

Syllabus
PHIL 1000 (3 Cr.)
Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips
Office: 108F General Classrooms
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Classes Meet:

(Section 01) MWF 10:00a-10:50a in GC 106
(Section 02) MWF 11:00a-11:50a in GC 303

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to philosophy through classical and contemporary readings on perception, metaphysical problems of personal identity, and value theory. Related films, selections and clips will be used to motivate the topics and facilitate discussion. This is a philosophy course, *not* a film course. As such, films will be used *sparingly*, and will not be the focus of the course. There may be an evening or two during which I will screen full films as a foil for in-class discussion. I will let you know in advance when these dates will be. Attendance is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged.

Note about film clips: some of the best films (philosophically speaking) are action/sci-fi films. As such, some of the clips will involve violence, strong language and occasionally, brief partial-nudity. If this is a problem, you are welcome to leave prior to the showing of these clips. There are no assignments directly tied to any film clips, I intend them to serve only as a way to ground some of the more esoteric content. Should you elect to skip the film clips, I would encourage you to come to my office and chat with me about the course content.

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

Course Learning Outcomes:

- **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 increase their capacity for written expression of difficult philosophical positions and arguments clearly, concisely, and thoroughly.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be done through exams, papers, and in-class discussions.

TEXTS: *Introducing Philosophy through Film*, edited by Fumerton and Jeske (Wiley-Blackwell 2009) ISBN: 1405171014.
Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, 2nd Ed. by David Hume, ed. Popkin (Hackett 1988) ISBN: 9780872204027.

These can be found at the College Bookstore, and are *required*.

Philosophical Writing: an Introduction, 4th Ed. by Martinich (Wiley-Blackwell 2015) is *recommended*.

Materials not available in the required texts will be provided on Canvas.

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 if you are having problems understanding the material. 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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SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

This list of readings is tentative. Specific reading assignments will be given on a day-to-day basis.

Weeks 1-2

Introduction

Russell: *The Value of Philosophy* (Canvas)

Introduction: *Philosophical Analysis, Argument, & the Relevance of Thought Experiments* (3-10)

Weeks 2-5

Epistemology, Skepticism and Problems of Perception

Descartes: *First Meditation* (17-20)

Descartes: *Second Meditation* (133-7)

Locke: *Some Further Considerations Concerning Our Simple Ideas of Sensation* (21-26)

Berkeley: *The First Dialogue* (27-45)

[First Exam]

Weeks 6-10

Metaphysical Problems of Personal Identity

Locke: *Of Identity and Diversity* (192-202)

Reid: *Of Mister Locke's Account of our Personal Identity* (Canvas)

Butler: *Of Personal Identity* (Canvas)

Hume: *On the Immortality of the Soul* (229-232)

Brison: *Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity* (Canvas)

[Second Exam]

Weeks 11-15

Philosophy of Religion

Pascal: *The Wager* (577-580)

Anselm: *The Ontological Argument* (581-582)

Rowe: *The Cosmological and Design Arguments* (583-594)

Hume: *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (All; assigned day-to-day)

[Final Exam]

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, POLICY:

Three Exams (75%; 25% for each exam) The first exam will cover the material from the epistemology section of the course and the introductory material (including logic). The second exam will cover personhood and personal identity. The *final exam* will cover the philosophy of religion. The exams will be take-home. You will be expected to answer all of four short-answer questions, and one of three essays. Your short-answers will be 2-3 pages typed, and the essay question will be 2-3 pages typed. You are to work alone; standard exam rules apply. More on this in class.

Ten Reading Responses (25%; 2.5% for each) In addition to your exam, 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 on Friday) 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 5:00p on Sunday. The dropbox will close at that time, and I will not accept *any* late responses.

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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 exams, but for each 24-hour period that the paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade. I will not accept late reading responses.

Grade Disputes: If you feel that your work has been unfairly assessed, you may ask that I reconsider. I am, after all, a human who makes mistakes on occasion. 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. 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.

Attendance: Excessive absences (6 or more) will hurt you 1 letter grade (as in A- to B-). Philosophy is hard even if you come to class. Skip at your own risk. You are responsible for information that I offer in lecture that is not in the readings. I will not give you notes for unexcused absences. Participation in class discussion can raise your grade up to 1/3 of a letter grade.

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

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>.

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.