INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
PHIL 1301.002   Spring 2015
Time: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45   Location: CI-102

Instructor: Prof. Glenn Tiller
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Phone: 825-6008
Office hours: 12:45-3:15 Monday and Wednesday and by appointment.

Course Description
This course is an introduction to the problems and practice of philosophy. We begin with some general considerations on the nature and relevance of philosophy. We will also familiarize ourselves with the basic tools of logical reasoning. Next we will inquire into fundamental questions in the areas of epistemology and metaphysics, such as “What is knowledge?”, “Do we have free will?”, “What is the relationship between the mind and the body?”, and “Does God exist?”. Our inquiry into these questions will involve examining both classic and contemporary readings.

Student Learning Outcomes
Successful completion of the course provides you with a foundational understanding of Western philosophical thought. In particular, you will be familiar with basic logical, epistemological, and metaphysical issues discussed in classic and contemporary literature. These outcomes will be measured through in-class quizzes, tests, and take-home essay assignments. By the end of the course, you will also know the elements of logic (e.g. recognizing arguments, argument forms, and using terms of appraisal) and be able to compose philosophical essays on topics such as the mind-body problem, the existence of God, and freedom of the will. Ideally, you will develop a coherent understanding of the nature philosophical inquiry and begin forming a philosophical perspective of your own. Since much of our time is spent on close textual analysis, you will also improve your reading comprehension skills and strengthen your abilities to construct logical arguments.

Required Text
2. Readings distributed in class.

Course Website
To get to the course website, go to the main philosophy page at: http://philosophy.tamucc.edu/
Click on the tab “Courses” and you’ll find a link for our course. Note: to fully access the philosophy website, login using your “islander” email account. If you are asked for a password to fully access the site, then use “island”.

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Attendance
Regular attendance will be taken. Any student who misses more than three classes without a reasonable excuse (e.g. medical) can expect to be penalized (up to a letter grade) on their final grade. All materials discussed in lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for quiz and test questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all lectures and keep up with assigned readings. If you don’t attend class, don’t expect to pass.

Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Percentage of Final Mark</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Précis, January 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worth 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description: Provide a brief synopsis of Bertrand Russell’s “The Value of Philosophy”. Further instructions will be provided in class.</td>
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<td>2. Ten reading quizzes</td>
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<td>Worth 20%</td>
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<td>Description: Short quizzes held at the start of class, usually answerable in a word or sentence.</td>
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<td>3. In class test, March 12</td>
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<td>Worth 15%</td>
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<td>Description: General test consisting of some combination of true/false, multiple choice, short and long answer questions. It will cover all materials up to and including March 10 and will take the entire period to write.</td>
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<td>4. Essay, April 7</td>
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<td>Worth 20%</td>
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<td>Description: Essay topic and specific instructions to be distributed in class.</td>
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<td>5. In class test, May 5</td>
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<td>Worth 20%</td>
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<td>Description: General test with the same structure as the first test. Will cover all materials up to and including April 30.</td>
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<td>6. Essay, Due by the end of the exam period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worth 20%</td>
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<td>Description: Essay topics and specific instructions for this essay to be distributed in class.</td>
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Grading Scale
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100% = A, 80%-89% = B, 70%-79% = C, 60%-69% = D, 59% and below = F.

Missed Test Policy
Students unable to write a test for a medical reason must provide a doctor’s note. If a student is unable to write a test for a similarly serious reason, documentation may be required. Make-up tests will be written at an arranged time under my supervision.

Freedom of Speech and Classroom Etiquette
You are free to ask any question you please about the material. In many cases if you did not understand something, this is because it was not explained clearly to you, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request clarification. You are also free to argue for any philosophical position you find compelling, as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons offered for a particular conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

E-etiquette
*Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom.* If your cell phone rings during class, I will stop the lecture. Any student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
Grade Appeal Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Important Dates

January 19  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (CLOSED)

January 21  
Classes begin

January 28  
Last day to late register or add a class

Spring Break

March 16-20  
- Classes will not meet March 16-20.
- The campus will be closed March 19-20.

April 10  
Last day to drop a class

May 4  
Last day to withdraw from the University

May 5  
Last day of classes
Last day to apply for Spring (May) 2015 graduation

May 6  
Reading Day

May 7-8, May 11-13  
Final examinations

May 14-15  
Grading days

May 16  
Spring Commencement

May 18  
Deadline for faculty to submit spring grades

May 22  
Faculty End Date

December 24-January 2  
Winter Break (CLOSED)
January 19  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (CLOSED)

The Fine Print
For all other matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc, students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

TOPICS AND READINGS
*Readings and schedule subject to change

Week 1 (Jan. 22): Introduction & Course Mechanics
No Readings

Week 2 (Jan. 27, 29): Why Study Philosophy? & Logic I
Readings: (1) Think, “Introduction”; (2) Spinoza, “Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect”.

Week 3 (Feb. 3, 5): Why Study Philosophy? Logic II
Readings: (1) Think, chpt. 6 “Reasoning”; (2) Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”.

Week 4 (Feb. 10, 12): Epistemology & Logic III
Readings: (1) Think, chpt. 6 “Reasoning”; (2) chpt. 1 “Knowledge”; (3) Descartes, “Meditations” I & II

Week 5 (Feb. 17, 19): Epistemology & Logic IV
Readings: (1) Think, chpt. 6 “Reasoning”; (2) chpt. 1 “Knowledge”; (3) Descartes, “Meditations” I & II

Week 6 (Feb. 24, 26): Mind & Body
Readings: (1) Think, chpt. 2 “Mind”; (2) Churchland, “A Critique of Dualism”; (3) Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?” (3) Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia”.

Week 7 (Mar. 3, 5): Mind & Body
Readings: (1) *Think*, chpt. 2 “Mind”; (2) Churchland, “A Critique of Dualism”; (3) Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?” (3) Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia”.

**Week 8 (Mar. 10, 12):** General Review & Test 1
*No Readings*

**Week 9 (Mar. 24, 26):** Free Will

**Week 10 (Mar. 31, Apr. 2):** Free Will

**Week 11 (Apr. 7, 9):** Personal Identity
*Readings:* (1) *Think*, chpt. 4 “The Self”.

**Week 12 (Apr. 14, Apr.16):** The Existence of God

**Week 13 (Apr. 21, 23):** The Existence of God
*Readings:* (1) *Think*, chpt. 5 “God”; (2) Behe, “Molecular Machines: Experimental Support for the Design Inference”; (3) Kitcher, “Born-Again Creationism”.

**Week 14 (Apr. 28, 30):** The Existence of God

**Week 15 (May 5):** Test 2
*Readings: No Readings*