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Office Hours: 10am-4pm Mondays & Tuesdays

Location of class: D2L
Time of class: Weekly: Wednesday-Tuesday is a week for this online class.

15 January - 6 May 2020
Email: shockleypr@sfasu.edu

“Philosophy begins in wonder.
And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a concern with the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, Introduction to Philosophy (PHI 153) course focuses 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 is on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking.

PHI 153: Introduction to Philosophy (3 credits) will meet once a week (Monday) for 2.50 hours for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, 10 discussion posts and replies, two papers with one being used for core assessment, mid-term, and final exam. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

II. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

A. Problem Learning Outcomes:

➢ This is a general education core curriculum course with specific core objectives. This course has been selected “personal responsibility” as a core objective for assessment.

➢ Personal responsibility is a problem learning outcome whereby objective is to develop the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
B. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

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

III. GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:

A. Course Policies and Requirements:

- 20% D2L Discussion Board: 10 Weekly Responses with 3 * qualitative replies to other entries. These will be weekly assignments (unless otherwise stated in announcements) with 500-word minimal word count response to prompt or question given. Following each discussion post which will be given by prof on Wednesday- you are to post response by Sunday at 11:59 PM of every week and three replies to other student responses by the next Tuesday of every week by 11:59 PM. Each reply is to specifically advance, clarify, or critique other student posts.

  1. Professor Prompt: Prompt is issued by Wednesday
  2. Student post: Sunday by 11:59 PM: 500 words minimal
  3. Reply to other student posts that advance, clarify, or critique the fellow student(s) position by Tuesday by 11:59 PM using the seven types of questions I've listed on pages 12-14 of syllabus.

- 20% philosophical critique of a film (prior approval needed by prof for film selected) using chapters 3-8 & 11-13 from Thinking with Excellence. This will count as mid-term. Due on Sunday, 16 February by 11:59 PM. No plagiarism whatsoever.

- 20% Epistemology 5-7 page paper excluding cover sheet and bibliography: Due on 26 April (Sunday by 11:59 PM).

- 20% Video Debate Analysis 5-7 page paper excluding cover sheet and bibliography: Due on 5 April (Sunday by 11:59 PM).
➢ 20% 8-13 minute video file assessing philosophical issues from a list of possible topics (see below) from three different philosophical worldviews mindsets, or historical philosophical movements. This will count as final exam. It will be due on Sunday on 3 May by 11:59 PM.

Notice that all papers and final exam are due on Sundays by 11:59 PM.

Each week will begin on Wednesday and will run through Tuesday night.

B. Attendance is expected. A complete attendance report may be filed with the student’s dean and the registrar with the final course grade. In fact, lack of required engagement online, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of “F” for this course.

Please do not miss class lectures! In view of your interests, too much is at stake. Each unit builds upon one another.

C. If assignments are altered in favor of exams, students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a cogent documented excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.

D. Because of the nature of these exams over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your best interest to engage weekly units and proactively engage material, especially since the course is built around them.

E. Required Books:


1. This book will stimulate our thoughts regarding ultimate questions like:
   a. Where did we come from? (origin)
   b. What are we? Who are we? (identity)
   c. Why are we here? (meaning)
   d. How should we then live? (morality)
   e. What’s gone wrong with the world? (evil)
   f. What can be done to fix the problems of the world? (hope)


a. This book is available on Amazon in print and in e-version and SFA bookstore. A free copy is available in library reserves.

F. Philosophical Critique of a Film:

Using chapters 3-8, & 11-13 from *Thinking with Excellence* and *Power of Ideas* write a philosophical critique of a standard type movie that identifies and debates a particular problem in philosophy. Write a 5-7 page critique excluding cover sheet and bibliography/works cited page. Use the following outline as a template:

I. Introduction:
   Identify the major philosophical idea(s) in film (page 1)

II. Explain the competing philosophical viewpoints? (page 2) to that idea in the film.

III. Where do we discover this problem in the history of philosophy? Who are (or were) the leading proponents and critics on the problem in philosophy? (page 3) What are their critiques (pages 4-5)?

IV. Critique the philosophical position that is visually debated with your own worldview (page 6) using the sevenfold criteria of evaluating truth-claims and worldviews from *Thinking with Excellence* (see chapters 4 and 12).

V. Conclusion: What are specific lessons you learned from this assignment (pages 7)? The more specific you are with the lessons, the better your conclusion will be.

