

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Course Syllabus

PHIL 1301: Introduction to Philosophy
Cowan Fine Arts 02006
Instructor: Jackson R. Hoerth, Ph.D.
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Required Textbooks:

Reading materials are provided for free (OER) in Canvas.

Catalog Description:

A survey of the major areas of traditional and modern philosophy: philosophies of knowledge, ethics, logic, aesthetics, and metaphysics.

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to...

1. articulate the basic terms, methods and questions of philosophy.
2. explain the importance of philosophy.
3. explain the job description and responsibilities of a philosopher.
4. identify key figures in the history of epistemology.
5. discuss the connection between certainty and knowledge.
6. explain the tenets of empiricism.
7. compare and contrast Eastern and Western theories of reality.
8. compare and contrast Eastern and Western theories of the self.
9. articulate and critique arguments for the existence of God.
10. discuss whether human nature is self-oriented or other-oriented.
11. describe the nature of true happiness.
12. explain the nature of human virtue.
13. discuss the idea of a social contract.
14. explain the basis for property rights.
15. explain and evaluate theories of justice.

Grading Scale Percent:

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=less than 60%

Grading:

Essay Assignments (2):	50%
Midterm Exam:	30%
Final Presentation:	20%
TOTAL:	100%

Assessment:

Essay Assignments: 2 Essay assignments due at the end of Units 1 & 3. Each essay will be 2-3 pages long and will feature some question, problem, issue, etc. covered in the corresponding section. All essays will be submitted via Canvas and will adhere to the following requirements and grading rubric.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- • 500-1000 words (not including citations and bibliography)
- • Double-spaced
- • No cover page
- • Name and title at the top center of first page
- • Page numbers on the bottom right of each page
- • Standard twelve-point font (e.g. Times New Roman)
- • One inch margins
- • .docx or .rtf file formats only
- • The introduction should be no more than half a page.
- • The conclusion should be no more than half a page and only review the main points.
- • No inflammatory or disrespectful language

ESSAY RUBRIC (100 POINTS)

0-25 points	The paper demonstrates an original and thoughtful answer to the writing prompt.
0-25 points	Philosophic idea is clear and central to the overall paper.
0-25 points	Multiple, relevant citations are used from <u>at least 1</u> outside, scholarly, source.

0-25 points

Grammar is polished, paper adheres to the minimum word count, and citation style conforms to a conventional citation style

Additional points will be deducted for late papers and papers that don't satisfy the "basic requirements" above. Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized papers may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences.

Midterm Exam: We will have a midterm exam roughly halfway through the course. The midterm will contain short essay questions. The exam will be available online for a 24-hour period instead of class on the designated day.

Final Presentation: In lieu of a traditional, comprehensive final exam, we will spend the final 2 weeks of the term with in-class presentations. These are intended on being 5-7 minute presentations. The topic and options for the presentations will be provided during the week of the midterm exam.

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1: Course Introduction

Weeks 2 - 4: *Unit 1: Philosophy in and of Itself*

Overview: This module explores the purpose and tools of philosophy and illustrates the practice of philosophy in the life of Socrates.

Learning objectives: upon completing this module, students will be able to...

1. articulate the basic terms, methods and questions of philosophy;
2. explain the importance of philosophy;
3. and explain the job description and responsibilities of a philosopher.

Readings

- Plato – The Apology
- Plato – The Allegory of the Cave

Weeks 5 - 8: *Unit 2: Epistemology*

Overview: This module explores important questions and issues related to knowledge and knowledge acquisition, including questions related to religious belief.

Learning objectives: upon completing this module, students will be able to...

1. identify key figures in the history of epistemology,
2. discuss the connection between certainty and knowledge,
3. and explain the tenets of rationalism, empiricism, and idealism.

Readings

- Descartes – On Doubt and Certainty
- Hume – On Empiricism
- Kant – On the Sources of Knowledge

Week 9: Midterm Exam

Week 10: Spring Break (No Class)

Week 11 & 12: *Unit 3: Aesthetics*

Overview: This module explores ideas of moral goodness.

Learning objectives: upon completing this module, students will be able to...

1. discuss whether is objective or subjective,
2. describe the nature of beauty, taste, ugliness, etc.
3. and explain the nature of a standard of beauty.

Readings

- Plato – On the Value of Art and Imitation
- Hume – On Opinion and Taste

Week 13 & 14: In-Class Presentations

Week 15: TBA

Week 16: Finals Week (No Class)

Course Policies:

Late work policy: Assignments must be submitted by the deadline. A penalty of a letter grade per day up to three letter grades will be assessed for late papers. This penalty will be waived only under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note). After three days, late work will no longer be accepted. The midterm must be taken on the day assigned. There will be no exceptions to this requirement, unless accompanied by a document-supported excuse. The professor reserves the sole right to determine what constitutes a valid excuse and proper documentation.

Communication policy: The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail (jhoerth@uttyler.edu) or in Canvas. Students can expect replies within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. Students who do not receive a reply within this timeframe should attempt to contact the instructor again. The instructor communicates with the class via

Canvas emails and announcements. It is important that students check their email and allow push notifications for class announcements.

Class conduct policy: All comments and behavior must be classroom appropriate. What does “classroom appropriate” mean? It does *not* mean that students cannot express unpopular opinions. It means practicing reasoning and logical argumentation. It means being civil and listening with respect. Insults, snide comments, name-calling, cutting someone off, derogatory tones, sarcasm, ridicule, cussing, vulgarity, personal attacks, racial slurs, misogynistic remarks, etc. will not be allowed. If you are unsure about what counts as disrespectful, consult the instructor or the Golden Rule. The instructor will act as the final word on what is or is not classroom appropriate. Violators may be ejected from the class.

Cell phone policy (face-to-face sections): Mobile devices can be used in the classroom if it is related to what is going on in class, i.e., you have an electronic textbook or plan to take notes on your device. Devices are permissible as long as they don’t distract you or your classmates from the lesson.

Arriving late or leaving early policy (face-to-face sections): Arriving on time can sometimes be challenging, but it is better to be late than never. However, late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive to others in the classroom. For this reason, please don’t make a habit of it.

Extra credit policy: It has been my experience that some students wait until the end of the semester in hopes that extra credit will save their grade. As such, I will not be offering any opportunities for extra credit in this class unless specifically announced.

“It is what it is” final grade policy: Grades are final once the final grade percentage has been posted in Canvas at the end of the semester. No changes will be made unless the instructor has made a mistake. Grades are not bumped up unless the student is within .5% of the next letter grade. For example, an 89.5% is an A. An 89.4% is a B. No extra credit opportunities will be given during finals week. The conditions for an “incomplete” are stated in the university handbook: “(a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due.” The terms and deadline for satisfying an “incomplete” will be set by the instructor.

[UT TYLER HONOR CODE](#)

I embrace honor and integrity.
Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.