

# Introduction to Philosophy 1301



Summer I, 2022

Department of Political Science and Philosophy

John Glassford, *Professor of Philosophy*

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**Office Phone:** (325) 942-2262

**Office Hours:** MTWTh by appointment on Blackboard Collaborate

**Required Texts:** All the necessary texts (Plato, Spinoza, Bentham & Marx PDFs) are on Blackboard.

**Additional Meetings:** I will be available to meet one-on-one with anyone who requests a short Blackboard collaborate session. I strongly advise those who have a low grade on the first paper to request such a meeting to work on any issues that might arise. Doing philosophy is a *process*, not an event, I will work with students who want to improve their papers.

## Course Description

The *Introduction to Philosophy* class for the summer session is a pared-down and 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 an intro and only THREE of the sub-disciplines of philosophy: **metaphysics [of God]**, **ethics**, and **political philosophy**. We will explore these through some of the great set-pieces of Western philosophical history; **the death of Socrates** (Intro to what philosophy is), **Spinoza's excommunication from the synagogue** (Metaphysics), **Bentham's prison reform** (Ethics or moral philosophy), and **Marx's critique of capitalism** (Political Philosophy). We will spend roughly one week on each of these great moments in Western philosophical history.

## Communication

The only means I have of communicating with you is through your ASU email address. It is especially important in an online class, especially in a short summer session, to check your ASU email SEVERAL TIMES A DAY. It is also important to check Blackboard every day for announcements and other communications. There is also a lot of teaching aid material with regard to content on Blackboard: podcasts, interviews, audio-visual material such as Open University animations, and a series of folders and weblinks. Please seek these out and use them, especially if you are having problems with the texts.

## READINGS

You must make an attempt to spend several hours per day doing the readings. Be realistic, you will not do well on the course unless you do the required reading, or at least make an attempt. There are no shortcuts in philosophy. The number one reason for poor performance in college philosophy courses is a failure to do the reading. You cannot fake it. Reading philosophy texts is not like reading a newspaper or a novel, one dense paragraph of philosophy can contain many new ideas.

### **Assessment**

4 Short philosophy papers of between 800-1000 words, 25% weighting. One paper will be due each week, on Sunday evenings (see course calendar below), except for the final one. There are a few extra days on the calendar for the final paper. All papers must be submitted to Blackboard. Detailed instructions on how to complete the paper will appear with the paper questions on Blackboard when the questions open.

### **The papers will be assessed on:**

Ability to answer the question.

Accuracy; are your claims correct?

Relevance; are you on topic or wandering off?

Comprehension or understanding of readings, especially understanding of key concepts and ideas.

Effort and Application; Seriousness, working hard or blowing the course off?

Rule following; i.e. how to write a philosophy paper, use of texts as primary sources, avoiding the internet, cliché, and generalization.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Accommodations for Disability**

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](mailto:studentservices@angelo.edu) to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

## **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.

## **Title IX at Angelo State University**

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](mailto:michelle.boone@angelo.edu)

## **\*GradingScale**

A-90%Outstanding

B-80Verygood

C-70Satisfactory

D-60Minimumrequired

F-less than 60%

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

# **The Course**

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

## **WEEK 1 (Monday June 6 through Sunday June 12)**

**Theme:** Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, what is the point of doing philosophy? Is there a philosophical method? 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? These questions begin in Plato's account of Socrates' death in the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*.

**Readings:** Blackboard 'Socrates' tab, please read the *Euthyphro* (indictment), the *Apology* (defense speech), and the *Crito* (prison cell scene).

**First Paper:** due on Sunday, June 12, at midnight. Paper questions will open on Friday June 10 at 8am. All papers must be submitted on Blackboard.

### **WEEK 2 (Monday June 13 through Sunday June 19)**

**Theme:** Spinoza's excommunication from the synagogue; philosophy and the metaphysics of religion. What is the appropriate relationship between philosophy and religion? What can we know of God's existence? What is a heretic? What is the role of the heretic or apostate in society? What are the great metaphysical problems of religion? Did Spinoza have the answers?

**Readings:** Blackboard 'Spinoza' tab, the herem, and selections (in yellow highlights) from the *Ethics*; Of God, Of the Mind, Of the Affects, Of Human Bondage, Of Human Freedom.

**Second Paper:** due on Sunday June 19 at midnight. Paper questions will open on Friday June 17 at 8am. All papers must be submitted on Blackboard.

### **WEEK 3 (Monday June 20 through Sunday June 26)**

*Bentham's Ethical Penal Reform*; what can moral philosophy do to address social problems? One example is Bentham's attempt to use utilitarian ethics, 'the greatest happiness principle' to address the criminal justice system. Bentham even proposed that philosophy could be used to develop prison architecture; his answer was the Panopticon.

**Readings:** Blackboard 'Bentham' tab, please read chapters 1, 2&4 of his *Principles of Morals*.

**Third Paper:** due on Sunday 26 at midnight. Paper questions will open on Friday June 24 at 8am. All papers must be submitted on Blackboard.

### **WEEK 4 (Monday June 27 through Tuesday July 5)**

**Themes:** *Marx's Communist Manifesto*, forget everything you have heard about 'Marxism.' Marx had virtually nothing to say about communism, but he did write millions of words about capitalism and globalization? Marx added many new ideas to the modern language of political philosophy; alienation, commodity fetishism, and the contradictions of capitalism such as his doctrine of monopoly, and fictitious money (think of bitcoin or sow belly 'futures') as well as the crisis tendencies such as underconsumption and the falling rate of profit.

**Readings:** Blackboard 'Marx' tab, please read the first 10 pages of *The Communist Manifesto*, Alienated Labor, and the section of *Capital Vol 1* on Commodity Fetishism.

**Final Paper:** paper due Tuesday, July 5 at midnight. Paper questions will open on Thursday, July 7 at 8am.

All papers must be submitted on Blackboard.

**Note:** final papers will be read and graded. There is no time to give feedback and explain final paper grades in detail because final course grades have to be turned in quickly. Anyone who requires feedback or explanation of final grade can contact me at a later date once all final grades are in.