A. What are some of the philosophical ideas, themes, or presuppositions in films? Consider the following:

1. What is reality?
   a. Matrix; Truman Show; The Village; Dr. Strange; Shutter Island
   b. E.g., we think reality is one way but we discover it is another.

2. What is true?
   a. Truman Show; Gone Baby Gone; Waking Life; The Village; The Giver
b E.g., We believe something is true until we discover it is a construct; withholding truth to govern society

3. What does it mean to be human?

a. The Green Mile; Rain Man; InterStellar; Contact; Star Trek; Fight Club; Captain America; Wonder Woman; Bohemian Rhapsody; Pinochio; I, Robot; V for Vendetta; Planet of the Apes

b. E.g., Against the backdrop of suffering, special needs, cosmos, alien life, discrimination, and sexuality, what are we, where did we come from, and what are we becoming?

4. What does it mean to be conscious?

a. Fight Club; Avatar; Waking Life; Dr. Strange; Star Trek; X-Men; Planet of the Apes

b. E.g., Mind/Body issues; Human vs other species consciousness;

What does it mean to be conscious? Can the mind and body be divided? Can our consciousness be transported into another body? Or do we have no soul/spirit/conscious...we are merely body parts functioning via biochemicals? What about other species? What about the power of imagination?

5. What does it mean to be free?

a. Fight Club; Matrix; Groundhog Day; Wall-E; Clash of the Titans; Gattaca; Jason Bourne movies; King Arthur (with Clive Owen)

b. Are we merely consumers driven by our appetites? Can we rise above our cultural conditioning? Are we nothing more than our genes, and thus, controlled by genes. Are we merely “dancing to our DNA? Or do we become what we become by the personal choices we make?
6. What does it mean to be an individual?

a. Die Hard; Sully; Captain America; The Hobbit

b. Related to what it means to be free, is the idea of individuality, development, and becoming. Thus, Steve Rogers, terribly bullied, becomes America's hero. He was worthy to carry Thor's hammer; Thanos was even impressed by his strength. Bilbo Baggins, who lived a simple, easy life, becomes more than he ever imagined through adventure.

7. What is ethical?

a. The Man Who Wasn't There; The Color Purple; Remember the Titans; The Village; Citizen Kane; Avengers: Infinity War; The God Father; Batman movies; The Purge; The Green Mile; Gladiator; There will be Blood; Chronicles of Narnia; Lord of the Rings

b. E.g., what is right/wrong, good/bad? Morality governs our actions? Whose morals? Origins of morality? Cultivation of morals? What happens when what is evil becomes good and what is good becomes evil?

8. What is beautiful?

a. Beauty and the Beast; Annie; Shallow Haal; Beastly; Snow White; Edward Scissorhands

b. Who or what determines what is beautiful or ugly? God? Society? Cultural, authority powers, or trends of popularity? What if there is more to beauty than appearance? What if beauty is inherently related to moral goodness and truth (as opposed to what is false).

9. What is evil?

a. Exorcist; Conjuring; Lord of the Rings; Silence of the Lambs; The Shining; Batman; The Avengers; Batman;
b. Eg., What is evil...the corruption of something good? How does evil manifest itself? Is the source of evil supernatural, part and parcel of our humanity, ignorance, faulty human genes, malfunctioned body mechanisms, or society itself? How is evil controlled or tempered?

B. Related to film, philosophical ideas are often discovered within the following tensions:

1. **Human vs. Human**: Divergent; X-Men; Hunger Games (homo sapien; home superior)

2. **Person vs. Machine**: The Terminator; I Robot

3. **Humanity vs Nature**: Jaws; Jurassic Park; Into the Wild; Titanic; The Revenant; Godzilla; Planet of the Apes.

4. **Person vs. Society**: Hunger Games; The Maze Runner; Enemy of the State; Romeo and Juliet; The Hunt for Red October; Apocalypto; Jupiter Ascending

5. **Humanity vs Supernatural**: Conjuring; A Serious Man; The Clash of the Titans; Passion of the Christ; The Last Airbender

6. **Humanity vs Technology**: Star Trek, “The Borg”; Jurassic Park; The Island of Dr. Moreau; Ex Machina; Terminator

7. **Evil vs Good**: Lord of the Rings; Star Wars

8. **Person vs Self**: Good Willing Hunting; Count of Monte Cristo; Call Me By Your Name; Amadeus; Bohemian Rhapsody

