General Course Description
In this course we will consider the nature of reality, debate the existence of God, and ask after justice and the good life. At the end of this course you should be better able to

1. Identify and define key philosophical terms studied in the course.
2. Distinguish among the philosophical theories studied in the course.
3. Apply philosophical theories to everyday life.
4. Identify major points and arguments of philosophical views.
5. Critically analyze and evaluate philosophical ideas.

Grades
Your grade will be determined by three tests, worth 60% of your final grade; a final exam (30%); and in-class exercises and homework (10%). Late work will be accepted in only the most extraordinary circumstances, so do try your utmost to meet all due dates. If you know you will not be able to submit an assignment on time, be prepared to document your excuse, and if at all possible let me know in advance of the deadline. When an extension is granted, the assignment must be submitted no later than one week after the original due date.

I grade in 10% increments:
A: 90-100%
B: 80-89%
C: 70-79%
D: 60-69%
F: 59% and below

Attendance
You are permitted four absences during the term. Each additional absence will result in a 2% reduction in your final grade.
There is no required text for this course. Instead, all of our readings and resources will be posted on Blackboard throughout the term: http://bb9.tamu.cc.edu. Failure to access Blackboard on a regular basis may also result in grade reductions. Please do your best to keep up with the course files. You’ll get a lot more out of the lectures and discussions if you do.

Week of:

Unit One: God

1/21 - Does God Exist? Anselm, Aquinas & Paley

1/27 - Faith & Knowledge: Pascal & Kierkegaard

Unit Two: Appearance & Reality

2/3 - Empiricism: Locke, Berkeley & Hume

2/10 - Science: Popper, Kuhn & Feyerabend

TEST #1: Friday, 2/14

2/17 - Rationalism: Plato & Descartes

2/24 - Mind & Body: Descartes & Ryle

3/2 - Mind & Machine: Turing, Lycan & Searle

3/9 - SPRING BREAK

3/16 - Personal Identity: Locke, Michaels, & Hume

TEST #2: Friday, 3/20

3/23 - Free Will & Determinism: Holbach, Kane & Ayer

Unit Three: Values

3/30 - Why Be Moral?

4/6 - Mill

4/13 - Kant’s Ethics
TEST #3: Friday, 4/17

4/20 - The Social Contract: Nozick & Rawls
4/27 - Justice: Rawls & Marx
5/4 - REVIEW

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 11 (1:45-3:45)

E-Etiquette: Please refrain from the use of all electronic devices during class.

Friday, April 10, is the last day to withdraw from the course with a grade of 'W.'

Disabilities Accommodations
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 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.

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.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. The last day to drop a class for the spring semester is April 10, 2020.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at:

Classroom behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero on the assignment, and in some cases a failing grade in the course.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Finally, this syllabus is subject to possible revision as circumstances warrant.