasoning skills.

[Note: You must obtain a copy of the required text. Also, copies of some materials may be put on reserve in the Library.](See the note below concerning texts.)

>>Web: Information related to this course may be found on our course D2L Page. [Other selected readings may be distributed in class, placed on (or linked to) our D2L page, or put on reserve in the library.] This will involve some additional cost. [You will need to print out some of this material for class.]

(6) Course Format: In this course I shall employ a number of different teaching methods. Much of the time, I shall use a lecture/discussion format. I shall also use a version of the so-called Socratic method. This involves a question-based dialogue between you (the class) and me. I will also employ small-group exercises, individual in-class writing exercises, possibly some on-line conferencing, and computer-assisted instruction. Students may also be expected to participate in discussion, debates, and presentations. The emphasis in this course is on critical thinking, collaborative learning, and active learning. Also, communication and interaction are crucial!
(7) Tentative Grading Criteria:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Misc. Work</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(100 class points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3 in-class Exams total [2 Exams and a Final]</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>(750 class points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Online Discussion(s)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(100 class points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Short Assessment Paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>(50 class points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Attendance (penalties for unexcused absences over 3)</td>
<td>(-10%, -20%, or an F in the course)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. (Participation in activities to enable the instructor recognize you, (possibly) an individual self-evaluation, and a course evaluation are also required!! Also, acquiring the text is required!!)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: There will also be opportunities for extra credit.)

Also Note: Class participation may raise your final grade (if it is excellent) or decrease your final grade (if your attendance is poor). [Warning: excessive absences will result in an additional penalty and/or an F in the course. >> Anyone missing more than a few classes for any reason other than a serious illness or an extended family emergency will likely have a decreased final grade.] >> This evaluation breakdown is open to modification and negotiation. Components may be added or deleted. The weights of the other components will be modified accordingly. (Please also note that much of your grade will not be determined until the end of the semester.)

(8) Course requirements

(a) You are required to attend all class sessions, participate fully in class, and to complete all assignments. You should do any work outside class on a computer or word processor. This will greatly simplify both revision and study and it will give you a skill that you can apply elsewhere. In any case, I will likely require most homework assignments and any papers (that are handed in) to be typed.

(b) All students in this class must have access to a computer. I am requiring you to activate and use your University computer account and Brightspace D2L. One way that you can reach me is via electronic mail. Also, this class will likely use Internet conferencing for discussion outside of class and additional material will be posted on D2L. We will also likely do exercises using the computer during the course of the semester. The upshot is that on-line work and computer-assisted instruction are crucial components of this course. Hence, failure to have access to a computer or failure to obtain a computer account will result in a significant grade reduction.

(c) I expect common courtesy and civility in this class. I expect you to be courteous to me and to each other. Thus, any talking (or whispering) while someone else is talking, sleeping in class, reading the newspaper or materials unrelated to the course, or other sorts of disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Moreover, I expect you to be in class, to be on time, to be prepared for class, and to participate fully. Do not begin packing up your belongings before the end of class. Also, do not leave class early. If you absolutely must leave early, please let me know in advance. Schedule your appointments outside of class time. (Lack of common courtesy, habitual lateness, or absences will result in a grade reduction.) [See especially material in the Soccio book (on reserve)] (Also, please make sure to turn off any electronic communication devices (such as pagers and cell phones) before class!) [See p. 9 of this syllabus!!] Please carefully note the following university policy statement:

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.

(d) I expect any assignments and papers to be handed in on time. Materials that are late for any reason will be penalized. [Most due dates are subject to individual negotiation at least 48 hours in advance.]

(9) Class Attendance Policy: Punctual attendance at all class meetings is required. (Each student should keep track of his or her absences!!) Your attendance will be determined by roll call, sign-in sheets, and/or on the basis of in-class work handed in. Because I consider student attendance crucial to fulfilling the learning objectives of the course, I will penalize absences as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>(No penalty) -- 3 free unexcused absences!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>a one grade reduction (-100 pts.) in the final grade (e.g., A → B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>a two grade reduction (-200 pts.) in the final grade (e.g., A → C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>Automatic F in the Course (e.g., A → F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

>> (Thus, missing class once a week (over the course of the semester) will earn you an F in this class! The basic point is simple. If you don’t want to come to class, then don’t take this course from me!!)<br>
Also, please note that exams, quizzes, focus exercises, group exercises, and other in-class work cannot be made up. In general, there will be no makeup exams or quizzes, but this will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Also, other specific in-class work missed because of absence cannot be made up.