9. **Humanity vs Science**: Gattaca; Jurassic Park
C. Subgenres from the above categories:

1. **Human vs. Environmentalism:**
   Avatar

2. **Racism; Civil Rights:** Harry Potter; X-Men; Remember the Titans

3. **Abuse of Powers:** Star Wars; Dune; Dead Poets Society

4. **Innocence and Due Process:** Minority Report

5. **Person vs Institution:** Dead Poets Society; Devil Wears Prada

6. **Person vs. Social/Cultural Prejudice:**
   Beauty and the Beast; My Fat Greek Wedding; Devil Wears Prada

7. **Gender vs. Gender:** Wonder Woman; Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

- There could also be additional required readings as deemed appropriate on D2L discussion assignment. Therefore, do not wait till last moment to read and complete discussion assignments. Some of these prompts demand reading certain articles.

- Take good notes.

G. **Epistemology Paper:** During the unit on Epistemology, students will construct a written assignment that will dovetail with the specific epistemological theories covered in that section of the course. The assignment will be a single essay that is step driven and may be described to the students in the manner seen below. While the sample directions below break the assignment into steps, this is a single essay and will be uploaded for each objective.

- **Student Directions:**

   Following the unit on Epistemology, each student will complete and turn in a written assignment. The stylistic requirements for the assignment will be the completion of a **five-seven** page essay (excluding cover sheet and works cited page) that is stylistically clean and displays academic citation of all source material. The work will be typed and will include a works cited page. While the content
requirements have been broken down into a series of steps that build upon one another and thus highlight our learning process (see below), this is to be written as a single, cohesive essay. The content steps are:

As you have been introduced to a number of epistemological theories during the last several weeks, you are to choose **TWO of those theories and provide a critical evaluation of each theory**. Upon identifying and explaining each theory, you will then critically evaluate each theory.

Next, you will transition from a direct analysis of an epistemological theory to an indirect analysis of a third theory. In this case, you are to either design your own cartoon or find a cartoon online that you believe comments on a third epistemological. After providing the cartoon, you will write an analysis of this image in which you identify and explain how the cartoon, in terms of its context and assumptions, comments on this third epistemological theory.

Finally, you will conclude your paper with a personal discussion in which you identify the epistemological theory that you find most convincing and then critically explore how your choosing that theory will impact your own ethical self-awareness in different contexts and your cultural self-awareness as it is tied to such issues as civic responsibility or understanding your role in a regional, national, or global community.

Here you will need to demonstrate the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

This work is to be done in your words. All sources must be properly cited. Plagiarism, which is your responsibility to know what it is and how to avoid it, is totally unacceptable. Strict plagiarism policy is upheld. No "cut-in-paste" from internet. This paper is due on 26 April (Sunday by 11:59 PM) by 11:59pm and is to be uploaded to D2L.

By enrolling in **Introduction to Philosophy** you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the **Personal Responsibility** requirement. You will see this course on your D2L list. This paper will fulfill both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. When you complete the assignment mentioned above, you will upload the assignment to D2L.
H. Video Debate:

- You will watch **ONE** of the following four video debates and offer a 5-7 page critical review excluding cover sheet and bibliography. Cover sheet is required. 12 size font. Romans/New Times. Proper grammar, citations, and punctuation are expected. If any other sources are consulted, bibliography is required.

- Summarize each major argument from both sides and offer a thoughtful response/critique using the philosophical tools you have gained in this class. Look for logical fallacies as studied in chapter 1 and consider the seven-fold criteria for evaluation:

  Logical Coherence
  Empirical Adequacy
  Existential Relevance
  Viability
  Workability
  Explanatory Power
  Ethical and Aesthetic Values

You will also find resources from *Thinking with Excellence* to aid you in doing the analysis.

- This paper is to be in your own words; plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever. Whatever choice you make, it is due on 5 April (Sunday by 11:59 PM) on D2L. No exceptions, exemptions, or extensions.

- All four debates are offered on youtube.com. Choose only one! You can use the details below to find the youtube debates. If you have trouble accessing video on links provided, search youtube using title names, and minutes for the following presentations. All are readily available:

  - The first debate is John Lennox vs. Richard Dawkins Debate: *Has Science Buried God?* Oxford Museum of Natural History hosts this debate. John Lennox of Oxford explains how science points to an intelligent creator and Richard Dawkins of Oxford offers a counterargument. This debate is 1.21 hours long. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVEuQg_Mglw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVEuQg_Mglw).

