PHIL-4390-001 - "AI and Philosophy"

Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Languages, Cultures, and Philosophy

MW (1-2:15 p.m.) FERG375
{Spring 2024}

Instructor: Dr. [Mr.] Kelly Joseph Salsbery -- [Pronouns: he/him]

[Please address me as Dr. Salsbery, Professor Salsbery, or simply as Professor.

Please do not address me as Mr. Salsbery!]

[Tentative] Office hours:

- In person (in LAN 434): Monday and Wed.: 2:30-3:45 pm.
- [Online (using D2L Chat or Zoom)]: TH: 3-5:30 pm or by appointment.
  [Link information TBA.]

(Note: University Meetings or Personal Appointments may conflict with this schedule at times.)

>>> Note: The best (and preferred) way to contact me is through the "Mail" function within Brightspace D2L.
Course description:
This is an advanced course in philosophy which examines prominent philosophical problems, topics and theorists in connection with the development and use of artificial intelligence.

Credit Hour Justification: The course contains extensive reading and written content. Students engage in in-class and online readings and activities. For every hour engaging with content, students spend at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.


There are multiple ways to obtain a copy of the textbook:

- The text is on order at the SFA BOOKSTORE. This is a late order (and so it may take some time to arrive) and it may not yet be listed.

- You can also purchase the paperback version of the text or an electronic version from Amazon or directly from the publisher. These are likely the least expensive and best way to do this. See the News item (and other information) regarding this!

Additional primary readings and supplementary readings will be available on D2L in the course content. You are expected to read assigned articles and chapters before the class session the readings are scheduled for. I recommend, however, doing the readings both before and after the class session, as the material may at times be difficult, or unclear the first time reading it. After lecture and in-class discussions, the material should be much easier to understand. The tests will assume that you have understood the readings. Also, relevant videos, video playlists, and Powerpoints will be made available ASAP on D2L in the course content.
Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will acquire factual information concerning the nature of philosophy and the practice of critical thinking.
- Students will gain an understanding of certain fundamental philosophical problems and historically prominent conceptual systems associated with the philosophy of artificial intelligence. This will include the philosophical disciplines of philosophy of the mind and person, philosophy of science and technology, and ethics.
- 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.

>>TENTATIVE SCHEDULE of COURSE TOPICS:

>> Note: See the Course Timeline(s) for a more detailed schedule.

>>> This is a standard Face-to Face course.

>Topics:

1) Introduction and review of philosophy and its relation to science. [1-2 classes]

2) Introduction and review of logic and logical tools in philosophical analysis. [2-3 classes]

3) Introduction and review of theories and issues in the philosophy of mind. [4 classes]

4) A detailed examination of the nature, types, plausibility, and implications of Artificial Intelligence. [4-5 weeks]

5) Introduction and review of theories and issues in ethics. [2-4 classes]
6) A detailed examination of ethical issues arising from the development and use of artificial intelligence. [1-2 weeks]

7) A detailed examination of the possible implications of Artificial Intelligence for human life and its ultimate destiny. [1-2 weeks]

>>> Lecture and reading assignments (TBA).

**Class Participation:**
Class participation includes open discussion and debate in class and in small groups, raising and answering questions, and posting to an on-line discussion forum. [Guidelines for numbers and types of postings will be addressed in the Content]
Also, throughout the semester students (individually or in small groups) may be required present material concerning the readings for a given day and/or lead the class discussion concerning the readings.

[[If time permits, there may be additional opportunities for informal interaction outside of class (for instance, over lunch or coffee). These opportunities will be strictly **optional**, however.]

>>> [Other course policies and requirements will be added to this syllabus or posted in the Content ASAP.]

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Note: The Get Acquainted Exercise is a gateway to the graded discussions. It does not count toward your final grade, but it is required.

- In-class work, attendance, and participation: **10% of your total grade.**
Online Discussion Participation: \textbf{15\% of your total grade.}

- Students are \textbf{required} to participate in graded group discussions. Your discussion grade is not solely based on the number of posts but on their clarity, thoughtfulness, detail, and collegiality. 
  [There will be detailed discussion requirements available in the Content.]

