

Phil331.1HE—Honors History of Philosophy I      Fall 2019

Dr. Bill Bolin

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

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### 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?

This course will also allow you a number of opportunities to review and practice the principles of researching and writing academic papers.

Assignments include four research-based papers of 4-6 pages, a few quizzes over the reading, and several short (1-2 pages) written responses to the reading. You will submit one of your research-based papers to a journal for possible publication. The following books are 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.)
- Vaughn, Lewis. *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Reading and Writing Philosophy Essays*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2018. ISBN: 9780190853013 (The e-book is available at [www.redshelf.com](http://www.redshelf.com) ISBN 9780190853020.)

And, of course, any writer ought to have access to a thesaurus, a dictionary, and a [style guide](#).

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will write short response papers and longer research-based 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

**Papers:** You'll write four papers of 4-6 pages each (typed, double-spaced) based on assigned reading and other sources. All of these papers will require research beyond the assigned reading and the proper attribution of external sources. Each of your four papers will be evaluated according to criteria outlined on each assignment sheet.

**Written responses:** In addition, you'll turn in seven 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.

**Quizzes:** You'll take five quizzes to test your comprehension of some of the reading. These quizzes will be made available in the course management system and cannot be made up. Be aware of their deadlines when those are announced.

**Reflective writing:** Finally, you will do a number of in-class reflective writings. I will read these, but they are not for me to evaluate. They serve to raise your consciousness about some of your own strengths and weaknesses as a thinker and a writer.

As a rule I do not accept late papers.

#### EVALUATION

Papers will be evaluated and returned with a grade. You may submit revisions of two of the first three papers for a possible increase of up to one letter grade for each revised paper. Response papers will be evaluated and returned with a grade, but they may not be revised for increased credit. Quizzes will have a set number of questions, with each answer counting a set number of points.

Assignment Values	Final Grade Ranges
<b>Papers</b> 80 pts (4 @ 20 pts. each) <b>Written Responses</b> 70 pts. (7 @ 10 pts. each) <b>Quizzes</b> 50 pts. (5 @ 10 pts. each)	A=180--200 B=160--179 C=140--159 D=120--139 F=0--119

I use the following as a guide in grading papers and written responses:

A (18,19 or 20; 9,10) = superlative      D (12,13; 6) = passing  
 B (16,17; 8) = impressive                  F (10; 5) = failing  
 C (14,15; 7) = pretty good                  0 = no credit with no option to revise

#### 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 are absent the day an assignment is due, you must contact me and make satisfactory arrangements for turning in the assignment. In most cases, such arrangements will include your emailing the assignment to me as an attachment by the deadline. 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; WP=Writing 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; *WP*, Chapter 1; assign Essay#1

Sept. 3 Logic & Epistemology: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Posterior Analytics*; *WP*, Chapter 2

Sept. 5 Logic & Epistemology: *CP*, Thomas Aquinas, "Question LXXXV"; **RP1 due**

Sept. 10 Logic & Epistemology: *WP*, chapters 3 & 4

Sept. 12 Logic & Epistemology: *CP*, Sextus Empiricus; **RP2 due**

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

Sept. 19 Logic & Epistemology: Paper #1 due; reflective writing; assign Paper#2; lecture on metaphysics

Sept. 24 Metaphysics: *CP*, The Pre-Socratics

Sept. 26 Metaphysics: *CP*, Plato, from *Meno*; **RP3 due**

Oct. 1 Metaphysics: *CP*, Plato, from *Phaedo*

Oct. 3 Metaphysics: *CP*, Anselm and Gaunilo; Moses Maimonides; **RP4 due**

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 Metaphysics: Paper#2 due; reflective writing; assign Paper# 3; lecture on axiology

Oct. 22 Axiology: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics*; **RP5 due**

Oct. 24 Axiology: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics*, continued; *WP*, chapters 5 & 6

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

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

Nov. 5 Axiology: *CP*, Epictetus; **RP6 due**

Nov. 7 Axiology: *CP*, Thomas Aquinas, “Question XCII,” “Question XCIV,” “Question XCV”

Nov. 12 Axiology: *CP*, Epicurus

Nov. 14 Axiology: Paper#3 due; reflective writing; assign Paper#4; lecture on political philosophy

Nov. 19 Politics: *CP*, Plato, from *Republic*

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

Nov. 26 Politics: [Confucian political philosophy](#); from [Analects](#); **RP7 due**

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving

Dec. 3 Politics: *CP*, Aristotle, from *Politics*; lecture on preparing manuscripts for markets and on preparing the final portfolio

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

Dec. 10 ([Final Exam schedule](#)) Final portfolio, including Paper #4, due; in-class writing

**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](mailto: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)<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, don't be a distraction.