  - The second debate is theist William Lane Craig vs. atheist Paul Kurtz: *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?* This debate took place at Franklin & Marshall College. This debate is 1:39 long. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr_RzS-579o&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr_RzS-579o&t=5s).

  - Third debate is Does God Exist between William Lane Craig vs. late antitheist Christopher Hitchens. This 4 April 2009 debate took place
Fourth debate is “Is There a God?” between famed bioethics philosopher Peter Singer vs. Oxford scholar John Lennox which took place in 2017 at the Town Hall at Melbourne, Australia with Fixed Point Foundation. [https://youtu.be/HoTIlLnpd3q8](https://youtu.be/HoTIlLnpd3q8). The debate is 1:46 hours long.

Plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever. Your review and critique is to be in your own words.

Anticipate computer problems. Don’t wait till last minute to watch video and upload your paper.

Save your papers repeatedly. Upload working copies to your electronic email account in case something terrible happens to your computer.

Watch presentation early, write summary notes, and reflect upon contrasting views presented.

I. Discussion Board Responses:

- I will upload lecture material and pertinent questions each and every Monday on D2L. As a result, you will offer a minimal of 500 word response to 10 of the entries I upload with three thoughtful replies (no minimum word count) that clarify, critique, or advance other student’s posts. No minimal word count in responses but if it is not qualitatively framed by those three factors, then it will not be counted.

- Each entry with three thoughtful replies to other posts will graded with a potential possibility of earning 10 points. Thus, 10 points per entry could earn total of 100 points (A+).

- To be sure, this does not mean that each entry guarantees 10 points. Each entry must be excellent to earn 10 points.

- I will grade discussion questions and replies once they are completed to make one final grade.

- Each discussion post will be given by prof on Wednesday- you are to post response by Sunday at 11:59 PM of every week and three replies to other student responses by the next Tuesday of every week by 11:59 PM. Each reply is to specifically advance, clarify, or critique other student posts. Use tools from *Thinking with Excellence* to analyze other prompts.

1. Professor Prompt: Prompt is issued by Wednesday
2. Student post: Sunday by 11:59 PM: 500 words minimal

3. Reply to other student posts that advance, clarify, or critique the fellow student (s) position by Tuesday by 11:59 PM using the seven types of questions given to you.

- Proper grammar, citation, and punctuation.
- No plagiarism whatsoever.
- No extensive quotes.
- Use skills of analysis and thoughtful reflection.
- Any qualitative feedback you offer to the other entries (above three required) within the week they are posted, might qualitatively contribute to your overall grade for this assignment.
- Failure to be timely in your posts means zero. No exceptions, extensions, or exemptions. Sometimes I do lengthen the due dates since we are only doing 10 of them. But if I do, please read information. Don't merely assume anything. Look, observe, and study directions.
- You are not to be impolite or hostile to me or fellow students in any of your responses or replies. If you are, you will receive 0 for the entire discussion board grade University procedures will be followed.
- Once again: regarding replies: You will receive no credit if you only offer replies but do not give your own post. While there is no minimum requirement for replies, only those that are qualitatively thoughtful and beneficial, advancing the post philosophically, clarifying the post philosophically, or giving a critique to the post will be counted. Therefore, in addition to the resources found in *Thinking with Excellence*, you are to use the seven types of questions you will need to ask. See below!

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**What is a great question?**

Asking questions in class can be very intimidating. We are fearful of being embarrassed or rejected. We don't want to appear "dumb." We push back from the idea of being singled out by the professor whereby we are called upon repeatedly in class; we don't like the spotlight. We don't want to be known as the "teacher's pet."

The situation becomes even more difficult. We come across students who like to argue, who want to be the center of the class, or who redirect your questions in way that benefits them. Out of arrogance, *hubris* (which means excessive pride), and control, they want to claim "superiority" over fellow classmates.
Sadly, we’ve met educators who don’t like to be asked questions. Some are hot-tempered, 
cynical, and not easy to talk to or even learn from, and deem themselves “god-like” given 
their background, degrees, and accomplishments. They make us feel irrelevant, 
uncomfortable, and worthless.

To be sure, many us don’t even know where to begin when it comes to asking good 
questions. We’ve never been trained on the science and art of asking good questions. Yet, 
we want to learn. We want to contribute to class. We want to seize our studies!

“Do one thing every day that scares you.” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

What are we to do?

