Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

PHIL 4323.001

Contemporary Philosophy

TR 9:30 – 10:45

BH 235

http://philosophy.tamucc.edu

Professor:

Don Berkich, Ph.D.

Office: FC-283

Hours: TR 11:00 - 1:00, W 1:00 - 5:00, and by appointment

Office#: 3976 (do not leave a message, send email instead)

Home#: 852-1514 (never after 9:00 p.m.)

Email: don.berkich@tamucc.edu

Web: http://philosophy.tamucc.edu/berkich

Course Description:


Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will

1. Learn the important figures and their contributions to the development of contemporary philosophy and its major themes.

2. Be able to explain the contributions of significant contemporary philosophical works in terms of the positions they articulate and the arguments they present.

3. Develop the analytic sophistication to be able to extract and evaluate complex philosophical arguments while sharpening their ability to express themselves with clarity and precision.
Texts:


Tentative Schedule:

Week 1:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 1, Common Sense and Philosophical Analysis
Volume I, Chapter 2, Moore on Skepticism, Perception, and Knowledge
Volume I, Chapter 3, Moore on Goodness and the Foundations of Ethics

Assignments: None

Week 2:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 5, Logical Form, Grammatical Form, and the Theory of Descriptions
Volume I, Chapter 6, Logic and Mathematics: The Logicist Reduction

Assignments: Weekly Page 01 Due

Week 3:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 7, Logical Constructions and the External World
Volume I, Chapter 8, Russell's Logical Atomism

Assignments: Weekly Page 02 Due

Week 4:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 9, The Metaphysics of the *Tractatus*
Volume I, Chapter 10, Meaning, Truth, and Logic in the *Tractatus*
Volume I, Chapter 11, The Tractarian Test of Intelligibility and Its Consequences

Assignments: Weekly Page 03 Due
Week 5:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 12, The Logical Positivists on Necessity and Apriori Knowledge
          Volume I, Chapter 13, The Rise and Fall of the Empiricist Criterion of Meaning

Assignments: Weekly Page 04 Due

Week 6:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 14, Emotivism and Its Critics
          Volume I, Chapter 15, Normative Ethics in the Era of Emotivism

Assignments: Weekly Page 05 Due

Week 7:

Readings: Volume I, Chapter 16, The Analytic and the Synthetic, the Necessary and the Possible, the Apriori and the Aposteriori
          Volume I, Chapter 17, Meaning and Holistic Verificationism

Assignments: Weekly Page 06 Due; Term Paper Proposal Assigned

Week 8:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 1, Rejection of the Tractarian Conception of Language and Analysis
          Volume II, Chapter 2, Rule Following and the Private Language Argument

Assignments: Weekly Page 07 Due; Term Paper Proposal Due

Week 9:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 3, Ryle's Dilemmas
          Volume II, Chapter 4, Ryle's Conception of Mind

Assignments: Weekly Page 08 Due; Term Paper Proposal Consultations with the Professor

Week 10:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 5, Strawson's Performative Theory of Truth
          Volume II, Chapter 6, Hare's Performative Theory of Goodness

Assignments: Weekly Page 09 Due; Term Paper Annotated Bibliography Assigned
Week 11:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 7, Malcolm's Paradigm Case Argument
          Volume II, Chapter 8, Austin's *Sense and Sensibilia*

Assignments: Weekly Page 10 Due; Term Paper Rough Draft Assigned

Week 12:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 9, Language Use and the Logic of Conversation
          Volume II, Chapter 10, The Indeterminacy of Translation
          Volume II, Chapter 11, Quine's Radical Semantic Eliminativism

Assignments: Weekly Page 11 Due; Term Paper Annotated Bibliography Due

Week 13:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 12, Theories of Truth as Theories of Meaning
          Volume II, Chapter 13, Truth, Interpretation, and the Alleged Unintelligibility of Alternative Conceptual Schemes

