

Course Information Handout and Syllabus  
Blinn College, Brenham Campus  
Summer 2010

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**1. PHIL 1301 Section 01**

**2. INSTRUCTOR:** William Angelette

**Phone:** 979-830-4413 **Office:** Room# 30 Academic Building

**Lectures:** MTWRF 10:05 AM.- 12:00 N.

**Email:** will.angelette@blinn.edu

**Office Hours:** as posted & by appointment

**3. Catalog Course Description**

**+1301. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

This course surveys perennial problems of Philosophy **such as** the fundamental nature of reality, the limits of knowledge, the existence of God, and the difference between right and wrong.

**4. Prerequisites:**

Pass the Reading section of the THEA test (or alternate test) or to have passed READ 0306 with a grade of "C" or better.

Three class hours per week. Credit: Three semester hours.\*

*\*Based on a typical fall or spring semester. Summer and other special sessions may vary.*

**5. Core Curriculum Statement:** This is a Core Course in the 42- hour Core of Blinn College. As such, students will develop proficiency in the appropriate Intellectual Competencies, Exemplary Educational Objectives, and Perspectives. See: [www.blinn.edu/corecurriculum/](http://www.blinn.edu/corecurriculum/)

**6. Student Learning Outcomes as defined by the Master Course Syllabus**

At the completion of the course, the student will: Identify the major fields of philosophy: i.e. metaphysics, epistemology, ethics. Explicate the purpose of philosophy, with reference to the major fields of philosophy. Illustrate the thoughts of major philosophers with original applications/examples. Compare and contrast the central ideas of major philosophers: e. g. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Bentham, Mil, Kant, James. Analyze the viewpoints of the major philosophers. Critique the arguments of major philosophers.

**7. Required Texts:** Solomon, Robert C. *Introducing Philosophy: A Text with Integrated Readings*. 9th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Additional readings and text as assigned by instructor.

**8. Course Objectives and Student Learning Objectives**

**Purpose Statement:**

In Philosophy 1301, students clarify and develop philosophical perspectives on reality, knowledge, and values. Students think critically about controversial issues and gain experience in the critical analyses of texts. Students consider alternative points of view and discuss and debate contemporary issues of concern. Philosophy 1301 supports the mission of Blinn College by providing college level transfer credit hours in arts and sciences for those seeking associate degrees, or intending to transfer to senior institutions.

**Course Description:**

This course surveys perennial problems of philosophy such as the fundamental nature of reality, the limits of knowledge, the existence of God, and the difference between right and wrong.

Students will become familiar with and interpret representative philosophical problems, arguments, and philosophers. The student of philosophy becomes familiar with and works toward an understanding of the purposes and methods of philosophy.

A. Meta-Philosophy: How do we define philosophy?

B. The basic areas of philosophical investigation

1. Metaphysics: Can we coherently describe absolutely **All** that may exist?
2. Epistemology: What reasonably constrains confidence and the possibility of knowledge?
3. Ethics: What factors govern your values and how you live your life?
4. Critical Thinking: How do you judge the worth of an argument?

C. Illustrate the thoughts of major philosophers with original applications/examples.

D. Compare and contrast the central ideas of major philosophers.

E. Analyze the viewpoints of the major philosophers.

F. Critique the arguments of major philosophers.

**Course Requirements**

**Grading Scale:**

A = 90 - 100	B = 80 - 89	C = 70 - 79	D = 60 - 69	F < 60
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**Grading system:**

The student will complete major assignments including a Pretest and initial assignment, a concept paper, a group project, home reading assignments and abstracts, in class group reading and explication, discussions, a final examination (& course inventory) and colloquial presentation of a group paper. Tests and essays are graded using philosophy department grading criteria. Course grading will be according to the following chart.

