

Syllabus
PHIL 1000 (3 Cr.)
Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips
Office: 108F General Classrooms
Student Hours: M: 4:00-5:00p, T: 11:00a-2:00p, W: 11:00a-12:00p & also by appointment

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Class Meets:
(Section 04) MWF 1:00p-1:50p in GC 110

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to philosophy through classical and contemporary readings on perception, metaphysical problems of personal identity, and the relation between happiness and the good life. Over the course of this semester we explore not what one ought to think, but *how* to think about fundamental problems in all of these areas.

This course fulfills the *Humanities Knowledge Area* for the General Education Program.

This course is *Writing Intensive*, in line with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Guidelines.

Course Learning Outcomes (GE):

- **Critical Thinking:** The successful student will begin to be able to differentiate between good and bad reasons for holding philosophical beliefs and will be able to seek out and identify the assumptions that lie at the basis of philosophical positions.
- **Inquiry and Analysis:** The successful student will begin to be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- **Communication:** The successful student will develop and clearly express difficult philosophical concepts through writing and speaking.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be done through papers, in-class assignments and weekly reading responses.

Course Learning Outcomes (Personal):

- **Epistemic Humility:** The successful student will begin to demonstrate an awareness of their own epistemic limitations and the complexity of the evaluation and propriety of knowledge claims.
- **Sense of Self and Others:** The successful student will demonstrate a stronger sense of self both in belief and behavior by deploying philosophical concepts in epistemology and metaphysics as they relate to self and identity.

I will evaluate your progress on these outcomes through the reading responses (outlined below).

TEXTS: The material for the introductory, epistemology and metaphysics sections of this course is available on Canvas. I expect you to print out each of the readings (or make sure you have a copy on your tablet, computer, etc.) and bring them to class with you so that we can discuss them.

Happy Lives, Good Lives (ISBN: 978-1-55481-100-7) by Jennifer Mulnix and M.J. Mulnix, Broadview Press (2015) is available at the bookstore and is *Required*.

SOME GENERAL ADVICE: This course presupposes a willingness to work hard and think critically about some very difficult problems. Philosophy is hard, you'll see. Students who read reflectively and attend class regularly are more likely to remain interested in (and even enjoy) the material, benefit from the class discussions, and develop the philosophical skills and level of comprehension required to do well on the exams and papers. Some notes will be provided every week, but these, the lectures, and class discussion will very likely be hard to follow if you don't do the readings or if you miss previous classes.

Everyone will get the grade they earn. If you're worried about getting an A, work hard and come to office hours and/or tutoring often. You might still get a B or C because not everybody is excellent at philosophy, but your future does not depend on you getting straight A's nearly as much as you think it does.

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ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, POLICY:

Three Exams/Papers (60%; 20% for each paper)

The first paper will cover the material from the epistemology section of the course and the introductory material. As this is your first attempt at writing philosophy, you must revise your paper in light of the written feedback you receive. The revisions will be due 1 week after your papers are returned. You *must* indicate where you have made revisions to your paper. The initial draft will be worth 5%, and the revised draft will be worth 15% of your final grade. I will provide more information on the revision process in class.

The second paper will cover personhood and personal identity. You will have the *option* to revise your second paper in light of written comments.

The final paper will cover value theory. As this paper is required in lieu of a final exam, there will not be an opportunity to revise the paper for a higher grade.

In-Class Short Writings (15%) At random intervals in class I will ask you to break up into groups of 3-4 and analyze a piece of text, or produce a brief response to a topic/theme in class. Philosophy is notoriously difficult to read and understand, so we will practice identifying and reconstructing arguments, identifying the “voice” in a passage, and stepping back and considering why we are reading and discussing the material. This will be an in-class activity, so you must be in class and participate to receive credit. I will not allow you to make up any of these you miss for any reason.

Ten Reading Responses (25%; 2.5% for each) In addition to your exams and argument analyses, I expect you to keep up on the reading. To facilitate discussion and keep you on track, you are expected to complete 10 weekly critical summaries. You are to complete the reading for the week (assigned by Wednesday) and write a 1-page critical discussion of the reading. It is not enough to summarize the reading; you must make some kind of critical contribution in order to receive full credit. You are to submit them to Canvas by **11:59p on Sunday**. The dropbox will close at that time, and I will not accept *any* late responses.