Students will not be penalized for legitimate absences, however. First, if you miss one or two days of routine in-class work, the loss should not be significant. Also, there will be opportunities for extra credit work during the course of the semester. Missing a great deal of work or missing a major component of your grade (an exam, for instance) is, however, very serious. Thus, you will need to fill out a copy of the excuse form (to be posted on-line). If it is accepted, then that part of your grade may be shifted to your final exam. (In some instances involving documented cases of illness or family emergency a student may negotiate to do work to take the place of previously missed work.) Those involved in athletics, work, or other activities should talk to me as soon as possible. In general, habitual absence for any reason is not acceptable. Please note that according to the SFA University Policy, the maximum number of excused and unexcused absences (together) is six.

(10) Class Participation: Class participation includes open discussion and debate in class and in small groups, raising and answering questions, and possibly posting to an on-line discussion forum at least 2-3 times a week (or so) probably starting the second or third week of class. [Guidelines for numbers and types of postings will be addressed on my web page.] Also, throughout the semester students (individually or in small groups) will present material concerning the readings for a given day and/or lead the class discussion concerning the readings.

[[If time permits, there may be additional opportunities for informal interaction outside of class (for instance, over lunch or coffee). These opportunities will be strictly optional, however.]]

(11) Assignments, Papers, and Exams: Many in-class and homework assignments will be graded credit/no-credit. For such assignments, you will receive credit if you make a good faith effort to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. During the semester I will provide specific guidelines for papers, quizzes, and exams.

(12) Group Work: All students are required to participate in group work during the term. More details concerning this will be announced.
(13) Some additional important points to keep in mind:

(a) Please address me as “Dr. Salsbery” or “Professor Salsbery” (or simply as “Professor”). Also, please do not address me as “Mr. Salsbery.” First, this is not High School. Second, I have a Ph.D. and I am a professor. Thus, you should use my title. Third, when you use “Mr. Salsbery,” it makes me think that you are talking to my late father (or that you are perhaps trying to sell me something)!

(b) I have a large number of students this semester. Thus, except as a last resort, please do not phone or e-mail me concerning routine matters such as what has been assigned or when some item is due. (Imagine my phone ringing every 5 minutes with such questions.) You should get this information in class, or from a classmate. Information concerning some assignments may be posted on the web page and/or distributed by e-mail, but technical difficulties may at times prevent such information from being communicated in a timely fashion. I will not accept this as an excuse for missing or late work.

(c) Never cheat on any exam or assignment. I favor a strict interpretation of the SFA academic policy concerning dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) and it would behoove you to do so as well. (Students found to be engaged in any instance of academic dishonesty in this course will receive an automatic F for the semester!) 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. The University Definition of Academic Dishonesty is as follows:

“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.” (from the SFA Policy A-9.1)

(d) At times I will suggest outside reading and lectures. I shall also suggest techniques that you can use to improve your reasoning and study skills. Most of these will be optional, but I would encourage you to consider them.

(e) If there is any student in this class who has special needs (including test-taking or note-taking accommodation), please discuss this with me as soon as possible. I am also very sympathetic to the special concerns of non-traditional students. 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/.

(f) 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.

(g) Plan on working at least 2-3 hours per week outside of class for every hour spent in class. Philosophy is not a spectator sport. It is a difficult and rigorous area of study. This course is no exception. Thus, there is a great deal of extremely difficult reading and writing that go along with this course. In order to succeed you
must both do the work and come to class. The amount of work in this class can be heavy at times, but it is consistent with other such courses taught throughout North America.

