

Syllabus
PHIL 1000 (3 Cr.)
Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2015

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

(Section 01) MWF 10:00a-10:50a in GC 311
(Section 02) MWF 11:00a-11:50a in GC 303
(Section 03) MWF 12:00p-12:50p 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 will be a few evenings 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.
- **Reading Comprehension:** The successful student will begin to be able to analyze and interpret abstract and difficult philosophical writing.
- **Writing:** The successful student will be able to express some abstract and complex philosophical ideas in clear, precise, and logical prose.

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.
The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays, by Albert Camus (Vintage Books, 1991) ISBN: 9780679733737.

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

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.

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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.

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

Value Theory: Are Life and Death Meaningful?

Epicurus: *Letter to Menoeceus* (Canvas)

Epicurus: *The Principle Doctrines* (Canvas)

Epictetus: *Encheiridion* (Canvas)

Wolf: *The Meanings of Lives* (Canvas)

Nagel: *The Absurd* (Canvas)

Camus: *The Myth of Sisyphus*

[Final Exam:

Section 1: Friday, December 11 at 9:00a

Section 2: Tuesday, December 8 at 11:00a

Section 3: Wednesday, December 9 at 11:00a]

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ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, POLICY:

Three Exams (60%; 20% 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 value theory. The exams will be take-home. You will be expected to answer two of four essay questions. Your answers will be 2-3 pages typed (each), and will thoroughly answer all parts of the paper prompts. You are to work alone; standard exam rules apply. More on this in class.

Two Short Papers (40%; 5% for draft, 5% for peer review, 10% for final draft for a total of 20% of your final grade for each paper.) You will be required to write two papers, each approximately 900 words. Topics and guidelines will be provided in advance.

As a component of these papers, you will be expected to complete a full draft of your paper which will subsequently be traded with another student (you will also receive another student's paper). Your task will be to evaluate the paper to the best of your abilities based on the rubric I will hand out. When your paper is returned to you with comments, you will be expected to make revisions based on your peer's comments. Your revised final paper should include the original draft paper, and your peer's comments.

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 1/3 of a grade.

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

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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.