Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL 1301.505
Fall 2021

Dr. Owen M. Smith
Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies
OFFICE: Paul L. Boynton Building 208B (BO 208B)
OFFICE HOURS:
T 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (OFFICE) and 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. (OFFICE)
W 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. (OFFICE) and 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. (ONLINE via Zoom)
R 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon (OFFICE) and 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. (ONLINE via Zoom)
and by appointment
E-MAIL ADDRESS: omsmith@sfasu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: (936) 468-2367

Course Meeting Time and Place: Since this course meets entirely online, no classtime or classroom has been assigned to this course.

Prerequisites for Course: None

Course Description:
An introduction to philosophy through the examination of prominent philosophical problems, topics, and theorists

Credit Hour Justification:
The course 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 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.

Required Textbook:
NOTE: It is possible to purchase or rent the book from online retailers. Googling the ISBN, 9780078038341, should bring up a variety of options. Be sure to obtain the SIXTH edition of the textbook; other versions will not coordinate with the lectures or assessments.
Course Requirements:
• Factual Quizzes (1 per unit) – 20% of final course grade
• Thinking Skills Quizzes (1 per unit) – 40% of final course grade
• Unit Discussions (1 per unit) – 40% of final course grade

Program Learning Outcomes:
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

General Education Core Curriculum
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 PHIL 1301, you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will Be Addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Unit 1 Discussion assignment on The SFA Way</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Students will acquire factual information concerning the nature of philosophy and the practice of critical thinking.
2. Students will gain an understanding of certain fundamental philosophical problems and historically prominent conceptual systems associated with the philosophical disciplines of philosophy of the person, epistemology, and ethics.
3. Students will come to recognize the importance of basic philosophical issues and distinctions in their own lives, and to analyze and evaluate the choices they make in regard to these issues.
Course Policies:

1. Student Conduct: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (cf. Student Conduct Code, Policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on course requirements 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.

2. Office Hours
   a. The instructor is available to meet with students either in his office (BO 208B) or online via Zoom. Students can also meet with the instructor during office hours by using the instant message function on the university's Desire2Learn (D2L) website.
   b. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office during regularly scheduled office hours do not need to make an appointment; the instructor will meet with students on a first come, first served basis.
   c. Students who wish to meet with the instructor in his office outside of regularly scheduled office hours must make an appointment with the instructor ahead of time. Appointments can be made by email at the instructor's university email address (omsmitche@sfasu.edu) or by telephone at the instructor's office phone number (936-468-2367).

3. Getting Started Module – Mandatory Assignments
   a. In order to be eligible to participate in required course activities, all students must complete two (2) mandatory assignments at the beginning of the semester. Each of these assignments may be found in the Getting Started module in the Content Browser section of the D2L site for the course.
   b. The first mandatory assignment is participation in the Getting Acquainted Exercise, in which students participate in an online discussion designed to familiarize them with the discussion function of the Brightspace/D2L site for the course. Students must make at least four posts to this discussion: an initial post introducing themselves to the rest of the class and at least three posts responding to introductions posted by other students. The Getting Acquainted Exercise is a mandatory course assignment; students who fail to meet the requirements for participation in this exercise will be excluded from the group discussions required for each unit of the course. Although the Getting Acquainted Exercise is a mandatory course assignment, this assignment is ungraded and will NOT factor into your final course grade.
   c. The second mandatory assignment is the Discussion Instructions Quiz, which is a short quiz that covers material from the Discussion Instructions document and the Unit Discussion Grading Rubrics document. This quiz is designed to familiarize students with the requirements of the unit discussions as well as strategies for performing well on these course requirements. Students must pass this quiz with a score of 100%. To facilitate this requirement, students will be permitted to take this quiz as many times as necessary to achieve this score. Students who fail to earn the required score on the Discussion Instructions Quiz will become ineligible to participate in the four unit discussions in the course. Although the Discussion Instructions Quiz is a mandatory course assignment, your score on this quiz will NOT factor into your final course grade.
   d. Any student who wishes an extension on any of these mandatory assignments must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing these deadlines.