(h) I do not repeat lectures. I do, however, (at times) review significant portions of previous material (especially difficult or technical material). Also, I will (at times) read out loud material from the text or supplements in order to facilitate your understanding of the material.

(i) Some of the exercises that you complete in class are so-called active learning exercises and are simply graded credit/no-credit. In general, active learning exercises are not graded in detail and I don’t write comments on them. Moreover, they typically are not returned. Other exercises are designed for you to include in your notes, and some exercises may be graded and returned.

(j) By the end of the semester you will have some idea of your grade average for the work you have completed. SFA will communicate your final grade to you (and you can access it on-line). In general, I do not post final grades or discuss grades over the telephone or by e-mail. You should see me in person or ask about your grade via the U.S. mail.

(14) Preliminary Course Schedule [this schedule is subject to modification and negotiation]:

**Note:** readings, assignments, homework, short papers, and schedule changes generally will be announced in class. They may also be posted on the web page or communicated by other means. In the past, I did not provide a detailed listing of readings and homework assignments in the syllabus. The pace and coverage of this course is generally determined by our class discussion and by the needs and abilities of the students. This strategy has enabled me to make the course much more relevant and flexible.

>>> A Tentative Calendar/Schedule of Topics for 15 weeks -- (Subject to Revision!!)<<<

Students and other reviewers of this syllabus should note that in order to comply with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) syllabus requirements, in the following I “list the topics that the course will cover and indicate the approximate amount of time to be devoted to each either by percent of course time or number of weeks.” [from Syllabus Guidelines, p. 2]

>>> Misc. Online Exams, Quizzes, Discussions, and/or Assignments [TBA]

>>> The First (In-class) Exam is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, 2/26.

>>> The Second (In-class) Exam is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, 4/9.

>>> Short Assessment Paper – [Due date TBA]

>>> [Final] -- The final exam time is noted in the Schedule of Classes: 1-3 pm Tues., 5/14

> Note: There are no classes on Tues. 3/19 and TH 3/21 (due to Spring Break), and TH 4/18 due to Easter.

**TENTATIVE** Course Topic Calendar

[Note: This is a very tentative Schedule and I reserve the right to modify it or change it as needed.]

♦ The first half to 2/3 of the course (roughly):

   **Topics:** What is the nature of Philosophy and how is it related to education? – (Around 20% of the course)
   Critical Thinking, Logic, and other Philosophical Tools – (Around 20-25% of the course)
   Knowledge, Perception, and Skepticism – (Around 20% of the course)

   **Readings:** Selected readings from the text and supplemental material.

♦ Topics and readings for the remainder of the course to include:

   **Topics:** Mind and body/human nature/personal identity/ – (Around 15-20% of the course),
   The nature and existence of God; etc. – (Around 15-20% of the course)

