

Introduction to Philosophy 1301 Spring 2021

Dept of Political Science and Philosophy

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Office Hours: Blackboard (Collaborate by appointment)

Required Text: *Classics of Western Philosophy, 8th Edition*, Edited by Steven M. Cahn, 2012.

Lectures: I will post the class lectures roughly one week in advance (see lectures for readings)

Description

This course serves as a general introduction to philosophy. There is something childlike about philosophical method because philosophy asks questions that we often take for granted as adults. Why are we here? How can we 'know' something? What is 'experience'? What is 'mind' or 'thought' and how does it relate to the body? Should we be held accountable for our actions? How can we know right from wrong? Does freewill really exist? Can we prove the existence of God? What is a good life? Is there such a thing as objective time? Philosophy also asks questions about itself, it is self-reflexive? Philosophers often ask if philosophy is still relevant in the scientific age? How should we do philosophy? Is philosophy an art? If it is an art should it be beautiful like other arts, and what is beauty in any case? In the course of this semester we will approach some of these questions through lectures, discussions, readings, writing, and thoughtful inquiry.

***Note:** the lectures had to be put online quickly because of covid-19 and only a few of them have been revised this year. In cases where there is a divergence between the readings or texts in the lectures and those on the syllabus, go by the syllabus. The page numbers in the syllabus are for the new textbook.

The Class

Because of Covid-19 the course is made available entirely online.

Assessment

8 Multiple Choice quizzes (6.25% each)

***Note:** Each test is 10 multiple choice, true/false questions, and you will have 30 mins to take the test, set for force completion, and displays only one question at a time, no backtracking. This test is NOT designed to be open book. It is assumed that you have completed most of the reading assignments before taking the test (all course work must be completed for a final grade).

Papers

Two papers; one midterm and a final. (25% each)

You will be expected to write an answer of about 800-1000 words. There will be 3 or 4 questions to choose from and these will be made available on Blackboard. All papers should be submitted to Blackboard. The main reason why students under-perform with regard to papers is that they do not engage with course material. Papers often tend towards 'streams of consciousness' with few references to what has been studied. It is expected in a philosophy class, even in an intro class, that you will have learned the philosopher's names

and can accurately point to what ideas are associated with these philosophers, and how to deploy these ideas in a coherent fashion. Higher grades will be awarded to those who can do some of this. **Important:** No internet sources should be used on papers, course content only.

Academic Honesty

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the University Academic Honor Code, which contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address <http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/>) and click on the Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Religious Observances

Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

Disabilities

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities. Please let me know if you have any special need due to any learning disability. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Title IX Statement

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, you are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:

Michelle Boone, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

325-942-2022

michelle.boone@angelo.edu

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.

The Course Calendar

(I reserve the right to make course changes from time to time if required)

***Note on the Readings:** some of the assigned readings are long and some short. I do not intend that you should read all of the long readings. Page numbers in the syllabus are a guide only. For a further guide on what is most relevant in the long readings please refer to the page, passage, or paragraph numbers in the lectures. The lectures should be read in tandem with the textbook readings. Most (but not all) philosophy texts are numbered.

Week 1

Topic: What is Philosophy?

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 1 *What is Philosophy?*

Lecture 2 *Philosophical Method*

Textbook: Plato, *The Euthyphro*, pp. 18-26.

Week 2

Topic: The Trial and Death of Socrates

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 3 *The Trial of Socrates.*

Textbook: Plato, *The Apology*, pp. 27-39 and *The Crito*, pp. 40-46.

First Quiz: Friday, February, 5.

Week 3

Topic: Ethics or Moral Philosophy

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 4 *A General Outline of Ethics*

Lecture 5 *Aristotle's Virtue Ethics*

Textbook: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 275-329

Week 4

Topic: Classical Values (Rome)

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 6 *Stoicism and Classical Republican Values*

Lecture 7 Ethics and Natural Law

Textbook: Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, pp. 338-351.

Second Quiz: Friday, February, 19.

Week 5

Topic: Modern Ethics

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 8 *Spinoza and Secular Ethics*

Lecture 9 *Kant or Utilitarianism?*

Textbook: Spinoza, *The Ethics*, pp. 592-638.

Third Quiz: Friday, February 26.

Week 6

Topic: Ethics in the 20th Century

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 10 *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*

Lecture 11 *The Ethics of Existentialism*

Textbook: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 1227-1243, and Sartre, *The Humanism of Existentialism*, pp. 1319-1333.

Midterm Paper: Friday, March 5.

Week 7

Topic: The Philosophy of Knowledge (epistemology)

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 12 *Scepticism Ancient and Modern*

Lecture 13 *The Empirical Account of Knowledge*

Textbook: Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, pp. 352-371, and John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 670-740.

Week 8

Topic: Giving Up on the Search for ‘Reality’

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 14 *Kant’s Great Project*

Lecture 15 *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*

Lecture 16 *Wittgenstein and the Linguistic Turn*

Textbook: Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (selections), pp. 1047-1084, G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 1152-111166, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, pp. 1334-1350.

Fourth Quiz: Friday, March 19.

Week 9

Topic: Metaphysics, Beyond the Physical

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 17 *God and Metaphysics*

Lecture 18 *Universals and Particulars*

Textbook: David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pp. 927-973, and Gottfried Leibniz, *Monadology*, pp. 662-669.

Fifth Quiz: Friday, March 26

Week 10

Topic: Is nothing really ‘real?’

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 19 *Time. The Self.*

Lecture 20 *Free Will and Determinism, Metaphysics and the Emotions*

Textbook: J.Ellis McTaggart, *The Unreality of Time* (PDF, “philosophy texts tab, metaphysics folder), and Robert Nozick, “Choice and Determinism,” from *Philosophical Explanations* (same folder).

Sixth Quiz: Friday, April 2.

Week 11

Topic: Political Philosophy Ancient and Modern

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 21 *Plato and the Great Beast*

Lecture 22 *Aristotle on Citizenship*

Textbook: Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 128-192, Aristotle, *The Politics*, (Blackboard PDF, Philosophy Texts tab, Political Philosophy folder).

Seventh Quiz: Friday, April 9

Week 12

Topic: Modern Politics

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 23 *Machiavelli's Prince*

Lecture 24 *Thomas Hobbes Leviathan*

Textbook: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Blackboard PDF as above), and Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 560-591

Week 13

Topic: The Liberal Order

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 25 *Locke's Liberal Revolution*

Lecture 26 *J.S. Mill's Liberalism*

Textbook: John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*, (Blackboard PDF, as above), and J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 1220-1226.

Eighth Quiz: Friday, April 23.

Week 14

Topic: Things Fall Apart

Reading Assignments:

Lecture 27 *Marx's Critique of Capitalism*

Lecture 28 *Nietzsche and the death of God*

Textbook: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (Blackboard, PDF, as above), and Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 1227-1243.

Finals Week: May 10-14

Final Paper due: Monday, May 10