While there are difficult classes, professors, and classmates, thinking with excellence invites 
you to ask good questions. Success in life demands good questioning. Most professors we 
encounter love questions and long for rich classroom dialogue. Outstanding professors, and 
there are many of them, will also protect you from students who seek to disrupt you, try to 
take advantage of the classroom setting by showing off, or attempt to “put you down.” They 
want you to learn and will do all they can to facilitate those opportunities. If you can learn 
how to ask good questions, then you will have a dynamic skill set that will last a lifetime, no 
matter your career, context, or relationships.

“Before you contradict an old man, my fair friend, you should endeavor to understand him.”
- Jorge Santayana

We encourage you to think about books, conversations, truth-claims made, and worldviews 
like a detective by asking clarifying questions like “What do you mean by that?” and “How 
did you come to that conclusion.” But here are seven types of questions you should ask when 
it comes to truth-claims being made by authors, professors, and fellow students (especially 
in view of the 10 discussion posts):

1. “When you make this truth-claim, are you saying ______?” Here you repeat your 
understanding of the truth-claim. This is an additional clarification question to the two 
mentioned above.

2. “When you make this truth-claim, would this be an example of what you are trying to 
say?” Here you give an example of the truth-claim made. This is an example question.

3. “If I understand you correctly, your understanding of this truth-claim is ________
[repeat interpretation]? Am I right?” I wonder if the claim could be interpreted this way 
give alternative interpretation]?” These are interpretation questions.
4. "What are the implications of this truth-claim?" Or would this be an implication of this truth-claim _________?" You can think about the implications of the truth-claim in how it affects or impacts one’s life, community, context, faith, family, other ideas, history, policy, science, or other types of studies. These are implication questions.

5. "Can this truth-claim be true given what we know about _________ [common sense; empirical data; historical facts; philosophical truths; scientific evidence; other realms of studies such as sociology or other inquiries]?" Here we are examining the consistency of the truth-claim with what we already know is true and trustworthy. This is a consistency question.

6. “I agree/ disagree with you. Here’s why. I’ve had this experience [state experience; remember to summarize; don’t be too wordy].... What do you think about this experience?” This is an agreement/disagreement question rooted in personal experience.

7. “What other ways can we think about this truth-claim that may be foreign to our own particular shared assumptions?” “Would _________[e.g., different age; culture; gender; race; religion; time; place] interpret this truth-claim the same way?” Here we are using lateral type of questioning; we are attempting to think outside of the box.

These seven types of questions, namely, clarification, example, interpretation, implication, consistency, agreement/disagreement, and lateral questions, will benefit you in ways you can never imagine!

"The marvelous thing about a good question is that it shapes our identity as much by the asking as it does by the answering." ~ David Whyte

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**Video Post.** 20% 8-13 minute video assessing a philosophical problem from a list of topics from three different philosophical worldviews mindsets, or historical philosophical movements is due on Sunday on 3 May by 11:59 PM. This will count as final exam. It will be uploaded to D2L.

1. Here are possible philosophical worldviews. For example:

   a. Agnosticism: Soft or hard
   b. Aristotelianism
   c. Atheism: classic or ant-theistic
   d. Augustinian (St. Augustine)
   e. Buddhism
   f. Calvinism (John Calvin)
   g. Cartesian (Rene Descartes)
   h. Continental Philosophy: Critical; Postmodern; Post-Structural
   i. Deism
j. Dualism (e.g., Manichaeism)
k. Existentialism: Theistic or atheistic
l. Humean (David Hume; Modern Philosophy)
m. Humanism
n. Epicureanism
o. Kantian (Immanuel Kant; Modern Philosophy)
p. Marxism (Immanuel Kant)
q. Monism (e.g., Spinoza)
r. Naturalism
s. Neoplatonism (e.g., Plotinus)
t. Nietzschean (F. Nietzsche)
u. Panentheism
v. Pantheism
w. Polytheism
x. Process Philosophy
y. Scottish Common Sense Realism (Thomas Reid); also known as Scottish realism
z. Skepticism (Modified or Total)
aa. Spiritism/Animism
bb. Theism: Judaism; Islam; Christianity
cc. Thomism (Thomas Aquinas)
dd. Zoroastrianism
e. American Pragmatism