<b>EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS:</b>	individual	cooperative
<b>Initial Assignment: pre-test</b> - Please complete the Initial Assignment to be provided.		
<b>*Concept Outline</b> – a brief (2-3 pp.) proposal that describes what you wish to do for a course project, the rationale for this idea, preliminary resources you will consult, and the intended outcome when completed.	10	10
<b>*Course Group Project</b> – Teams of 4 or 5 students produce philosophical research papers, stemming from a concept paper or class discussion. You should discuss your ideas, methods, frustrations, and successes with your colleagues and instructor.	10	30
<b>*Weekly Abstracts</b> – 25 to 100 words summarizing a reading assignment.	20	
<b>*Explication</b> – 3 Oral presentations of assigned readings.	30	30
<b>Participation - Discussions</b> - Students should feel free to consult with one another (and the instructor) about course projects, readings, assignments, and anything else that is relevant to the course.	5	5
<b>Participation - Activities</b> – short activities (thought experiments) to be completed in class. These are intended to assist the student in applying the knowledge and the ideas presented. While these activities are to be conducted individually, they are to be shared with your colleagues and you may discuss them informally in order to learn more about other people’s ideas.	5	5
<b>*Final Examination: post-test</b> – Colloquial presentation.	20	20
Grading of course follows two paths: Individual and Cooperative. Final grade reflects average of the two paths.	<b>Total= <u>Individual+cooperative</u> 2</b>	100
	100	100

\*indicates major assignment including comprehensive final

Students may be provided an opportunity to improve their grade with extra credit assignments upon consultation and approval of instructor.

Grading student academic achievement is not a mechanical process. Research shows that students have individual learning styles. Consequently, one student's progress may be best captured on one measure while another student's progress could be better captured using a different assessment technique. This means that no one type of assessment will provide equal measure of every student's progress. Grading requires judgment.

## The fine print!

**Note:** To receive a grade of A-C, the paper must meet all requirements of the assignment.

**The A paper** (90-100%) represents original, outstanding work. It shows consistently careful philosophical thought, fresh insights, sophisticated analysis, and stylistic maturity.

- The reader moves through the A paper effortlessly because of its effective transitions, strong organization, and thorough, purposeful development.
- An A paper has a controlling idea that is complete and well-formulated.
- An A paper is not marred by distracting mechanical errors.
- Directly quoted passages are gracefully integrated into the text with appropriate attribution.
- Word choice reflects a superior grasp of philosophical concepts and terminology, is marked by a precise, varied, advanced vocabulary, and includes precise supporting examples. It is free of jargon, clichés, and other empty language.

**The B paper** (80-89%) represents clearly good, above average college level work. It demonstrates philosophical insight, correct, complete, and thoughtful analysis, and a varied vocabulary.

- Its specific points are logically ordered, with appropriate transitions; ideas are well developed and supported with evidence.
- The B paper has a clear controlling idea.
- It is mostly free of distracting mechanical errors.
- Directly quoted passages are smoothly integrated into the text with appropriate attribution.
- In summary, the language of the B paper is clear, with correct usage of philosophical terminology, and is often thoughtful, with relevant supporting examples, but it lacks the originality and precision of the most memorable writing.

**The C paper** (70-79%) represents average college-level work. It is a competent expression of philosophical ideas and exhibits a writing style that is basically correct.

- A C paper's analysis is correct and mostly complete, but is superficial and/or inconsistent.
- A C paper has an organizational pattern containing information that is relevant to the assignment. However, it often lacks varied transitions, developed thought, and other information needed to guide the reader.
- The C paper has a controlling idea, but it lacks specificity and focus because it is insubstantial, vague, or simply too broad or general.
- A paper earning a C has relatively few major syntactic, usage, and mechanical errors.
- Directly quoted passages are integrated into the text with attribution.
- In summary, the language of the C paper is characterized by generalities rather than precise, illustrative details.

**The D paper** (60-69%) represents below average college work. It often demonstrates one or more of the following characteristics:

- A D paper's analysis is incorrect and/or incomplete as well as superficial and/or inconsistent.
- It has only skeletal development and organization;
- A D paper's controlling idea is often unclear and/or non-existent;
- It has frequent major mechanical errors which are distracting and interfere with the readability of the document.
- Sentence structure is awkward, non-standard, and ambiguous.

