“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:

- 25% Epistemology 5-7 page paper excluding cover sheet and bibliography: Due on 27 May 2020 by 11:59 PM. See dropbox on D2L for instructions.

- 25% Video Debate Analysis 5-7 page paper excluding cover sheet and bibliography: Due on 27 May 2020. See dropbox in D2L for instructions.

- 25% 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 27 May by 11:59 PM. See Discussion Post in D2L for instructions.

- 25% D2L Online Participation; Content Engagement; Required Reading. D2L reporting. Completion Unit 1 will be submitted as mid-term grade but will incorporated into your final grade for participation on the online recording of grades. See "Overview tab" for more details on D2L.

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 any aspect of Unit 1 & 2 in content 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 online material, it is in your best interest to engage the two 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)


Three important websites to know & utilize:

1. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: https://www.iep.utm.edu/
2. Paul R. Shockley’s website: www.prshockley.org
3. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:
https://plato.stanford.edu/

F. **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 an 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.

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 theory. 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 27 May 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 four video debates (found in unit 2; step 4 under content tab on D2L and offer a 5-7 page critical review excluding cover sheet and bibliography. See dropbox for specific directions about paper and unit 2; step 4.

- 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. You are welcome to use the format you know the best (e.g., Turabian; MLA; APA).

- 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 in Power of Ideas and use the seven-fold criteria for evaluation from Thinking with Excellence:
You will also find additional resources from Thinking with Excellence to aid you in doing the analysis (e.g., logical fallacies; types of critical thinking).

- This paper is to be in your own words; plagiarism is not acceptable whatsoever. Whatever choice you make, it is due on 27 May by 11:59PM in Dropbox. 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.

- 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. **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 27 May by 11:59 PM. This will count as final exam. It will be uploaded to D2L.

1. Here are possible philosophies, worldviews, movements, etc. Choose three:

   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. Panenthiesm
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
ccc. Thomism (Thomas Aquinas)

2. Choose a question or problem from this list:
   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 identity: Essence precedes existence or existence precedes essence?
   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 smartphone. 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 transcript with 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. 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 and will do whatever I can to assist you.
Online attendance and active engagement is expected (it counts 25% of your grade). But if you do not engage in unit 1 and 2 content, 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 depress 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>Central questions &amp; key themes in units 1 &amp; 2 content</th>
<th>Reading Assignment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1:</td>
<td>Welcome to Philosophy</td>
<td>What is Philosophy?</td>
<td>Power of Ideas: chapters 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Thinking with Excellence, chapters 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1: Step 1</td>
<td>Welcome to Your Worldview</td>
<td>Know yourself</td>
<td>Power of Ideas,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Unit 1: Step 2 | Metaphysics & Epistemology: Logical Reasoning, Plato, and Reality | **Think Logically!** What is real? What is true? | **Power of Ideas**, chapters 5-6
Thinking with Excellence, chapters 5-6 |
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| Unit 1: Step 3 | Pre-Socratic Philosophy, Socrates, Plato, & Aristotle | The origins of Greek Philosophy | **Power of Ideas**, chapters 7-9
Thinking with Excellence, chapters 7-8 |
| Unit 1: Step 4: | Post-Aristotelian & Medieval Philosophy: Focus on St. Augustine & St. Thomas Aquinas | The integration of Philosophy & Theology | Read chapters 11-13 of Thinking with Excellence |
| Unit 1: Step 5: | **Two areas of focus:**
- We conclude our examination into Medieval philosophy by considering the Jewish philosophy of Maimonides
- Rise of Modern Philosophy: Rene Descartes | “I Think, therefore I am.” | **Review chapters 1-8, 11-13 of Thinking with Excellence and Power of Ideas, chapters 1-9.** |
<p>| Unit 1: Step 6: | Modern Philosophy &amp; Epistemology | <strong>Modern Empiricism vs. Modern Rationalism</strong> | <strong>Review what you have learned.</strong> |
| Unit 1: Step 7: | Modern Philosophy Continues | <strong>Skepticism vs. Scottish Common Sense Realism</strong> | <strong>Power of Ideas, chapter 10 Continue reading Thinking with Excellence</strong> |
| UNIT 1: | American Philosophy, | <strong>If something</strong> | <strong>Power of Ideas, read</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 8</th>
<th>Continental Philosophy, &amp; Introduction to Ethics: works, does it make it true? What if we do not possess personal freedom but are products formed by social forces?</th>
<th>chapters 10-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 2: CONGRATULATIONS!!!!</td>
<td>UNIT 2: Step 1: Introduction to Normative Ethics Nicomachean Ethics</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, re-read chapters 10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Step 2: Ethics Continues</td>
<td>Unit 2: Step 3: Welcome to Existentialism! Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going?</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, re-read chapters 10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Step 4: Introduction to Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>Unit 2: Step 4: The question of God</td>
<td>Chapter 13 of Power of Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2: Step 6:</td>
<td>Philosophical Aesthetics?</td>
<td>What is art vs. non-art? If there is a difference, how?</td>
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<td>CONGRATS!</td>
<td>You finished both Units!</td>
<td>#Golumberjacks!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 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 of 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