2. Here are some significant questions in philosophy you can choose from:
   
a. How do we know what is real?
b. How do we know what is true?
c. How do we acquire knowledge?
d. What is beautiful?
e. What counts as art vs non-art?
f. What does it mean to be human?
g. What is morally right from what is wrong?
h. The existence vs. non-existence of God
i. The reality of evil and suffering
j. The existence of consciousness/soul.
k. What is gender?
l. What is just war?
m. American Pragmatism
n. Evolution vs Intelligent Design

3. Outline of video post: Using chapters 3-8, & 11-13 from *Thinking with Excellence* and *Power of Ideas* identify a particular problem, issue, or concern in philosophy from the immediate list above. Once identified, examine the issue from three different worldviews. Show how each philosophical worldview, mindset, or perspective would interpret the problem and perhaps solution given. Once you write
this project out, use your video from the camera feature from your smart phone. If this is not possible due to ADA, let me know and we will provide an alternative way of doing this project.

➢ 8 minimal minutes (demanded)/13 minutes maximum. Use the following outline as a template:

I. Introduction: What is the problem and identify the three different philosophies you will use to analyze the problem.

II. First philosophical interpretation

III. Second philosophical interpretation

IV. Third philosophical interpretation

V. Conclusion: What are specific lessons you learned from this video assignment? The more specific you are with the lessons, the better your conclusion will be.

VI. Attach a bibliography of any sources used to help you do this project.

IV. GENERAL RULES:

➢ Any student who has to miss due dates must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to submit paper within two class days. Otherwise, you will receive no credit (00). But I will highly not approve documented excuse given that this is an online course. So, it is in your best interest NOT to miss any deadline. Even if I do happen to approve it (which is highly rare), then there will be a significant grade penalty. Therefore, anticipate unexpected. To be sure, I will not approve any missed weekly discussion post. Work on your papers early. If you are having trouble with your paper, then contact me. If you live outside of Nacogdoches, we can facetime. If you live in Nacogdoches, then set up an appointment with me; I want you to succeed. Do not wait till the last moment to contact me. Prepare early.

➢ All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.

➢ Online lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.

➢ Respect your classmates and professor.

➢ No use of profanity.

➢ Respect and tolerance for all views shared among us all. Let’s learn from each other. We want to create a learning and thriving online environment. If you fail to abide by this policy, not only will university policies be upheld, but you will receive F for this course. Zero tolerance for character attacks, discrimination, and harassment of even form. If you have a problem with a
student or with me as your professor, please come to me directly. We will follow university policies. Once again, I want you to succeed.

- Weekly attendance is expected. Otherwise, you will receive an F as final grade if you do not engage in weekly assignments. If you do not engage in weekly assignments, you will be dropped from the course when I register attendance.

V. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

- Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?

- Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: “What do I see?” The more observations you make, the better your interpretation of the author’s position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, “What does it mean?”

- After you outline the author’s position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, “What is the issue?” Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?

- You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.

- Consider forming study groups to prepare for exams.

- Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.

- Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a “morning person”, then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).

- Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).

- Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:
  
  Read Thoughtfully
  Read Repeatedly
  Read Patiently
  Read Selectively
  Read Imaginatively
  Read Purposefully
  Read Acquisitively
Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler’s informative work, *How to Read a Book*.

10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:

1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.

2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.

3. Be undivided! Do not separate one area of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.

4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!

5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depressed from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.

7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy—for if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.
9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.

10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE, WEEKLY TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

