INTRO. TO PHILOSOPHY

Professor: Ben Dixon
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Fall 2023
TR 2-3:15pm
Ferguson Liberal Arts, Rm. 375
Office Hrs: M&W: 1-2pm & TR: 12:30-2pm.

SYLLABUS

I. Text


II. Course Description

This course is concerned with the general goals, nature, and methods of philosophy. More specifically we will focus on issues concerning philosophical theories of knowledge and reality. Our readings for this semester include: the problem of skepticism and knowledge; the natures of mind and of the external world; and arguments regarding the nature and existence of God.

III. Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, 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:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

IV. **General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements. Students will demonstrate an ability to respond critically to works in philosophy. Students will have participated in assignments requiring them to formulate, express, and support their opinions on the philosophical issues covered in the course. Students will have acquired knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

V. **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.

VI. **Exemplary Educational Objectives**

1. Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with philosophical issues.
2. Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
3. Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
4. Ability to formulate, express, and support arguments on philosophical issues.
5. Knowledge of the cross-cultural influence of philosophy.
VII. **Student Learning Outcomes**

**Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Assignment:**
PHI 153 is part of the university’s Core Curriculum. As such, the work assigned in this course recognizes the general goals of the core and the specific objectives attached to those classes designated for inclusion in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Specifically, students enrolled in this course will demonstrate the general ability to:

- Think critically, which includes the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information about specific philosophical concepts.
- Communicate effectively by developing and expressing ideas through written and visual communication.
- Gain intercultural competence, a knowledge of civic responsibility, and an awareness of how humans in the past have engaged effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- Understand the role that personal responsibility has played throughout history and gain the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to making ethical decisions.

A. The core objectives will be assessed via embedded questions on your Final Exam.

VIII. **Credit Hour Justification**

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 and discussion work. These activities average a minimum of 6 hours of work per week to prepare outside of classroom hours. Online version of Introduction to Philosophy contains extensive reading and written

IX. **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 Early Alert Program. This program provides students
with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

X. **Attendance/Participation**

An important part of doing philosophy is participating in an exchange of ideas. Several things follow from this: (1) In order to participate in class discussion, **you must do the readings assigned** (you will find a tentative course calendar on the pages that follow)—your responsibility is to make sure you have already read the material we will discuss in class for each of our particular meetings. (2) In order to participate in class, you obviously have to be present in class. Thus, you will only be allowed three unexcused absences during the semester without having your grade affected. **Beginning with your fourth such absence, you will have four points taken away from your overall point total each time you are absent.** So please, don’t miss class!

XI. **Academic Integrity**

[The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.
Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

XII. 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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

XIII. Students with Disabilities

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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

XIV. Grading Policy: Exams and Assessment Assignment

Your course grade will be determined by how well you do on the following:

First Exam (30% of grade)
Mid-term (35% of grade)
Final (35% of grade)

*If at the end of the term your point total puts you on the borderline between two grades, your frequent class participation will give you the higher grade.

The questions on each exam will be some combination of multiple choice and true/false.

XV. Tentative Course Calendar

Week 1: August 28-September 1st Chapter 1: Dark Blue Velvet
Week 2: Sept. 4-8 Chapter 1: Dark Blue Velvet cont.

Week 3: Sept. 11-15 Chapter 3: The Pre-Socratics Note we are skipping Ch.2

Week 4: Sept. 18-22 Chapter 4: Socrates, Plato

Week 5: Sept. 25-29 Chapter 5: Aristotle

Week 6: October 2-6 Chapter 6: Philosophers of the Hellenistic and Christian Eras

Week 7: Oct. 9-13 Exam #1 is on Monday, October 9th
Chapter 7: The Rise of Modern Metaphysics and Epistemology

Week 8: Oct. 16-20 Chapter 7: The Rise of Modern Metaphysics and Epistemology cont.

Week 9 Oct. 23-27 Chapter 8: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Week 10: Oct. 30-November 3 Chapter 8: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries cont.

Week 11: Nov. 6-10 Chapter 9: The Continental Tradition

Week 12: Nov. 13-17 Midterm is on Friday, November 17th
Chapter 9 The Continental Tradition cont.

Week 13: Nov. 20-24 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Nov. 27-December 1 Chapter 14: Philosophy and Belief in God

Week 15: Dec. 4-8 Chapter 14: Philosophy and Belief in God cont.

Week 16: Dec. 11-15 Finals Week

Our University Scheduled Final Exam is Tuesday, December 12, 1-3pm.