

Spring 2008 Syllabus  
Philosophy of Science, PHL 372W 03  
Sam Houston State University

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Professor: Alan C. Clune, Ph.D.  
Office: AB4 Rm. 410  
Office Hours: MWThu 2PM-3PM  
                    TF By Appointment  
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### **1. Description**

This course explores some of the philosophical problems that arise with respect to considerations in science. The first part of the course will focus on traditional problems in philosophy of Science. The second part of the course will be an exploration of how problems in philosophy of mind and problems in psychology are related. The third part of the course will focus on the conflict that can occur between science and religion.

Credit Hours: 3

### **2. Description of Approach**

Class size necessitates the traditional lecture format. However, participation is encouraged. Students are encouraged to offer their own insights and freely ask for clarification.

### **3. Objectives**

#### **Fundamental Objectives**

- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- Understand problems in philosophy of mind and how research in psychology has attempted to contribute to their resolution.
- Understand contributions to philosophy of science which attempt to answer the following sorts of questions:
  1. What is a scientific explanation?
  2. To what extent can scientific claims ever be justified or shown to be true or false?
  3. How do scientific theories change over time?

### **4. Requirements**

Two Exams

Exam #1 (Essay, 30% of grade)

Final Exam, not cumulative (50 % Essay and 50% Multiple Choice: 45 % of grade)

Five Surprise True/False Quizzes on Readings (25% of Grade)

To get these points you need to read carefully.

Participation (Bumps you up a grade if you are within 1 point of a higher letter grade)

Participation means asking constructive questions or making constructive comments during class-time. I determine this grade based on my memory. So you need to do a good amount of participating and be constructive. Asking for clarification does count as participation. Attendance does not count as participation.

## 5. Course Policies

**ABSENCES:** In accordance with University regulations, I take roll every period. I make no use of the absence record in determining grades. However, if you do not attend class, **YOU MUST DROP THE COURSE**; otherwise you will receive an F. For any days absence, you are responsible for any information from that class period (notes, announcements of assignments, etc.)

**LATENESS:** Lateness is unacceptable. If I decide that you are systematically ignoring this lateness policy, you will begin to lose  $\frac{1}{4}$  point off your final grade each time you come in late.

**MAKE-UPS:** If one is necessary, it is likely to be longer and more difficult than the regular test. You must have a good reason for missing a test; having another test the same day, for example, does not count as a good reason. If you do miss a test, see me as soon as possible. Your excuse must be written out and appropriately documented. **ANY EXCUSE THAT CANNOT BE VERIFIED WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THAT EXAM.** If you do have a valid excuse, then we should make the arrangements for you to take a make-up **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

**INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS:** Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester. Starting in the Spring 2005 semester we will be officially using a new system of evaluation call 'IDEA'.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Anyone caught plagiarizing or cheating will receive an F *for the course.*

**UNCOLLECTED ASSIGNMENTS:** I hold onto uncollected graded assignments until the first day of the next semester. If you have not collected them by then, they will be thrown away.

## 6. ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

**STUDENT SYLLABUS GUIDELINES:** Go to the following website for fuller information on the three policies that immediately follow below:

**<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>**

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:** Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

**NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY:** 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 should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Students may tape record lectures provided they do not disturb other students in the process.

**REGISTERING FOR CLASS:** I cannot add anyone to the course, for any reason whatsoever, after the deadline for adding. This policy holds even if you were dropped due to financial aid reasons.

**DROPPING/RESIGNING:** See the calendar on the home page for policies.

**Q-DROPS:** See the academic calendar on the home page for policy.

#### **6. GRADING SCALE:**

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
<60	F

#### **7. Texts**

1. Godfrey-Smith, Peter. 2003. *Theory and Reality*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
2. Gopnik, Alison, Meltzoff, Andrew, and Kuhl, Patricia. 1999. *The Scientist in the Crib* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers)
3. Miller, Kenneth. 1999. *Finding Darwin's God* (New York: Harper Collins Press).

#### **8. Tentative Course Organization**

PART I: Theory and Reality (Smith)

## Readings/Exams

1. Smith, Chapter 1 and 2.
2. Smith Chapter 3 and 4.
3. Chapter 5 and 6.

Exam 1 (Approximately March 5th)

### Part II: Epistemology, Cognitive Science, and Infant Research (SIC)

1. Chapter 1 and 2.
2. Chapter 3 and 4.
3. Chapter 5 and 6.

### Part III: Conflict between Science and Religion (FDG)

1. Chapters 1 and 2.
2. Chapters 3 and 4.
3. Chapters 4 and 5.

Final Exam