

**PHL 372**  
**Philosophy of Science**  
**3 Credit Hours**  
**Fall, 2007**

<b>Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:50</b>	<b>AB4-220 Olson Auditorium</b>
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**Catalog Description:** **PHL 372 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.** A survey of topics in philosophy of science including the logic of explanations in the physical and social sciences, the relations of science to the realm of values, and a look at the "mind-body problem". Credit 3.

**Course Format:** This course will be primarily taught in a seminar/lecture hybrid format. Students are expected to participate in class discussion every day. The professor role is to facilitate the discussion and answer questions. In some classes, we will use small group discussions and in-class presentations.

**Objectives:** The primary objective of this course is to examine the role of science within our society. We will attempt to accomplish this goal through two broad projects. The first question we will investigate is, "What constitutes scientific knowledge or knowledge gathering practices?" The second question is, "Should science and scientific practices be granted special epistemological status?" The first question is a constitutive question asking us to draw a line between science and non-science. The second asks us to make a value judgment about those things on either side of the line. Through these two questions, we should gain insight into both the epistemological foundations and the social implications of science. A major component of all course work will be a focus critical evaluation of evidence and arguments. The mind-body problem will be discussed within the context of epistemology. **Note:** One of my personal objectives is to make myself available to students as much as possible. If you wish to meet with me to discuss any portion of this course, please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address above or in person and I will be happy to set up a mutually convenient meeting.

**Required Texts:**

Philip Kitcher (2003) *Science, Truth, and Democracy*. Oxford University Press, USA ISBN: 0195165527

Additional handouts, web-based, and library readings will be assigned. These readings will be given in class, posted on Blackboard, or links to web-based sources will be provided. In all cases, these assignments will be provided at no cost to the student.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance records will not be used in determining your grade. However, class attendance is strongly encouraged as all students are responsible for any material covered

or assignments given in class even if it does not appear in the texts or on the website. Also, students who miss class will receive zero points for any quiz that they miss due to an absence.

There are no make-ups for quizzes in this course, except as required by university policy. In cases where a student misses a quiz due to a religious holiday or other such policy-governed absence, I will work with the student to ensure an opportunity to complete the assignment. For take-home exams, I will deduct 10 points from your exam grade for each 12-hour period, or part thereof, from the time that the exam was due until I receive the exam. **When you submit a take-home exam, it is your responsibility to ensure that the exam is in Adobe PDF format.** Exams submitted in any other format will receive a grade of zero points, unless an acceptable version is submitted. If you submit an exam in an unapproved format prior to the deadline, but I do not receive the appropriate electronic format or a hard copy until after the deadline, I will deduct points according to the late exam policy.

For the in-class exam, a make-up will only be allowed in extreme cases that are both beyond your reasonable control and subject to verification. If you miss the exam, you must submit a written explanation for your absence upon your return to class -- NO EXCEPTIONS. The explanation should provide documentation to cover all classes missed between the due date and your return to class. If your excuse does not withstand verification you will receive a zero for that exam. Also, if you delay your return to class without a valid excuse, you will receive a zero for the missed exam, even if your excuse for missing the assignment was acceptable. In other words, you must provide a valid excuse for each class missed from the date of the exam until your return to class. If you do have a valid excuse, it is your responsibility to meet with me to make arrangements for the make-up as soon as possible. This meeting must take place within one week of your return to class or you will receive a zero for the missed exam. Having another exam on the same day is not an acceptable excuse for missing an exam. You should have no expectation that you will receive the same questions on a make-up that were given in class or appeared on the review.

#### STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines religious holy days as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code...."

A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

**Assignments: Readings:** Reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard as the course progresses. All readings, other than those available on the first day will be posted at least two weeks in advance. All students are expected to have read all assignments before attending the class on the day for which they are assigned. Please note that some readings may be difficult to comprehend. It is very important that you read all assignments before coming to class. If there are specific portions you do not understand, you are expected to notify me of this at the start of each class. I welcome questions as a basis for the day's discussion.

