Introduction to Philosophy 1301

Summer 1, 2018
Department of Political Science and Philosophy

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Office Hours: MTWTF 9:00-9:50 or by appointment
Class Times and Room: MTWTF, 10:00-11:45, Rassman 111

Required Text: All the necessary texts will be on Blackboard.

Course Description

The Introduction to Philosophy class for the first summer session is a pared-down much reduced version of the full semester class. Philosophy is all about thinking and reflection and it would be impossible to cover all of the material that is typically covered in the full version of the course in only four weeks – so we won’t even try to do that. Rather, we will look at FOUR of the sub-disciplines of philosophy: philosophical method, philosophy of religion, ethics, and political philosophy. We will explore these through four of the great set-pieces of Western philosophical history; the death of Socrates, Spinoza’s excommunication from the synagogue, Bentham’s prison reform, and Marx and the revolutions of 1848. We will spend roughly one week on each of these great moments in Western philosophical history.

The Class

Summer 1 class times are quite long and are five mornings a week, you cannot hope to cover all the necessary readings for a class when we are moving at that kind of pace- so we won’t even try. The class will run more like a European-style seminar. I will introduce the subject of the week and at the beginning of the class I will introduce the topic of the morning and say a few words, usually about 30 mins. We will then take a bathroom break for about 15 mins, and then we will have a class discussion for the remaining 30-40 mins. I will handout Blue notebooks at the beginning of each week and you will be expected to take notes of the proceedings. These notebooks will be turned in on the Friday of each week for assessment (see below, “assessment”).

Class Attendance Policy

Class attendance at ASU is mandatory and a class roll call will be taken. If you miss three consecutive classes the ASU registrar will be informed. If you miss more than five classes during the semester you may receive a fail for the course overall (depending on the circumstances). The only legitimate reasons for missing classes or leaving classes early are sickness or medical appointments, or a domestic emergency (i.e. ‘car trouble’ is not a domestic emergency). Exceptions to this will be reviewed on a case by case basis. There will be a 15 minute bathroom break in the middle of the class.
Class Behavior
Be respectful when you address other people (either other students or myself). You may disagree with what other people say but the challenge is to show the weaknesses in arguments and to build better ones. Insults do not make good arguments. In other words, you can challenge ideas but not the people who present these ideas. Don’t shout out, if you have a question or a point to make indicate that you want to speak by raising your arm, and wait to be called.

Class Prohibitions (*unless I am presented with an accommodation)
NO PHONES
NO EARBUDS
NO DIPPING
*NO LAPTOPS
NO SLEEPING (if you are too tired to stay awake please leave the class)
NO HOT FOOD
PLEASE DON’T PASS MESSAGES
DO NOT LEAVE CLASS AFTER SIGNING IN WITHOUT PERMISSION
DO NOT ENGAGE IN DISTRACTING BEHAVIOUR

Class Preparation
Always bring your Blue notebook to class and pencil/pen
Always complete the reading assignment before class
Be prepared to listen, answer questions, and participate in class discussion
Class recording: you might find it easier to select notes for your assignment if you record each class and the class discussion. I therefore recommend that you record all the classes.

Assessment
Four Blue Notebooks of journaling 25% (I will drop one of the lowest grades for these) so THREE grades will come from the Blue books, and there will be a class participation grade of 25%. You will be asked to keep notes, in effect, journal the class topics, and the discussions, and these will be submitted at the end of each week for grading. I will supply the Blue Notebooks.

Notes will be assessed on:
Relevance
Accuracy
Comprehension
Effort and Application
Seriousness

The Angelo State University Honor Code
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook.

In other words, when you submit your work, you claim that the work is yours. If someone else wrote it for you or you got it from someone else (internet, other student’s class…), then you are not the author and thus will get a zero for that assignment. Any idea that is not yours should be properly referenced.
**Disabilities**

Please let me know if you have any special need due to any learning disability. Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**ASU Mission Statement**

Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines. In a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

*Grading Scale*

A-90% Outstanding  
B-80% Very good  
C-70% Satisfactory  
D-60% Minimum required  
F-less than 60%

*All course work must be completed for a final grade.*

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**The Course**

(I reserve the right to make course changes from time to time when necessary)

**WEEK 1**

*The Death of Socrates*

**Themes:** what is philosophy? Is there a philosophical method? Why do we do philosophy? Is there a specific kind of “Western” philosophical tradition? Should an event that happened 2300 years ago matter to us today? What is the role of philosophy in a free society?

*(Assessment: first Blue Notebook due)*

WEEK 2

Spinoza’s excommunication from the synagogue

**Themes:** philosophy and religion. What is the appropriate relationship between philosophy and religion? What is a heretic? What is the role of the heretic or apostate? What are the great philosophical problems of religion?

(Assessment: second Blue Notebook due)

WEEK 3

Bentham’s Prison Reform

**Themes:** ethics, moral philosophy, utilitarianism, the panoptic an, ethics and social reform, public policy?

(Assessment: third Blue Notebook due)

WEEK 4

Marx’s Communist Manifesto

**Themes:** political philosophy, what is a revolution? What is Globalization? What is the appropriate relationship between economics and politics? Capitalism and alienation? Who should be in charge? What is history?

(Assessment: final Blue Notebook due)