D2L is capable of assessing whether you engage your online work. I will be monitoring your progress each week on Brightspace D2L. Thus, failure to qualitatively engage your weekly content, not meeting the objectives for each week could result in an overall grade level reduction at the end of the semester. Therefore, it behooves you to make sure you take the opportunity to engage the weekly material on D2L.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>I will be introducing you to some important</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<td>Each reading is due by</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Introduction to Class: What is Philosophy?</td>
<td>7 fold criteria for analysis</td>
<td>beginning of class time.</td>
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<td>January 22</td>
<td>Presocratic Philosophy</td>
<td>Plato’s Republic</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapters 3-4</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology: Ancient (Plato; Aristotle), Medieval (Plotinus; St. Augustine; St. Aquinas)</td>
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<td>Thinking with Excellence, chapter 3-4</td>
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<td>February 5</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology continued: Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, &amp; Neo-Platonism</td>
<td>Descartes’ Meditations</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapters 7-9</td>
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<td>February 12</td>
<td>Introduction to Continental Philosophy</td>
<td>Begin thinking about your philosophical critique film paper which is due 13 October by 11:59 PM</td>
<td>Review chapters 1-8, 11-13 of Thinking with Excellence and Power of Ideas, chapters 1-9.</td>
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<td>February 16</td>
<td>Philosophical Critique of Film is due on Sunday by 11:59 PM on D2L.</td>
<td>No reading requirement;</td>
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<td>February 19</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>No reading requirement;</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Week</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Epistemology continues</td>
<td>Review what you have learned.</td>
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<td>4 March</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ethics Introduced</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapter 10</td>
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<td>18 March</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Virtue/Consequential Ethics</td>
<td>Selection 10:6: Utilitarianism (beginning on pg. 299)</td>
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<td>Consequential Ethics; Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill); Egoism; Relativism; Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice (Carol Gilligan)</td>
<td>Selection 10.7 Friedrich Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil (beginning on pg. 301).</td>
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<td>25 March</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Continuation of Ethics</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapter 11</td>
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<td>Existentialism/ Nihilism</td>
<td>Augustine Pascal Kierkegaard Camus Sartre Jaspers Heidegger Nietzsche</td>
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<td>5 April</td>
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<td>Video Analysis Paper is Due Sunday Night by 11:59 PM on D2L</td>
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<td>8 April</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Introduction to Philosophy of Religion: Existence of God: Arguments; Evidences; Existential; Religious Experience</td>
<td>Thomas Aquinas' Five Ways; St. Augustine Anselm Descartes Leibniz Pascal</td>
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<td>Read selection 13.2 Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas</td>
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<td>15 April</td>
<td>Problem of Evil:</td>
<td>Re-read <em>Power of Ideas, chapter 13</em></td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Moral Evil; Natural Evil; God as Origin of Evil; Natural Evil; Pointless Evil</td>
<td>Continue reading <em>Amusing Ourselves to Death</em> by Neil Postman</td>
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<td>22 April</td>
<td>Problem of Miracles:</td>
<td><em>David Hume</em></td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Introduction to Aesthetics</td>
<td>Finish reading <em>Amusing Ourselves to Death</em> by Neil Postman</td>
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<td>20% 8-13 minute video assessing a philosophical issues from a list of possible topics from three different philosophical worldviews mindsets, or historical philosophical movements is due on Sunday by 3 May by 11:59 PM. This will count as final exam. It will be uploaded to D2L.</td>
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<td>26 April</td>
<td>Epistemology Paper is Due Sunday by 11:59 PM on D2L</td>
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<td>29 April</td>
<td>Introduction to Aesthetics: Historical Survey: From Plato to Kuspit</td>
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<td>Read and discuss” Aesthetic Universals” by Denis Dutton</td>
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<td>Aesthetics continued:</td>
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<td>Objective/subjective beauty; aesthetic value; aesthetic experience</td>
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<td>Dewey's Art as Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May</td>
<td>20% 8-13 minute video assessing a philosophical issues from a list of possible topics from three different philosophical worldviews mindsets, or historical philosophical movements is due on Sunday on 3 May by 11:59 PM. This will count as final exam.</td>
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<td>D2L</td>
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**VII. STUDENT ETHICS AND OTHER POLICY INFORMATION**

A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor’s discretion.

B. Student Ethics and Other Policy Information can be found at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/

C. Class Attendance and Excused Absence: Policy 6.7:

1. Given nature of class, only one absence is allowed, whether excused or unexcused. Official documentation will be required for excused absence.

2. Regular, punctual attendance, documented participation, and, if indicated in the syllabus, submission of completed assignments are expected at all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which the student is registered.
3. Based on university policy, failure of students to adhere to these requirements shall influence the course grade, financial assistance, and/or enrollment status. The instructor shall maintain an accurate record of each student’s attendance and participation as well as note this information in required reports (including the first 12 day attendance report) and in determining final grades.

4. Students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. However, students are responsible for notifying their instructors in advance, when possible, for excusable absences.

5. Whether absences are excused or unexcused, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for up to three weeks of absences during a semester or one week of a summer term, depending on the nature of the missed work. Make-up work must be completed as soon as possible after returning from an absence.

D. Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Policy 6.1 and 6.6:

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, 936-468-3004 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/

E. Student Academic Dishonesty: Policy 4.1:

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

F. Definition of Academic Dishonesty:

1. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing any information, including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

2. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
a. submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
b. submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
c. incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

G. Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:

1. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

H. Student Appeals:

1. A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3).

I. Withheld Grades: Policy 5.5:

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, 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, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

J. Student Code of Conduct: Policy 10.4:

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. 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 policy 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 at SFA. Information regarding the iCare program is found at http://www.sfasu.edu/judicial/earlyalert.asp or call the office at 936-468-2703.