Assignments: Weekly Page 12 Due

Week 14:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 14, Names, Essence, and Possibility
          Volume II, Chapter 15, The Necessary A posteriori

Assignments: Weekly Page 13 Due; Term Paper Rough Draft Due; Rough Draft Consultations with the Professor

Week 15:

Readings: Volume II, Chapter 16, The Contingent A priori
          Volume II, Chapter 17, Natural Kind Terms and Theoretical Identification Statements

Assignments: Weekly Page 14 Due

Week 16: (Finals Week)

Assignments: Term Paper Final Draft Due Wednesday, December 14.
Requirements:

The Weekly Page

Each week the professor prepares a question about that week's topics. Students are allowed at most one side of one page to answer the question and submit their weekly page at the start of the next week's classes. In answering the question, students must observe strict minimums: No less than 10pt font, no less than .75 margins, no less than 1.5 spacing. Students are encouraged to form page groups to help compose and edit their pages. However, each student's page must be his or her own answer. Only the best ten of the weekly pages will count for the course grade.

The Term Paper

There will be a single, substantial paper of not less than 15 pages and not more than 18 pages due at the end of the term. The term paper will be developed in four stages: Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Rough Draft, and Final Draft. Content and format instructions will be provided as each stage is assigned.

Policies:

The professor assumes that students enrolled in this course are sincere student-scholars. That is, the professor shall treat students with the respect due scholars, and students shall do their best to live up to the standards of scholars. To wit,

Preparation:

Scholars carefully read assignments in advance of class, take notes on their reading, explore specific issues in discussion with fellow scholars, and follow-up class by re-reading portions of the required readings and exploring suggested readings.

Participation:

Scholars are eager to respectfully, openly, and critically discuss arguments and issues raised by the readings. Scholars are adept at following a line of reasoning wherever it may lead. Most importantly, scholars welcome the insights and criticisms of their peers: A scholar understands that it is possible to entertain a proposition without believing it, just as it is possible to present an argument without personally endorsing the argument. Scholars enjoy vigorous deliberations and are always careful to treat fellow scholars with patience and good humor.

Assignments:

Scholars fully immerse themselves in assignments and never assume that an assignment is only legitimate if it will be covered on a test. Scholars are naturally curious and see every assignment as an opportunity to explore new issues, see old issues in new light, and hone their growing skills.

Cheating:

Scholars are very careful to give proper credit and maintain the highest standards of scholarly conduct. Thus, subject to university guidelines, any instance of cheating (including plagiarism) will be vigorously prosecuted.


**Attendance:**

Scholars always attend class barring serious injury, illness, or disaster. Scholars view class-time as rare and valuable for the thought it evokes and the opportunities it presents. Scholars arrive early for class and never leave class early without obtaining prior approval from the professor.

**Grading Formula:**

There are 1000 points possible as follows:

- Weekly Pages: 40 points each
- Term Paper Prospectus: 50 points
- Critically Annotated Bibliography: 100 points
- Rough Draft: 200 points
- Final Draft: 250 points

Total Points = sum of the best ten weekly pages + prospectus + bibliography + rough draft + final draft

Course Grade is determined by the following scale:

- **A**: 900-1000
- **B**: 800 - 899
- **C**: 700 - 799
- **D**: 600 - 699
- **F**: 000 - 599

**Additional Notes:**

Any change in the above will be announced in class. No change will be made which would be detrimental to the student's grade.

This syllabus is not authoritative. That is, the syllabus on the course website supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it appears in its entirety on the website, including the schedule of topics and readings.

Any student missing a due date must provide a documented, acceptable reason according to university guidelines. Students with a proper excuse for missing a due date will be given a reasonable extension.

Students without a proper excuse for missing a due date will lose 20 points per day after the due date.

**Required University Note to Students with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Required College of Liberal Arts Note on Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
Required University Note on the Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

By accepting this syllabus the student indicates that the syllabus has been read, all requirements are understood, and all policies are acknowledged.