**Note:** A paper exhibiting major weaknesses in any specific area—content, development, organization, writing style—or, indeed, a failure to address the assignment is usually considered, at best, a D paper.

**The F paper** (59% and below) is characterized by writing that falls below minimal standards for college-level literacy. It often demonstrates one or more of the following characteristics:

- analysis is completely incorrect or is entirely missing
- little or no organization;
- an unclear or missing controlling idea;
- lack of thought and purpose;
- numerous and pervasive mechanical errors which are distracting and interfere with the readability of the document.

**The No-Credit Paper (0%)** demonstrates one or more of the following serious errors:

- **plagiarized content** in any form, including the failure to acknowledge the source of any borrowed material (summarized, paraphrased, and directly quoted) and unmarked exact wording (directly quoted from either any primary or any secondary source, including dictionaries and class notes), whether a specific well-chosen word, a phrase (two or more words), a clause, or full sentence(s);
- complete failure to address the assigned topic;
- complete failure to meet the requirements of the assignment;
- complete failure to follow directions.

**9. Civility Statement:** Members of the Blinn College Community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Blinn College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others.

**10. Civility Notification Statement:** If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference.

**11. Course requirements** include extensive reading, completion of group and individual research projects, oral and written presentations.

## 12 Tentative Daily Calendar for major assignments and exams:

### June

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	2	3 <b>SUMMER I &amp; 10-WEEK CLASSES BEGIN</b>  <b>PRETEST</b>	4 Classes Meet-Summer I  <b>Late Registration Last day to add/change classes</b>	5 Classes Meet-Summer I
7 Classes Meet-Summer I  Abstract Due	8 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team A Presentation Assignment Due  Individual Paper Outline Draft Due  <b>Day of Record - Summer 1</b>	9 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due Team B Presentation Assignment Due	10 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due Team C Presentation Assignment Due	11 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due Team D Presentation Assignment Due  Individual Paper Outline Revision Due
14 Classes Meet-Summer I	15 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team B Presentation Assignment Due  <b>Day of Record- 10-week classes</b>	16 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team C Presentation Assignment Due  Group Paper Outline Draft Due	17 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team D Presentation Assignment Due	18 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team A Presentation Assignment Due  Group Paper Outline Revision Due
21 Classes Meet-Summer I	22 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team C Presentation Assignment Due	23 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team D Presentation Assignment Due  First Draft of Final Group Paper Due <b>Last day to drop classes w/a "W"-Summer I</b>	24 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team A Presentation Assignment Due	25 Classes Meet-Summer I Abstract Due  Team B Presentation Assignment Due
28 Classes Meet-Summer I	29 Classes Meet-Summer I  2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of Final Group Paper Due	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>  <b>Group Paper Presentation and Submission</b>		

# Tentative Daily Calendar, Instructional Schedule and Mapping of course content to institutional master syllabus SLO's

## Module 1.

	THEMES/Major Fields	SKILLS / OBJECTIVES	PHILOSOPHER	TEXT
1 Meet and Greet Pre-test	The origins of western philosophy  Meta-Philosophy	Critical thinking about building and deconstructing philosophical categories;  Mental maps -building a philosophical vocabulary.  SLO: Identify major fields of philosophy.. SLO: Explicate purposes of philosophy.	W.V.O. Quine Angelette Rorty	Pp 1-21

## Module 2.&3.

2 Lecture Team Set up	Metaphysics: *substance *accident *Necessity  Epistemology *Perception *Knowledge *Belief *Truth *Justifications	Methods for Close Reading of philosophical texts.  Student explorations of philosophical texts.  SLO: Identify major fields of philosophy. SLO: Explicate purpose of philosophy.	Plato *Aristotle *W.V.O. Quine *Kripki Rorty	Pp 43-54; Pp 65-78 Pp 78-84
3 Lecture Student Abstracts Discussion		Examples of close reading and interpretation.  Student Experience with presentation and interpretation of philosophical text.  SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Compare & contrast central Ideas SLO: Critique arguments	Thales Anaximander Heraclitus Democritus Parmenides Protagoras Socrates *Plato James	Pp 44-51 P 47 P 51 P 51 P 52-53