K. PHIL: 153: Typically meets three times each week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also
meets for a 2.5-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, and typically complete multiple exams, a final exam, and epistemology essay and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours. Online (and 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.

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”
~ Dr. Seuss

VIII. GRADING RUBRICS:

Here’s the rubric I use to book reports, discussion posts, essays, analyses, and research papers...

1. An excellent book report, essay, research paper, discussion post, or any other assignment (A) meets or exceeds all of these criteria for both content and writing:

   Content
   • Demonstrates originality of thought, creativity, and particular insight into the subject
   • Demonstrates excellent and thorough understanding of the material
   • Uses primary and secondary sources in a way that demonstrates high level of intellectual engagement with the text
   • Uses primary and secondary sources in such a way that demonstrates the ability to independently research, read, and assimilate material relevant to the topic and to include it in the paper in a useful and insightful way
   • Demonstrates the ability to read texts from different perspectives, traditions, cultures, and time periods with nuance and sensitivity, understanding how context affects interpretation.
   • Logical fallacies are completely avoided.
   • Truth claims are cogently justified (e.g., logical reasoning; empirical evidence)

   Writing
   • Includes excellent writing that is interesting to read, clear, correct, polished, varied, and appropriate to the nature of the audience and goal
   • Demonstrates completely correct handling of the mechanics of citation, attribution, and integration of quoted and paraphrased material
   • Is well organized, with a choice of writing and paragraph structure that guides readers through the work in a way that is well suited to the particular aims, audience, and tone of the goals of assignment.
   • Is copy-edited and polished at the sentence level to within an inch of its life
A good paper (B) meets or exceeds all of these criteria for both content and writing:

Content
- Demonstrates a good understanding of the material
- Uses primary and secondary sources in a way that demonstrates a high level of intellectual engagement with the text
- Demonstrates the ability to read texts from different perspectives, traditions, cultures, and time periods, with an understanding of how context affects interpretation
- Logical fallacies are avoided.
- Truth claims are justified with good argumentation.

Writing
- Includes good-quality paper that is interesting to read, clear, correct, and appropriate to the nature of the assignment’s goal
- Demonstrates correct handling of the mechanics of citation, attribution, and integration of quoted and paraphrased material
- Is well organized at the outline and paragraph level
- Is carefully copy-edited and almost entirely error-free

An average quality paper (C) meets all of these criteria for both content and writing:

Content
- Demonstrates solid understanding of the material; may sometimes not show full understanding of how sources relate to other material in the course
- Uses primary and secondary sources in a way that demonstrates intellectual engagement with the text at a level appropriate to undergraduate students
- May not demonstrate initiative in research; may sometimes show a superficial understanding of the texts
- Demonstrates the ability to read texts from different perspectives, traditions, cultures, and time periods with comprehension, but may have difficulty in not reading the text from an exclusively modern- or culture-specific position
- Logical fallacies are slightly evidenced.
- Truth claims are insufficiently justified (not argued very well)

Writing
- Includes average-quality writing that is correct and appropriate to the nature of the assignment’s audience and goal
- Demonstrates an average handling of the mechanics of citation, attribution, and integration of quoted and paraphrased material; may be awkward in integration and attribution of sources
- Somewhat organized at the outline and paragraph level; may be unfocused or somewhat not organized in the most effective order
- Is satisfactorily copy-edited, although some problems of language may remain

An average (D or below):

Includes any one of these problems to a noticeable extent:

Content
- Demonstrates a deficient understanding of the material
● Does not engage with primary and secondary sources, or does so in a superficial, proof-texting way
● Includes difficulty in comprehending or engaging with texts from different perspectives, traditions, cultures, and time periods
● Logical fallacies are discovered.
● Truth-claims are not justified or are poorly justified.

Writing
● Includes writing that is not appropriate to the nature of the assignment’s audience and goal (e.g., too casual or too jargonistic)
● Includes persistent problems with the mechanics of citation, attribution, and integration of quoted and paraphrased material
● Lacks organization at the outline and paragraph level
● Includes persistent and/or systemic problems at the sentence level (structure of sentences; appropriate word choice; spelling and punctuation; other grammar issues; general clarity)

“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” — Aristotle, *Metaphysics*