

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

## Course Syllabus

PHIL 1301.060: Introduction to Philosophy

ONLINE

Instructor: Jackson R. Hoerth, Ph.D.

E-Mail: [jhoerth@uttyler.edu](mailto:jhoerth@uttyler.edu)

Secretary Phone: 903.566.7373

### 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:

Quizzes:	10%
Essay Assignments:	30% (lowest essay dropped)
Exams:	30%
Final Exam:	30%

---

TOTAL:	100%
--------	------

## Assessment:

**Essay Assignments:** 5 Essay assignments are due throughout the course, with the lowest dropped. Each essay will be 1-2 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 (minimum) words (not including citations and bibliography)
- • Double-spaced
- • 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)
- • .docx or .rtf file formats only
- • The introduction should be no more than a quarter page.
- • The conclusion should be no more than a quarter page and only review the main points.

### 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 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.

**Exams:** We will have exams after Modules 1 & 2. They will consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. The exams will be available online for a 24-hour period.

**Final Exam:** In the final week of the course we will have a comprehensive final exam. It will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions from previous modules. The final will be available online for a 24-hour period.

## **Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments**

### **Week 1: Course Introduction**

### **Weeks 2 - 6: *Module 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 7 - 11: *Module 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 12 & 13: Module 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
- Immanuel Kant – On the Aesthetic Taste

## **Week 14: Thanksgiving Break (No Class)**

## **Week 15: Module 3: Aesthetics (cont.)**

## **Week 16: Finals Week**

### **Course Policies:**

***Late work policy:*** Assignments must be submitted by the deadline. Late work will not be accepted. Under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note) an extension may be offered. However, it is the professor's sole discretion whether to grant an extension and what documentation is required.

***Communication policy:*** The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail ([jhoerth@uttyler.edu](mailto: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.

***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 except those 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.