**“Pop” Quizzes:** I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes at any point during the semester. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. These quizzes will only be given if classroom discussion lags. It is possible that we will go through the entire semester with no quizzes. These quizzes will consist of a selection of short answer questions. Answers will be graded based upon each student's ability to clearly and concisely explain the required concepts. There are no make-ups on quizzes, except in the case of a religious holiday.

**Exams:** These will either be in-class or take-home. They will consist of 1-2 essay questions and may include multiple short-answer/definition questions. I will expect 4-6 paragraphs for each essay question. These numbers will all be specified in advance of a particular exam and will vary with the nature of the exam. Students are expected to demonstrate a grasp of the material covered while providing their own analysis of the relevant content for each question. These answers will be graded on content, clarity, specificity, and directness. All take-home essay exams require footnotes or in-text citations and a complete bibliography. Students may use any standard style, so long as all materials used are documented. If you are not sure how to appropriately cite the works you use, I recommend that you visit the University Writing Center (<http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>). Exams will be announced and a review will be provided at least 2 weeks in advance. All answers should utilize correct spelling and grammar.

**Grading Plan:** Grades for this course will be determined based upon your percentage of total points using the following scale: 90-100% = A, 80-89.9% = B, 70-79.9% = C, 60-69.9% = D, below 60% = F. There will be three exams (The first is worth 80 points, the other two 100 points each). In addition to the 280 exam-based points, points from the quizzes (if given) will be included when calculating your grade. To determine your percentage, divide the total amount of points you have earned by the total number of possible points. Students will be allowed to drop one quiz or response paper grade. I do not expect to offer any extra credit during this course; however, on occasion, I have provided students the opportunity to earn extra credit points for participating in university-sponsored research projects. If any such opportunity arises, I will announce it in class. You must be present to earn the points.

**Study Tips:** All students are encouraged to attend every scheduled class meeting. It is essential that students do all of the scheduled readings before class. Note any areas of the readings that are unclear, confusing, or otherwise of interest to you. Bring these notes to class and use them to ask questions during the discussion. It is your responsibility to make sure that you ask questions about all of the areas that you do not understand. I recommend that students re-read assignments after class as a way of reviewing reinforcing the class discussions and improving reading focus for future assignments. Often, working together in groups to study for exams is an effective

strategy. Students are encouraged to make use of the SAM Center, the Reading Center, and the Writing Center.

University policies concerning **academic dishonesty, Americans with Disabilities Act, religious holidays, and visitors to the classroom** are available at <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

I will be using turnitin.com as a plagiarism prevention/detection measure for the take-home exams. All take-home exams will be processed through this automated process. I consider plagiarism a very serious type of academic dishonesty. For any student caught violating the policy on academic dishonesty, I will enter a grade of 0 for the given assignment and work with the appropriate university authorities to seek the expulsion of the student. In all cases, I will seek the maximum penalty allowed by the university.

**Instructor Evaluations:** Near the end of the semester, all students will be asked to complete an IDEA evaluation of the instructor's performance in this class. This confidential evaluation is your chance to provide feedback on the effectiveness of this course.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If the student has a disability that may affect adversely their work in this class, then he or she needs to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how they can best be helped. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. There will be no retroactive accommodations.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

In accordance with the University's Academic Policy Statement 810213, the following statement applies to all students in my classes:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of

academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students therefore must refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular phones, pagers, and music players (for example, iPod-type devices) must be turned off and earphones removed before class begins. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, talking at inappropriate times, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. Violation of these rules may result in the student being counted as absent for the class in which the behavior occurs. The SHSU policy on student conduct and discipline is available at:  
<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

**Visitors in the Classroom:**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not he/she will be allowed to remain.

**Course Outline:**

There is no master course outline. After the initial list of assignments, all assignments will be posted on BlackBoard at least two weeks before they are due. This allows for flexibility to alter the pace of the course relative to the needs of students.