INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
PHI 153.004
Spring 2020

Class Time: TR 12:30 - 1:45 p.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 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.
   TUESDAY 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
   WEDNESDAY 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
   THURSDAY 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
   and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS: osmith@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 Text:

Course Requirements:
• Examination 1: The Philosophical Enterprise, Rational Discourse, and the Foundations of Epistemology – 30% of final grade
• Examination 2: Epistemology – 30% of final course grade
• Examination 3: Philosophy of the Person and Philosophy of Mind – 30% of final grade
• Cultural Reflections: 10% of final 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 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 iCare 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. Students are responsible for making sure that their 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. Any student who accumulates more than six (6) absences during the semester is subject to receiving 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 two 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. Contact Information
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students in his office (BO 208B). 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. 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.
   b. Students can also contact the instructor by email either through the Brightspace (D2L) website for the course or by using the instructor’s university email address (omsmith@sfasu.edu).
   c. Students can also reach the instructor through his university telephone number (936-468-2367); if the instructor is not available, please leave a message and he will return your call.
   d. Students can ask questions concerning course material or course requirements by making use of the Pager function of the Brightspace (D2L) website for the course or by making a post to the Open Question Forum discussion available on this site.

3. Examinations
   a. The instructor will provide fair notice of each examination and will clearly identify the material for which students will be responsible. The examinations will consist primarily of essay questions. 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 students do not finish a response, they 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. Students who wish to take a make-up examination without a grade penalty must attach to their 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. Cultural Reflections

a. Every student is required to attend at least two (2) cultural events on campus and submit a cultural reflection form to the instructor providing information about each event and relating each event to topics addressed in class during the course of the semester. The instructor will make periodic announcements of eligible cultural events, which may include talks by guest speakers, dramatic productions, films, panel presentations, and symposia. Students are also encouraged to notify the instructor of eligible events so that he can inform the remainder of the class. For an event to be eligible for a cultural reflection, the instructor must approve the event prior to the submission of any cultural reflection forms.

b. The cultural reflection form will be posted by the instructor on the Brightspace (D2L) site for the course and must be submitted to an online dropbox provided by the instructor for this purpose.

c. The first cultural reflection form is due by Friday, March 06, 2020; the second cultural reflection form is due by Friday, April 24, 2020. Each cultural reflection is worth 5% of a student's final course grade.

5. 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. If the instructor makes a finding that a student has committed an act of cheating or plagiarism in this course, that student is subject to receiving a final course grade of “F.” Moreover, a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s personal file with the appropriate academic dean.

6. 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/>.

7. 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:**

Week 1 (January 16): Orientation
Week 2 (January 21 and 23): The Philosophical Enterprise – The formal definition of “philosophy”
Week 3 (January 28 and 30): Critical Thinking – The prerequisites of critical thinking and the central activities of critical thinking
Week 4 (February 04 and 06): Rational Discourse – The First Canon of Rational Discourse and the Second Canon of Rational Discourse
Week 5 (February 11 and 13): Rational Discourse – The Third Canon of Rational Discourse and the Fourth Canon of Rational Discourse
Week 6 (February 18 and 20): Foundations of Epistemology
Week 7 (February 25 and 27): Foundations of Epistemology, continued; **FIRST EXAMINATION**
Week 8 (March 03 and 05): Reflections on Sensation: John Locke’s Inverse Spectrum
Week 9 (March 10 and 12): **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
Week 10 (March 17 and 19): Doubt: Descartes’ Dream Argument; Putnam’s Brain in a Vat Thought Experiment; Descartes' Evil Demon Thought Experiment
Week 11 (March 24 and 26): Skepticism
Week 12 (March 31 and April 02): **SECOND EXAMINATION;** Solipsism
Week 13 (April 07 and 09): Problem of Identity – Foundations; Cartesian insights; **NO CLASS – EASTER HOLIDAY**
Week 14 (April 14 and 16): Proposed solutions to the Problem of Identity; Philosophy of Mind – Turing’s Imitation Game Thought Experiments
Week 15 (April 21 and 23): Gilbert Ryle’s Philosophy of Mind
Week 16 (April 28 and 30): Searle’s Chinese Room Thought Experiment

**THIRD EXAMINATION: THURSDAY, MAY 07, 10:45 A.M. - 1:15 P.M.**