

Spring 2008 Syllabus, Introduction to Philosophy, PHL261 02, 3 Credit Hours

Meets in AB4 302 TThu 11:00AM-12:30PM

Professor: Alan C. Clune, Ph.D.

Office: AB4 Rm. 410

Office Hours: MWThu 2PM-3PM Or By Appointment

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is intended to introduce students to philosophy from a historical and problem-centered perspective. We will cover a sampling of several different problems that have been prevalent in Western Philosophy and stress the views of particular philosophers on these issues. I encourage people to communicate with me freely by making office visits and using email.

2. DESCRIPTION OF APPROACH:

The course will have a good amount of lecturing with notes. Also, there will be an emphasis on class discussion and active learning whereby students are expected to generate questions and offer critical evaluations of the various positions that are explored. Such in-class activity is of prime importance to developing critical thinking skills about philosophical issues. This is because such skills require practice thinking and speaking about the issues.

3. OBJECTIVES

Fundamental Objectives

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

Specific Objectives

- Learn basic philosophical theories on a range of issues.
- Learn to speak and write coherently about these issues.
- Learn the difference between having an opinion and having an opinion that one can make a case in support of.

4. REQUIREMENTS:

Three Exams (Test #1: 30%, Test #2: 30%, Final 40%): All multiple choice. Final is cumulative.

5. SPECIFIC COURSE POLICIES

ABSENCES: In accordance with University regulations, I take roll every period. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences w/o penalty. You must attend class 75% the time or you will receive a failing grade. If you decide to stop attending class, please remember to drop the course or you will receive an F.

LATENESS or EARLY DEPARTURES: For those who are habitually late or leave early, I reserve the right to start taking ¼ point off his or her final grade for each time 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.**

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

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: Everyone in the classroom is expected to be respectful of others. Heated discussions are often exciting and good, but the expression of disagreements should not stray too far from a constructive purpose. The professor reserves the right to ask a student to leave that class period. **NO USE OF THE INTERNET DURING CLASS.**

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.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: *Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into 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 the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.*

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational 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.

Q-DROPS: A Q-Drop is one made after the 12th day of classes but before the last day for dropping without receiving an F. There is now a limit of 5 Q-Drops for each student's undergraduate career at SHSU. This policy began Fall 2004. Q-Drops from other institutions and Q-Drops that occurred before Fall 2004 are not counted toward the limit of 5. Students who have reached their limit can petition the Dean to for another Q-Drop. If refused, they must stay registered for the course.

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'.

7. GRADING SCALE

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

NOTE: IN ORDER TO DO WELL ON QUIZZES AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS YOU MUST DO THE READINGS AND COME TO LECTURES.

8. REQUIRED TEXT:

Manuel Velasquez's Philosophy: A Text with Readings (United States: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008)

ISBN-13: 978-0-495-09497-5

9. TENTATIVE TOPICS AND READINGS: I reserve the right to delete or add readings as time demands.

Chapter 1: 4-44

Chapter 2: 46-74, 74-99

Test 1

Chapter 3: 144-159, 194-203

Chapter 4: 233-248, 251-258

Test 2

Chapter 5: 310-334

Chapter 7: 452-487

Chapter 8: 546-558, 590-597

Final