

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Philosophy 1301: Introduction to Philosophy **Examining the Human Condition: Knowledge, Religion, and Mind**

Professor Contact Information

Steve Hiltz	214-613-2084	shiltz@mail.smu.edu
JO 5.712	ext. 2170	Office Hours: after class, or by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

Being willing to think. Being open to revision/expansion of one's current mindset.
Being willing to explore odd questions.

Course Description

The course will investigate a variety of influential philosophical perspectives, from Plato to the present day, on topics of perennial interest in epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of mind. We will ponder the following questions, among others: What sort of inquiry is philosophy? What weight should be given to the roles of sense perception and abstract conceptual activity in our attempts to acquire knowledge of the world? Is certainty possible? Can we attain genuine knowledge of anything beyond Nature? Are there any valid proofs of the existence of God? What is the most reasonable attitude to take towards matters of faith? What, exactly, does it mean to have a mind? What sort of relation obtains between mental states or events and the physical dimension of our being?

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will demonstrate an understanding of both the nuances and the gist of the philosophical positions presented in the texts. Students will exhibit analytical skill in uncovering and assessing implicit assumptions behind views and evaluating arguments presented for them. Students will acquire the ability to articulate and defend a philosophical position. Students will apply considered analysis and respond to works in the humanities as example of human expression and aesthetic and philosophical principles

Required Textbooks and Materials

Cahn and Eckert, eds., *Philosophical Horizons: Introductory Readings*

Course Packet (available through UTD Bookstore and Off Campus Books)

Assignments & Academic Calendar

The following represents the order of the topics to be discussed. Flexibility is called for with respect to how much time will be spent on the particular subsections. Students are responsible for knowing where we are in the schedule, and are expected to have completed the relevant reading **before** the topics are addressed in class. (Subsequent rereading will of course be necessary, if even a merely adequate grasp of the subject matter is to be attained.)

I. The Nature of Philosophy; the Example of Socrates

Apology
Euthyphro

II. Theory of Knowledge

Plato: The Divided Line and the Myth of the Cave
Notes on Plato's Epistemology (course packet, hereafter 'cp')
Descartes: The Early Modern Era (cp), Descartes and Galileo (cp)
Meditations on First Philosophy, I and II
Hume: Hume and Empiricism (cp)
An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (selections)

Test #1 First Writing Assignment Due

III. Philosophy of Religion

Religious Belief (cp)
Anselm: The Ontological Argument (and corresponding article in cp)
Aquinas: The Five Ways
Taylor: The Cosmological Argument (and corresponding article in cp)
Paley: The Teleological Argument
Hume: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (selections)
Evolution Through Natural Selection (cp)

IV. Philosophy of Mind

Descartes: *Meditations*, VI; Descartes' Dualism (cp)
Ryle: Descartes' Myth; Ryle's Logical Behaviorism (cp)
Smart: Sensations and Brain Processes; Smart's Materialism (cp)
Searle's Biological Naturalism (cp)

Functionalism (cp)
Turing: Computing Machinery and Intelligence
Searle: Is the Brain's Mind a Computer Program?
Churchland and Churchland: Could a Machine Think?

Test #2 Second Writing Assignment Due

Grading Policy

The grade will be determined by two tests and two writing assignments, each worth 25% of the final grade. The tests will consist of True-False, Multiple-Choice, and Short-Answer/Definition Questions. The writing assignments will consist of short essays answering specific questions provided a week or so before the due date.

Course & Instructor Policies

Regular (if not perfect) attendance and participation in class is strongly recommended. If you do not show up for class — or if you *merely* show up, unprepared — you cannot expect to learn much. Past experience has taught me to back up this advice with a sanction. Consequently, if you accumulate **four unexcused absences** you will have **five points deducted** from your next test.

Classes start promptly at 11:30 and are not over until 12:45.

There will be no extra-credit assignments, and no tests will be given early to accommodate individual students' extracurricular lives. If you miss a test for legitimate reasons, you will have to take a make-up at a later date.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the

Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called “the respondent”). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent’s School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean’s decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester’s end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student’s responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. (http://www.utdallas.edu/Business Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.