Introduction to Philosophy - Hybrid - First Eight Weeks

Dr. Anne Collins Smith

W 10:00-11:40 in BO 212 and online

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday & Thursday: BO 208A 11 a.m. – 12 noon
Wednesday: BO 208A 2 - 3 p.m.
Wednesday by Zoom 7 - 8 p.m.

and by appointment

Email: acsmith@sfasu.edu [n.b. be sure to include the "c"]

Course description

An introduction to philosophy through the examination of prominent philosophical problems, topics and theorists. Credit hour justification: Typically meets three times each week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, or the equivalent. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, complete two exams, two short papers, and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

We will examine responses to the following questions:

- What is philosophy?
- How do we distinguish good reasoning from bad?
- How do we justify our knowledge claims?
- What does it mean to be a human being?
- How do we decide the right thing to do?

Program Learning Outcomes:

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

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will acquire factual knowledge concerning critical thinking, epistemology, the mind-body problem, and ethics.
- Students will gain familiarity with certain fundamental philosophical questions and historically prominent conceptual systems, as well as an understanding of the progression of ideas within philosophical disciplines.
- Students will come to recognize the importance of basic philosophical issues and distinctions in their own lives, and to analyze and evaluate the choices they make in regard to these issues.
- Students will acquire and sharpen work-related skills such as working within a group dynamic, analytical skills (such as analyzing cultural products to recognize embedded concepts), ability to work within a set timeframe, and critical thinking skills.

Core Curriculum Objectives

PHIL 1301 is part of the university's Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. More detailed information concerning the core outcomes to be assessed in this class can be found following the Course Policies section of the syllabus.

Course Materials

All necessary texts will be provided online through the D2L website for the course.
Grading Criteria
Cultural event reflections 10%
Online activities 30%
Midterm 30%
Final 30%

Attendance
Attendance is expected, and I strongly recommend you take notes.

Cultural event reflections
Throughout the semester, I will let you know about upcoming SFA events that you can attend virtually, such as talks by guest speakers, dramatic productions, and panel presentations. Events outside of SFA are also acceptable for this requirement. You are required to attend two such events and to write a short reflection about each one, using a template that I will supply, in which you relate the event to something you are learning about or have learned about in this class. The template for the reflections will be available on the D2L website for the course, and you will submit your reflections to dropboxes on the D2L site. The first reflection is due by September 17 at 11:45 p.m.; the second, by October 8 at 11:45 p.m.

Online activities
Class will meet in person once a week on Wednesdays. The remainder of class time each week will consist of online activities, which will vary from one week to the next. For example, you may watch a video and answer questions about it, or read a short passage and engage in an online discussion. While these activities are asynchronous—there is no specific time that you must be online in order to participate—they do have deadlines. Since they constitute an important component of your grade for the course, you must keep up with them week by week.

Midterm
The midterm exam will be online; it will be due Friday, Sept. 17. The exam will cover the definition of philosophy, critical thinking, and epistemology. Material from online learning activities will be included in the exam. The exam format will be a mixture of multiple choice and true/false questions.

Final
The final will be similar in format to the midterm. It will be due by Friday, October 8 at 11:45 p.m.

Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Syllabus; Definition of Philosophy</td>
<td>Get Acquainted Discussion</td>
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<td>September 1-8</td>
<td>Critical Thinking and Rational Discourse</td>
<td>Critical Thinking Videos exercise</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking worksheet</td>
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<td>September 15-22</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Watch Star Trek: The Cage</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam &amp; 1st Cultural Event due Sept 17</td>
<td>Discuss Star Trek: The Cage in light of</td>
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<td>Cartesian epistemology</td>
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<td>Sept 29-October 6</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Watch &amp; discuss Stripes</td>
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<td>Daoist Videos exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 8 by 11:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Final Exam &amp; 2nd Cultural Event due</td>
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Grading Policy: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 1-59=F
Course Policies

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.

1. 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.
2. Breastfeeding babies, as well as 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.
3. 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.
4. Do not take any photos, audio, or video of any children on screen. Students who do so are subject to censure.
5. 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.
6. 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 problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-caregiver balance.

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline  1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
Additional Policies

- Missed examinations must be made up as quickly as possible. Students with a serious and documented excuse may make up tests during the semester without penalty as long as they do so before the next class day. Students without an excuse have one week to make up tests, but there will be a 10% penalty per class day until the test is taken. The final must be taken on its scheduled date.

- Academic integrity is the responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf:

  Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarize will receive a grade of F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s permanent file. If you feel that the instructor’s determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeals process described in full at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/final-course-grade-appeals-by-students-6.3.pdf.

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

- Credit hours: Typically meets three times each week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) in 50-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students have significant weekly reading assignments, and typically complete multiple exams, a final exam, an epistemology essay and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours. Online or hybrid version of

Introduction to Philosophy contains extensive reading and written content which includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture course receive. Students engage in online modules for at least three hours per week. Students typically complete four discussion posts, multiple quizzes, four essays in addition to regular homework assignments. For every hour engaging with content, students spend at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.

- Withheld Grades [Semester Grades Policy (A-54)]: Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

- Acceptable Student Behavior: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

General Education Core Curriculum

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in PHIL 1301 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Personal Responsibility requirement, “To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.” This Core Objective will be addressed during the first unit in the Critical Thinking Exercise.