## Module 4.,5.,6.

4 Lecture Student Abstracts Discussion	Epistemology: *Rationalism *Empiricism  Mind-body problem: *Types of dualism *Types of Identity	Presents models of critical philosophical problem analysis in outline.  Student Experience with presentation, interpretation & critical analysis of philosophical text.  SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Critique arguments	*Descartes	Pp 88-90; pp 190-200
5 Team project preview Lecture		Student Experience with presentation, interpretation & critical analysis of philosophical text.  SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Critique arguments	*Locke *Berkeley Ryle Smart Dennett Searle Jackson	Pp 201-112 Pp 113-220 Pp 338-387
6 Lecture Student Abstracts Discussion		Student Experience with presentation and interpretation of philosophical text.  SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Critique arguments	*Hume *Kant	Pp 221-234 Pp 235-243

## Module 7. & 8.

7 Lecture Student Abstracts Discussion	Human Action: *Intentionality, *freewill/determinism *Philosophy of Science	Presents models of critical philosophical problem analysis in outline.  SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Critique arguments	Carnap Hempel Ayer Popper Wettgenstein Kuhn Lakatos Quine Laudan Thagard Aristotle *Mill	Pp 457-550
8	Ethics *Utilitarianism, *Deontology, *Virtue, *Relativism, *Emotivism *Skepticism	SLO: Illustrate Philosophers' thoughts SLO: Critique arguments SLO: Compare & contrast central Ideas	Bentham Nietzsche Ryle Ayer Rawls Nozick Nagel	

## Module 9 & 10

Summary Lecture & Review				
Student Presentations EXAMS / Team paper due				

**13. Grading Criteria:** Using the measures noted in section 8 above, the grading criteria for the course attempts to capture the student's level of success across all domains listed in the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) listed in section 8 above. Assessment methods include:

Observation of

- students engagement in critical analysis,
- judgment,
- statements exhibiting coherence between philosophical explications of assigned texts and personal goals/values,

Analysis of

- quality of abstracts,
- quality of final paper
- final exam

Survey of

- student's attitude towards philosophy

#### 14. Blinn College Policies

**Disability Accommodations:** Students with documented disabilities may seek support from Blinn College's Office of Disability Services. Students are encouraged to contact this office as early as possible to initiate services. The student must then discuss requested accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations are not retroactive.

**Incomplete Policy:** A grade of "I" may be given only in emergencies, such as the serious illness of the student or a close family member. The grade is not for students who fall behind in their work. To receive an incomplete, the student must have satisfactorily completed all but one or two of the final requirements of the course. The instructor and student must agree before this grade can be assigned; then a course completion contract must be signed by the student, the instructor, and the division chair. All work must be made up within 90 days of the course completion contract or zeroes will be assigned for the incomplete work. The instructor will then average these zeroes with the rest of the grades to compute a final course grade and will fill out a grade change form with the Division Chair.

**W/WF/WP :** Students who drop a course prior to the official drop deadline in a semester will receive a grade of W. students who drop after the official drop date will receive a grade of WF. A student may request of the instructor that this WF be changed to a WP, providing the student is passing on the day he /she drops the course. To change the grade the instructor will fill out a grade change form with the Division Chair.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Blinn College does not tolerate cheating. Scholastic dishonesty is "(1) any attempt to receive a grade by passing off someone else's work as your own, such as plagiarizing, cheating on daily work, exams or papers, (2) any type of collusion on work for this class, or (3) any attempt to use notes, cheat sheets, etc. during an exam or essay" (refer to the Blinn College Student Handbook). A grade of zero will be given to any assignment in which cheating is involved and as report made to the division chair. If there is a second offense, the student may receive a failing grade of the course (see Blinn Student Hand book. A student who engages in scholastic dishonesty may not drop the course.