   **Readings:** Selected readings from the text and supplemental material.

[Note: This is a very tentative Schedule and I reserve the right to modify it or change it as needed.]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class #1 – T [1/22]</td>
<td>Syllabus &amp; Introduction to the Course. The Nature of Philosophy</td>
<td>In-class &amp; Online Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #4 – TH [1/31]</td>
<td>The “Allegory of the Cave” and Groupthink, Defining Philosophy</td>
<td>[OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #6 – TH [2/7]</td>
<td>Introduction to Philosophical Tools</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #2 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #8 – TH [2/14]</td>
<td>Plato’s <em>Euthyphro</em> &amp; Philosophical Tools</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #2 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;Class #11 – T [2/26]</td>
<td>Exam #1 in class!</td>
<td>Coverage - Material through 2/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #13 – T [3/5]</td>
<td>Intro. to Theories of Knowledge</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #3 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #19 – T [4/2]</td>
<td>Intro. to the Mind/Body Problem</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #6 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;Class #21 – T [4/9]</td>
<td>Exam #2 in class!</td>
<td>Coverage: Cumulative with a focus on material since Exam #1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #23 – T [4/16]</td>
<td>Functionalism</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #6 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt;TH [4/18]</td>
<td>No class – Easter Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #25 – TH [4/25]</td>
<td>Personal Identity (continued)</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #5 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #27 – TH [5/2]</td>
<td>Cosmological Arguments</td>
<td>[Rauhut] Chapt. #7 &amp; [OL&amp;S]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;Final Exam- T [5/14]</td>
<td>Final Exam – 2-3 pm!</td>
<td>Coverage: Cumulative with a focus on material since Exam #2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Who is my instructor? Dr. Kelly J. Salsbery began teaching at SFA in 2001 as an Assistant Professor in the SFA Philosophy Program. He is tenured and is the University Pre-Seminary Advisor. Kelly is originally from Cherokee, Iowa. He has a B.S. in physics and mathematics with an astronomy minor, and a B.A. in philosophy (with a religious studies emphasis) from Iowa State University in Ames. He also did some graduate work in physics and astronomy at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Kelly has an M.A. in philosophy from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. He graduated with a Ph.D. in philosophy from Syracuse University (in Syracuse, New York) in 1995. Kelly previously taught philosophy part-time at Syracuse University, as an adjunct at Le Moyne College (in Syracuse), and for three years as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Northern Illinois University. His research areas of interest include metaphysics, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of science and technology, philosophy of religion, and applied ethics. Kelly enjoys reading, movies, computers, the Internet, science fiction, studying Norse/ Germanic & Celtic mythology and religion, listening to music, and spending time with his wife, Annette, their 21-year old daughter, Miranda, and their dog, a Jack Russell-terrier mix named Liberty (alias – the Terrierist!).*
Be courteous in class. Discourtesy pollutes the classroom, laboratory, or athletic field. Rude comments, hostile or disinterested body language, communicating with other students during lectures or while others have the floor, and so on, sends a message (intentional or not) of indifference and contempt for others and for the educational activity in progress. Discourtesy distracts and disturbs serious students, students fulfilling their obligations to themselves and the learning community. Discourtesy may also draw the kind of attention to you that negatively affects your grades. [Soccio, p. 31]

If you can't resist communicating with your friends during class, don't sit near them. All discussion in class should relate to the class. Fidgeting, mumbling, or passing notes interferes with the concentration of others and deprives them of their very basic right to a congenial learning environment. It also prevents you from learning along with the rest of the class, which can increase or foster feelings of alienation, defensiveness, and boredom. [Soccio, p. 31] From Soccio, Douglas J., 2007. How to Get the Most Out of Philosophy. Sixth ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

Students violating the following rules may be asked to leave class and may receive a grade reduction.
If we all make every effort to be respectful and courteous we should have little trouble in our class. If, however, an individual chooses to ignore such considerations, then that person may be asked to leave class on a given day or may even be permanently excluded from this class.

1) You should address questions or comments to the class as a whole.[Don't chat!] That is, please don't talk, whisper, pass notes, text or communicate with other students in any other way while I am speaking (or while anyone else is speaking, or during videos, presentations, etc.).

2) Please get your sleep at home. You need to be as focused, alert, and active with the material during class as possible. To do this you need to take careful notes and jot down any questions or comments that come to mind concerning the material during class.

3) You should be reading only the text(s) or your notes at the beginning and during the course of the class. [That is, please don't read the newspaper or other materials during class!]

4) Be in class on time and be ready to go when class is scheduled to start. If you must arrive late or leave early, please let me know in advance (or you may be counted as absent).

5) Please pack up and get ready to leave after the end of class when you have been dismissed. Please do not begin packing up your belongings 5-10 minutes before the end of class!

6) Schedule your appointments and other commitments outside of class time

7) Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, music players, etc. before class and stow them away.

8) You should obtain your own copies of any required course texts or other materials ASAP and bring them to class daily.

9) Students should raise grievances, specific concerns, questions about how your work has been graded, or detailed inquiries concerning course structure or pedagogy outside of class. (Please do so in a calm and respectful manner.) I will not openly debate issues of this sort in class.

10) Finally, please refrain from using the language of consumerism when discussing difficulties you have with the course. (For example, “My tuition pays your salary, and so, I deserve X.”) Also, please do not inform me as to what grade you need in the course. The grade you earn is based solely on how well you perform in the class.