

PHILOSOPHY (PHL) 261  
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY  
Fall 2007

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

**PHL 261 Introduction to Philosophy.** [PHIL 1301] A general examination of the fields and issues of philosophy as discussed by both classical and modern philosophers. Philosophical problems discussed include the existence of God, the nature of knowledge and truth, the issue of human free will, and theories of moral judgment. Credit 3.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course the student should be able to do most or all of the following:

- recognize basic philosophical questions, problems, and argument forms;
- define and use key philosophical terms;
- claim insight into the various branches of Philosophy;
- identify major “schools” in the history of Philosophy;
- explain how Philosophy was and is centrally related to other disciplines such as natural science, religion, law, etc;
- think more critically (in the constructive sense of the word “critically”).

REQUIRED BOOK(S)

The required book is *Classics of Western Philosophy*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, edited by Steven Cahn (Hackett Press).

EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

EXAMINATION I

**Plato: *Republic*** (The Divided Line/On the Essence of Justice/The Philosopher-King/The Decline of the City);

EXAMINATION II

**Plato: *Euthyphro*** (On the Essence of Piety).

EXAMINATION III

**Aristotle: *Metaphysics, Physics, On the Soul***

EXAMINATION IV

**Aristotle: "Great Chain of Being;" *Nicomachean Ethics***

EXAMINATION V

**Epicurus: *Letter to Menoceus*** (Moral Principles) [Open Book Test]  
***Letter to Herodotus*** [Lecture only] (Cosmological Principles) [Closed Book Test]

EXAMINATION VI

**Augustine: *On Free Will; Confessions*** (On Time and Eternity).

EXAMINATION VII

**Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy*** (I-IV)

EXAMINATION VIII

**Hobbes: *Leviathan*.**

EXAMINATION IX

**Nietzsche: *Twilight of the Idols***  
[Final Exam: not comprehensive]

## GRADES

The grade for the course will be the average drawn from all of the test scores and determined according to the following scale:

A = 88-100

B = 77 - 87

C = 66 - 76

D = 55 - 65

F = 0 - 54.

There is no curving of grades. **The professor will not drop the lowest grade. There is no outside work for extra credit.**

As this is a (W) writing enhanced course, incomplete, inept, or simply sloppy grammar (including, but not limited to, errors in contractions, possessives, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, or run-on sentences, etc.) will be considered incorrect.

There will be no make-up exams (except in extraordinary circumstances with documentation). Should a student miss one exam, the student's lowest grade will be substituted for that missed exam. Should a student miss a second exam, the score for that exam will be a zero.

Given extenuating circumstances, some portions of the course may have to be omitted or augmented.

The professor will only review graded exams upon their return in class. Only at that time will revisions to a grade (always upward) be made. This fact makes attendance a virtue.

## ATTENDANCE

Poor attendance will have consequences. Four to six unexcused absences will result in a demerit of an entire letter grade for the entire course. Seven or more unexcused absences will result in a demerit of two entire letter grades for the entire course.

This course will be directed as a lecture course. There are no group discussions, etc.

However, each student should feel free to interrupt a lecture at any time should he or she be confused, curious, or particularly enthusiastic about a topic. Questions, comments, and constructive class participation are encouraged. Do not be shy or afraid to ask questions.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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.

## STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY

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. 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). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

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 you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center: Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students and Director of the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex, or by calling (936) 294-1720.

### VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office

### Q-DROPS

A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (12<sup>th</sup> class day for fall/spring; 4<sup>th</sup> class day for summer) but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of 'F' as published in the Academic Calendar.

Students will be allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of five Q-drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class.

This limit will take effect with the start of the fall 2004 semester. Any drops accumulated prior to the fall 2004 semester will not be included in the five Q-drop limit, nor will Q-drops from other universities.