**Civility Policy:** Members of the Blinn College community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Blinn College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others. If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference

**Attendance Policy:** The College District believes that class attendance is essential for student success; therefore, students are required to promptly and regularly attend all their classes. Each class meeting builds the foundation for subsequent class meetings. Without full participation and regular class attendance, students place themselves at a severe disadvantage for achieving success in college. Class participation shall constitute at least ten percent of the final course grade. It is the responsibility of each faculty member, in consultation with the division chair, to determine how participation is achieved in his or her class. Faculty will require students to regularly attend class and will keep a record of attendance from the first day of class and/or the first day the student's name appears on the roster, through final examinations. If a student has one week's worth of unexcused absences during the semester, he/she will be sent a message by the College requiring the student to contact his/her instructor and schedule a conference immediately to discuss his/her attendance issues.

**Electronic Policy:** All the functions of all personal electronic devices designed of communication and /or entertainment (cell phones, pagers, beepers, iPods, and similar devices) must be turned off and kept out of sight in all College District classrooms and associated laboratories. Any noncompliance with this policy shall be addressed in accordance with the College District civility policy (administrative policy). Additionally, any communication understood by the instructor to be in the nature of cheating shall have consequences in accordance with the section in this policy regarding academic dishonesty. Students exempted from this policy section will include active members of firefighting organizations, emergency medical services organizations, commissioned police officers, on-call employees of any political subdivision of the state of Texas, or agencies of the federal government. Exempted students are expected to set the emergency-use devices on silent or vibrate mode only. No food or drinks are allowed in any Blinn classrooms or laboratories.

**15. Other Considerations** Because the nature of the course and the nature of the presentation both invite classroom discussion, any potential impediment to the free flow of ideas cannot be allowed; therefore, no mechanical recording of class meetings is allowed. See instructor. The Internet is often considered an authoritative source of information, but only one possible source among many; therefore, the Internet and information obtained there from should contribute some proportion of research for this course and cleared with the instructor for guidance in proper citation. The student will be held responsible for all assignments, even reading assignments not actually discussed during scheduled class meetings. Class meetings are designed to further understanding; therefore, class time will be spent exploring—not explaining—the assigned reading. In short, the student must come to class prepared to discuss any and all aspects of the assigned reading. The student should bring to the classroom setting all needed supports such as notebook paper, laptop computer, highlighter(s), functioning pen, dictionary, the Solomon textbook, and all handouts. The student should not at any time rely on borrowing; borrowing will be construed as a sign of ill preparedness, which, in turn, affects the student's participation grade. In an effort to enhance student engagement on the Brenham campus, class assignment may be handwritten only as a last resort, printed output, e.g., laptops will be preferred. All of the above may be waived or amended at the option of the instructor. The Writing Room provides, free of charge, a supportive, non-directive environment for all students at any stage of the writing process. Located in room 14 of the Academic Building, The Writing Room, while not providing proofreading or editing services, does provide activities for idea invention, computers and computer programs that simplify the task of composing, reference books to help students find the answers to their questions, and English consultants to offer feedback to students as they learn to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing. While computers in The Writing Room are available on a walk-in basis, students are encouraged to make appointments in advance to meet with Writing Room consultants.

**Make-Up Policy** The student is responsible for all assignments, including those made during any class meeting from which the student has absented him- or herself. Any clarification of directions, etc. for any assigned work will take place during the instructor's conference hours. All assigned work is due before or on the designated day and time. Unless indicated otherwise, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day designated. If a student is unable to attend class on the day that an assignment is due, he or she should nevertheless ensure that the instructor receives the assignment by the designated time. In-class essays can be made up only if the student's absence is excused in accordance with Blinn attendance policy. No late work is accepted without severe penalty unless the student and the instructor agree on a different due date well in advance of the original due date. Severe penalty means one letter grade off for each calendar day the assignment is late.

**Class Attendance:** Class room attendance and active participation is an essential component of this course. Failure to consistently attend will result in course failure. See Catalog for further information.

