

Phil331.01E— History of Philosophy I Fall 2019

Dr. Bill Bolin

Office & Hours: Talbot HL 324, MTWR 3:30p—5:00p, and by appt.

Telephone: 903.886.5260 (Dept. of Literature and Languages)

Email: bill.bolin@tamuc.edu (best way to reach me)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, which does not assume any previous study of philosophy, will allow you opportunities to read a number of scholars from the ancient and medieval periods in order to address these four major divisions in philosophy:

1. Metaphysics—What does it mean to *be*? What counts as evidence of free will? How can there exist both a benevolent, omnipotent deity and evil in the world?
2. Logic and Epistemology—What counts as knowledge? What does it mean to know something? What is evidence of sound reasoning?
3. Axiology—How ought one to live? Why are these people's ethical systems different from those people's? What is beauty?
4. Politics—What actions are permissible? How ought one to govern and to be governed?

Assignments include two exams, some short (300-400 words) written responses to the reading, and several quizzes over the reading. The following book is required:

- Pojman, Louis P., and Lewis Vaughn, eds. *Classics of Philosophy*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2011. ISBN: 9780199737291 (Use the ISBN to shop around. Current plans call for this book to be used also for Phil332 History of Philosophy II in Spring 2020.)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will write short response papers that demonstrate an understanding of established arguments in philosophy.
- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends, and systems), and this ability will be assessed through a response paper.
- Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.
- In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
- Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To acquire an overview of the various approaches to understanding major concepts in the discipline of philosophy.
- to acquire an overview of the various cultural and social influences on thinking about those major concepts.
- to formulate articulate responses to the reading assignments and ensuing discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: You'll have a mid-term and a final, each covering roughly half of the semester. These exams will solicit short answers of 3 or 4 sentences, as well as longer, more richly detailed essay responses. You will need a blue book (or green book) for each exam.

Response papers: In addition, you'll turn in four written responses (300-400 words each) to some of the reading assignments. These responses are not designed to test how well you've read the assigned material. Rather, they serve as opportunities for you to comment on one or two points in the reading, connecting those points to other reading and/or experiences. Each response paper will be evaluated according to the level of detail in your insightful commentary and sensible connections to other reading and/or experiences or observations. Specific assignments are forthcoming in D2L Brightspace, where you will upload your response papers.

Quizzes: You'll take six quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These open-book quizzes will be in D2L Brightspace and cannot easily be made up. Be attentive to their deadlines when those deadlines are announced throughout the semester.

As a rule I do not accept late assignments.

EVALUATION

Assignment Values	Final Grade Ranges
Midterm Exam 50 pts.	A=180--200
Final Exam 50 pts.	B=160--179
Response Papers 40 pts. (4@ 10 pts. each)	C=140--159
Quizzes 60 pts. (6 @ 10 pts. each)	D=120--139
	F=0--119

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important for several reasons, but it is especially important for you to keep up with the assignments in this class. The tentative calendar below offers only the most general description of activities; more detail will be provided in class as the semester goes on. If you will be absent the day an assignment is due, you must contact me and make satisfactory arrangements for turning in the assignment. Failure to make *prior satisfactory* arrangements will result in your forfeiting the right to turn in that assignment. As per university policy, excessive absences (three weeks' worth) may result in your being dropped from the course.

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT

Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Plagiarism on one assignment in this course will result in a failing grade for the course.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR

CP=Classics in Philosophy

Aug. 27 Introduction: Intro to course procedures and to Classical and Medieval philosophy; reflective writing

Aug. 29 Logic & Epistemology: Lecture on logic and epistemology

Sept. 3 Logic & Epistemology: CP, Aristotle, from *Posterior Analytics*

Sept. 5 Logic & Epistemology: CP, Aristotle, from *Posterior Analytics*, continued

Sept. 10 Logic & Epistemology: CP, Thomas Aquinas, "Question LXXXV"

Sept. 12 Logic & Epistemology: CP, Sextus Empiricus

Sept. 17 Logic & Epistemology: CP, William of Ockham; **RP1 due**

Sept. 19 Logic & Epistemology: Lecture on metaphysics

Sept. 24 Metaphysics: CP, The Pre-Socratics

Sept. 26 Metaphysics: CP, Plato, from *Meno*

Oct. 1 Metaphysics: CP, Plato, from *Phaedo*; **RP2 due**

Oct. 3 Metaphysics: CP, Anselm and Gaunilo; Moses Maimonides

Oct. 8 Metaphysics: CP, Aristotle, from *Categories* and from *Metaphysics*

Oct. 10 Metaphysics: CP, Thomas Aquinas, "Question II" and "Question XLVI"

Oct. 15 Metaphysics: CP, Augustine, from *On Free Will*

Oct. 17 **Midterm Exam**

Oct. 22 Axiology: CP, Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics*

Oct. 24 Axiology: CP, Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics*, continued

Oct. 29 Axiology: CP, Plato, *Euthyphro*

Oct. 31 Axiology: [Confucian ethics](#); from [Analects](#); **RP3 due**

Nov. 5 Axiology: CP, Epictetus

Nov. 7 Axiology: CP, Thomas Aquinas, "Question XCII," "Question XCIV," "Question XCV"

Nov. 12 Axiology: CP, Epicurus

Nov. 14 Axiology: Lecture on political philosophy

Nov. 19 Politics: CP, Plato, from *Republic*; **RP4 due**

Nov. 21 Politics: CP, Plato, from *Republic*, continued

Nov. 26 Politics: [Confucian political philosophy](#); from [Analects](#)

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving

Dec. 3 Politics: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Politics*

Dec. 5 Politics: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Politics*, continued

Dec. 12 8:00a—10:00a ([Final Exam schedule](#)) **Final exam**

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Gee Library
Room 162**

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Nondiscrimination notice: A&M–Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry statement: *Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.)* authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M- Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedure/s/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Tenets of Common Behavior statement: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)¹

¹ In other words, don't be a distraction.