

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Department of English, Philosophy, and Modern Languages

Professor: Dr. David J. Hart
Office: CC325D
Office Hours: TBA

Email: dhart@wtamu.edu
Office Phone: 806.651.2468

Spring 2013

PHIL 1301-45(H): INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Catalog Description: Introduction to the problems and methods of philosophical inquiry.

Course Description

Philosophy is an activity the primary purpose of which is to clarify the way we think and use language. Philosophy is not a fixed system of belief or a set of doctrines. Philosophical inquiry involves understanding and applying the fundamental principles of logic to a particular subject matter. In this course, we will focus on three main branches of contemporary philosophy: *metaphysics*, the study of the difference between appearance and reality; *epistemology*, the study of how to distinguish between opinion and knowledge; and *ethics*, the study of right and wrong. We will explore these themes by reading and analyzing essays written by philosophers representing a variety of social, historical, and cultural perspectives; by developing a familiarity with philosophical terms and concepts; and by discussing and writing about important philosophical issues.

Course Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will learn:

1. To read, analyze, and criticize philosophical texts;
2. To employ informal logic, verbally and in writing;
3. To identify and articulate key philosophical terms and issues;
4. To locate themselves and/or develop a position in relation to a range of philosophical problems;
5. To grasp how social and political events and commitments shape philosophical inquiry;
6. To appreciate the scope and variety of philosophical literature that has been produced in different social, cultural and historical contexts.

Required Text

None

Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. Three objective-style exams to measure students' knowledge of basic philosophical terms, concepts, and arguments.
2. A comprehensive, objective-style final exam to measure students' knowledge of basic philosophical terms, concepts, and arguments.
3. Three short writing assignments (approximately 500 words each) in which students will analyze an argument by a philosopher or articulate their own positions on a philosophical issue.

Assignment Percentages

Exam One	Intro and Metaphysics	20% (of final grade)
Exam Two	Epistemology	20%
Exam Three	Ethics	20%
Final Exam	Comprehensive	30%
Three Short Writing Assignments		10% (each counts 3.3%)

Grading Scale

A = 90-100% B = 80-89% C = 70-79% D = 60-69% F = 59% or below

Policy on Late Assignments

Except in cases of medical emergency, late assignments will not be accepted without prior authorization. Students are responsible for any class content missed because of absence.

Academic Integrity

All work must be completed individually unless otherwise stated. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute scholastic dishonesty: acquiring or providing information for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the exam is given in any subsequent sections of the course or as a makeup; plagiarism; submission of a paper or project that is substantially the same for two courses unless expressly authorized by the instructor to do so. For more information, see the Student Code of Life at

<http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Student%20Life/WEB2010-2011CodeOL.pdf>

Acceptable Student Behavior

Course behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (*Code of Student Life*). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action or referral to the University's Behavioral Intervention Team. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ADA statement

West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) and to contact faculty members in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations. Contact Information: Student Success Center, CC 106; www.wtamu.edu/disability; phone 806-651-2335.

Evacuation Statement

If you receive notice to evacuate the building, please evacuate promptly but in an orderly manner. Evacuation routes are posted in various locations indicating all exits, outside assemble area, location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull stations and emergency telephone numbers (651.5000or 911). In the event an evacuation is necessary: evacuate immediately do not use elevators; take all personal belongings with you; report to outside assembly area and wait for further information; students needing assistance in the evacuation process should bring this to the attention of the instructor at the beginning of the semester.