- The Get Acquainted discussion (in the Getting Started module), \textit{while required, is not graded}; in addition to offering you an opportunity to get to know your classmates, it also offers you the opportunity to become experienced in using the discussion function in a low-stress situation.

Midterm and Final Exams: \textbf{50\% of your total grade (25\% each).} In-class Midterm – Wed. March 6; In-class Final -- TBA (see the Final Exam Schedule)

  >> It is likely that parts of the Midterm and Final will be administered online.

Final Project (standard term paper or creative project): \textbf{25\% of your total grade.}

  [Due Wed. May 1!]

A note on deadlines: Extensions may be available on individual assignments; contact the instructor if you have an extenuating circumstance. \textbf{However, because of the group nature of the discussions, extensions are not available on discussions.}
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class Attendance Policy: Punctual attendance at all class meetings is required. (Each student should keep track of his or her absences!!) Your attendance will be determined by roll call, sign-in sheets, and/or on the basis of in-class work handed in. Because I consider student attendance crucial to fulfilling the learning objectives of the course, I will penalize absences as follows (starting the second week of classes):

0-5 unexcused absences total -- (No penalty)

6-7 unexcused absences total -- a one grade reduction (-100 pts.) in the final grade (e.g., A to B)

8 (or more) unexcused absences total -- Automatic F in the Course (e.g., A to F)

>>(Thus, missing class once a week (over the course of the semester) will earn you an F in this class! The basic point is simple. If you don’t want to come to class, then don’t take this course from me!!)<

Also, please note that exams, quizzes, focus exercises, group exercises, and other in-class work cannot be made up. In general, there will be no makeup exams or quizzes, but this will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Also, other specific in-class work missed because of absence cannot be made up.

Students will not be penalized for legitimate absences, however. First, if you miss one or two days of routine in-class work, the loss should not be significant. Also, there will be opportunities for extra credit work during the course of the semester. Missing a great deal of work or missing a major component of your grade (an exam, for instance) is, however, very serious. Thus, you will need to fill out a copy of the excuse form (to be posted on-line). If it is accepted, then that part of your grade may be shifted to your final exam. (In some instances involving documented cases of illness or family emergency a student
may negotiate to do work to take the place of previously missed work.) Those involved in athletics, work, or other activities should talk to me as soon as possible. In general, habitual absence for any reason is not acceptable.

Please note that according to the SFA University Policy, the maximum number of excused and unexcused absences (together) is supposed to be 6.

**GRADING POLICY**

90-100%: A

80-89%: B

70-79%: C

60-69%: D

0-59%: F

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**General Course Objectives:**

I hope that you will become familiar with these important areas of philosophical concern, with the sorts of questions philosopher’s find important, and with the methods they employ to approach these questions. We will explore topics that have engaged philosophers, and anyone who has taken the time to reflect on them. Indeed, philosophical reflection and discussion can be a lot of fun. A significant amount of time will be spent discussing issues in class. Hopefully, analysis and presentation of arguments, discussion of issues, and writing will help you to further develop your writing and reasoning skills.

**Course Format:**

In this course I shall employ a number of different teaching methods. Much of the time, I shall use a lecture/discussion format. I
shall also use a version of the so-called Socratic method. This involves a question-based dialogue between you (the class) and me. I will also employ small-group exercises, individual in-class writing exercises, possibly some on-line conferencing, and computer-assisted instruction. Students may also be expected to participate in discussion, debates, and presentations. The emphasis in this course is on **critical thinking, collaborative learning, and active learning**. Also, **communication and interaction** are crucial!

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES [As required by SFA].

**Institutional Absences (HOP 04-110)**

An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.
More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at [https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences](https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences).

**Academic Integrity**

*Please copy and paste the following information regarding Academic Integrity into your syllabus. In addition, you may include your guidelines for academic integrity as appropriate.*

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.

[Please note that quoting or closely paraphrasing the textbook or lecture without citation is plagiarism and will be penalized. Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism 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/academic-appeals-by-students.pdf.]

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

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](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).
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/.

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  
936.468.1041
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](http://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)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741