4. Factual Quizzes
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to take an open-book quiz to demonstrate comprehension of basic information contained in the unit readings and course lectures.
   b. Each Factual Quiz will be worth a total of five (5) points and will typically consist of a combination of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
   c. Factual Quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   d. Students may attempt each Factual Quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will be the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.
   e. At his discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a Factual Quiz during the designated period owing to technical (internet) limitations, serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on this type of quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.
5. **Thinking Skills Quizzes**
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to take an open-book quiz to demonstrate more complex, higher-order thinking skills to demonstrate understanding of the theoretical material contained in the unit readings and course lectures. The questions in the Thinking Skills Quizzes are more difficult than those in the Factual Quizzes, and students are urged to approach them thoughtfully.
   b. Each Thinking Skills Quiz will be worth a total of ten (10) points and will typically consist of a combination of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
   c. Thinking Skills Quizzes will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   d. Students may attempt each Thinking Skills Quiz a maximum of two (2) times. A student’s grade on this quiz will the the higher of the two scores earned on these attempts.
   e. At his discretion, the instructor may grant an extension to a student who cannot take a Thinking Skills Quiz during the designated period owing to technical (internet) limitations, serious illness or another similarly compelling reason. Any student who wishes an extension on a Thinking Skills Quiz must submit a written request to the instructor and provide some form of credible written documentation for the reason cited by the student for missing the deadline for the quiz.

6. **Unit Discussions**
   a. During each unit of the course, students will be required to participate in a small group discussion to explore the unit material in greater detail. General requirements for participation in group discussions will be addressed during the Getting Started module for the course.
   b. In order to be eligible to participate in the group discussions, each student must (i) pass a quiz on the requirements for participating in group discussions and (ii) participate in the Getting Acquainted discussion. Students who have not completed BOTH these requirements will not be permitted to participate in the group discussions. The deadline for both these requirements are 11:45 p.m. on Friday, September 03, 2021.
   c. Student participation in group discussions will be graded on a ten (10) point scale. Students will be graded on the clarity, thoughtfulness, and collegiality of their discussion posts as well as on the number of their discussion posts and their distribution throughout the discussion period.
   d. Discussions will be available through the Course Tools menu on the D2L website for the course.
   e. Because student contributions to group discussions must be made in a timely manner, no extensions will be granted by the instructor regarding participation in a group discussion.

7. **Accommodations:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

8. **Academic Integrity**
   a. Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.
   b. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. The complete university policy on academic dishonesty may be found at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp).
   c. Please note that quoting or closely paraphrasing the textbook or course lecture without citation is plagiarism and will be penalized.
   d. Students are required to be familiar with all items they submit in fulfillment of course requirements. If in the instructor’s opinion, a student does not demonstrate sufficient familiarity with any such item, the instructor may reject the item and assign the student a score of zero (0.0) for that item.
e. Students in this course are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism in this course is subject to receiving a final course grade of “F.” Moreover, the student will be required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s personal file.

f. A student who considers the instructor’s determination of academic dishonesty to be in error may take advantage of an appeals process; this process is described in full at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.

9. Grading Policy

a. As course requirements are graded, the instructor will publish student grades to the D2L site for the course; if a grade has not been published on the D2L site for the course, the grade is not yet available. The instructor does not generally respond to requests to specify the date by which a particular course requirement will be graded, to provide unpublished grades to students, or compute current course averages for students.

b. Withheld Grades: Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

c. Final course grades will be assigned according to the following schedule:
   • A: 90.0 - 100.0
   • B: 80.0 - 89.9
   • C: 70.0 - 79.9
   • D: 60.0 - 69.9
   • F: 59.9 and below

10. Use of the Zoom Application

a. Zoom flexibility is intended to support students in many situations. Especially now, in our virtual learning space, with many children learning from home and schools facing sudden closures, I expect children to be present during Zoom sessions such as office hours or other meetings from time to time. I also understand that students may be caring for other family members who need assistance, such as siblings or parents.

b. There is no requirement for any student to be visible during Zoom office hours or other Zoom meetings related to the class, and students do not need to state a reason for preferring to turn off their video.

c. Breastfeeding babies and children of all ages are welcome during office hours and other meetings and may be visible on screen even when other students are present. Alternatively, parents and caregivers may turn the camera off when more privacy is required.

d. Stepping away momentarily for family care reasons is completely understandable and expected. Simply mute and/or turn off your camera as necessary and rejoin when you are able.

e. Students are prohibited from recording any still images, audio, or video of any children on screen. Students who do so are subject to censure.

f. All students participating in a Zoom session are encouraged to support and respect caregivers as they mute and/or turn off their video and use the chat function as needed.

g. Please consider disclosing your student-caregiver status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes, I am happy to discuss challenges with you in a way that supports you as you strive for school-caregiver balance.

Tentative Course Schedule:
• Getting Started Module: August 23 – September 03
• Unit One - The Philosophical Journey: September 06 – September 24
• Unit Two - Mind and Body: September 27 – October 15
• Unit Three - The Search for Knowledge: October 18 – November 05
• Unit Four - Ethics: November 08 – December 03

NOTE: For a more detailed list of the activities and due dates associated with each unit, please refer to the Course Timeline, which is available in the Course Content section of the Brightspace/D2L page for the course.