NOTE: I can and will feel free to utilize turnitin.com to ensure the originality of your work. As such, I will require at least an electronic copy of your paper, and probably a hard copy as well.

Late Work: I will accept late papers, but for each 24-hour period that the paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 4%. **I will not accept any late reading responses or in-class writings.**

Grade Disputes: If you feel that your work has been unfairly assessed, you may ask that I reconsider. I am, after all, a human with a unique perspective and various background experiences and beliefs that may lead to different interpretations of your work than what you had in mind. I will do so **only if** you submit to me, on paper, a one-paragraph typewritten explanation of why you believe that your work has been unfairly evaluated, along with the graded exam itself. You must indicate the grade you believe yourself to deserve and explain clearly why it is that you deserve that grade. Your dispute must be submitted within **one week** of receiving your grade.

Extra Credit and Final Grades: I will *not*, under any circumstances, offer extra credit. If you are concerned about your grade, consider taking advantage of the help available (e.g. come to my office hours). Please do so before the end of the semester. With regard to final grades, as I stated above, you will get the grade you have earned. Asking me to bump, round up, or otherwise adjust your final grade will guarantee that I will NOT adjust your final grade. Please do not ask.

Plagiarism or academic fraud of any sort will result in an F for the course. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter. Please familiarize yourself with Southern Utah University’s *Student Handbook*, which you can find online at <https://www.suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP633Academic.pdf>. I will follow the regulations described in this document for dealing with cheating, plagiarism, etc. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism

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or academic fraud after reading through the student handbook, please do not hesitate to ask me for further clarification.

Classroom Conduct: The classroom constitutes a community of which we are each an important part. The very foundation of philosophy as a discipline is the ability to charitably listen, understand and represent the views of ourselves and others. As such, respect for your fellow student, your instructor, and the course is of critical importance. We can, should, and will disagree with one another often, but this *MUST* be conducted with respect. As such threatening behavior, offensive language (including “hate speech”) will not be tolerated.

Attendance: I do not have a formal attendance policy, but philosophy is hard even if you come to class. AND! The in-class assignments cannot be made up, so skip at your own risk. You are responsible for information that I offer in lecture that is not in the readings. I will not provide notes for absences so get to know your classmates.

COVID: I would prefer that we be able to keep this class Face-to-Face. In order to do so, I strongly recommend that you (a) wear a mask while in class, (b) consider getting vaccinated if you have not already, and (c) monitor your health carefully. If you have any symptoms of illness at all, STAY HOME. I will work with you to ensure you are able to get notes, will waive in-class works for you, etc. (if you let me know *before* class that you won’t be there).

Disabilities: I warmly welcome any of you who have disabilities. Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these services and aids Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines. For Southern Utah University’s full policy, see:

<http://suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP119Disability.pdf>.

SUU Care and Support Team: The SUU Care and Support Team (CAST) is comprised of trained faculty and staff who are committed to creating an environment at SUU that supports students who may be struggling with emotional distress and mental health issues. As a member of CAST, please know that I am here to help. I am not a professional counselor, but I do care, know how and where to find help if you need it, and want to see you succeed. Please do not be afraid to visit me if you’re struggling.

<http://www.suu.edu/cast/>

SUU Pride Alliance: SUU Pride Alliance is a network comprised of students, staff, and faculty dedicated to creating safe spaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer individuals and Allies (LGBTQA) on the campus of Southern Utah University (SUU). As a member, please know that I am committed to seeing that everyone is afforded the dignity and respect they deserve regardless of their identity.

<http://www.suu.edu/allies/>

Emergency Management: In case of emergency, the University’s Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the mySUU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University’s emergency management plan can be found at <http://suu.edu/emergency>.

HEOA Compliance: The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law.

Disclaimer: Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies are subject to change, with advance notice, as I deem appropriate.