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 do we distinguish good reasoning from bad?
- 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, the mind-body problem, 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 and sharpen work-related skills such as working within a group dynamic, analytical skills (particularly in terms of analyzing cultural products to recognize embedded concepts), oral presentation skills, ability to work within a set timeframe, and critical thinking skills.

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
- Cultural event reflections 10%
- Group presentations (10% each) 30%
- Midterm 30%
- Final 30%
Attendance

Attendance will be taken every face-to-face class day by roll. It is your responsibility to make sure that your name is recorded when you are present. Sleeping in class, using your cell phone in class, doing homework for other classes, or being disengaged from the class in any other way may result in your being counted absent for the day. Excessive absences may lower your course grade. If you accumulate more than three weeks' worth of absences, in accordance with university policy, you may receive an automatic F for the course.

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 on D2L, in which you relate the event to something you are learning about or have learned about in this class. The first reflection is due by MARCH 5; the second, by APRIL 30.

Group discussion/presentation

During each of the three longer units (Epistemology, Mind/Body, and Ethics), we will watch a television episode that relates directly to the material. The class will be divided into groups and each group will be given a different question to reflect on during the episode. Each group will be assigned a discussion space on D2L to use in sharing ideas and planning a group presentation. The following week, each group will take turns making a class presentation to help their classmates understand how to relate the video they saw to the material they studied. The presentation must include at least one interactive element that engages your classmates, such as a Kahoot or a guided small-group discussion.

- 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 5 points.
- The actual presentation will be graded on the correctness and completeness of the references to the source material and the philosophical concepts. Creativity is encouraged. It is worth 5 points.
- N.B. #1: Every student is required to complete peer evaluation forms in which you address the contributions of your fellow group members. At the instructor’s discretion, these evaluations may negatively affect the presentation grade of those who did not contribute. If you do not turn in these forms, you will receive a zero for the assignment as a whole.
- N.B. #2: 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 as far in advance as you can so that your group can be scheduled for a different day.

Midterm

The midterm exam will be held on Thursday, March 5. The exam will cover the definition of philosophy, critical thinking, and epistemology. Material from group presentations will be included in the exam. The exam format will be multiple choice; you will not need to bring a Scantron sheet or blue book.

Final

The final will be similar in format to the midterm. It will be held on Thursday, May 7 from 8:00-10:30 a.m.

Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>Syllabus; Definition of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>January 21-30</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>February 4-27</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First cultural event reflection due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>March 17-April 7</td>
<td>The Mind-Body Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>April 14-30</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 30: Second cultural event reflection due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Thursday, May 7: 8:00-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Final examination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tentative Presentation Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Film shown in class</th>
<th>No class; online discussion</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>February 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind-Body</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>April 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>April 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Policies

- **Attendance is required.** A student who accumulates more than three 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:
  
  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.

- **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/disabilitieservices/.

- **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."