

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Course Syllabus

Fall 2023

PHIL 1301: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Gregory L. Bock, 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 Percents:

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

Grading:

Exams (5 @ 100 points each):	400 points (lowest dropped)
Attendance	50 points
TOTAL:	450 points

Assessment:

Exams: There are five in-class exams, which are made up of short-answer questions. Answers to the questions will be scored on accuracy and completeness. A study guide will be released a week prior to the exam, and an in-class review will be hosted by the instructor. The last exam will not be comprehensive of the whole semester.

Attendance: At the start of the semester, each student has fifty points for attendance and one free unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after the first is penalized five points per day against the attendance grade up to fifty points. Excused absences will not count against the fifty points but need to be accompanied with documentation (e.g. a doctor's note). This documentation must be submitted when the student returns to class and no later. After losing fifty points, no further points will be deducted even if there are more absences. Students may not see points deducted in the grade book immediately or even until the end of the semester, so it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of attendance points remaining and make sure that the attendance sheet is accurate on a weekly basis.

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

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.

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 empiricism.

Module 3: Metaphysics

Overview: This module explores questions related to reality and the philosophy of religion.

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

1. compare and contrast Eastern and Western theories of reality,
2. compare and contrast Eastern and Western theories of the self,
3. and articulate and critique arguments for the existence of God.

Module 4: Ethics

Overview: This module explores ideas of moral goodness.

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

1. discuss whether human nature is self-oriented or other-oriented,
2. describe the nature of true happiness,
3. and explain the nature of human virtue.

Module 5: Political Philosophy

Overview: This module explores questions of justice and political organization.

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

1. discuss the idea of a social contract,
2. explain the basis for property rights,
3. and explain and evaluate theories of justice.

Course Policies:

Late work policy: Exams must be taken during the class time on the day of the test. Make-ups are only allowed under special circumstances, such as a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note.

Communication policy: The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail (gbock@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: The subject matter of this class can make some people hot under the collar. This said, 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. If you have an electronic textbook or plan to take notes on your device, please let me know early in the semester. They 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: Extra credit may be available from time to time when the instructor announces it. It is not available upon request, especially not during the last week of class.

"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.