**University of North Texas**

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**PHIL 1050**

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1. **Rationale and Course Outline:**

This course is an introduction to the rich heritages of the world’s philosophical traditions.

Rather than assuming or maintaining a particular definition of philosophy, this course will engage “philosophy” as an ongoing cite of contestation and debate: What is philosophy? Who counts as a philosopher? What can be recognized as a serious philosophical endeavor? How does philosophy intersect and differ from theory, critique, belief, science, and ethics? What is philosophy for and can it make any difference in the world? None of these are settled questions, but reflect ongoing debates with material consequences. Congruent with the aim of opening rather than closing or assuming the question of “philosophy” this course engages multiple cultural perspectives and approaches.

The course begins where philosophical questions often first confront us: in the middle of everyday life as we ask questions about how we should live and how we know what is right or good. From there we often move to questions of society: how do we live well together, what makes a society just, what is justice and is it possible given the complexities of life? Reflecting on what is right and just leads to questions of truth and how we can have knowledge. If we are going to explore what it means to have good or true knowledge then we will also need to ask questions of the real: what is reality, what is it composed of, what makes it up, and how do we distinguish reality from illusion? Finally we will conclude the class with questions of identity, subjectivity, and embodied life: who am I, what am I, how should or can I relate to human and more-than-human others?

As one of the University Core Curriculum, this class aims at the achievement of “core objectives,” especially critical thinking, communication skills, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. To evaluate the progress in each objective area, the instructor will apply four criteria: Introduction of issue and Presentation of Conclusion; Organization/Structure; Analysis of Ethical Issues; and Apply Perspectives. The four criteria are applied to each objective to assess your progress. Your results may be collected by the instructor to clarify the feedback from the class and improve the quality of the education.

The instructor will apply four criteria to grade your two essays. The full score of each essay will be 30 points. You can see the detailed explanation of each criterion in CANVAS.

**II. Course Outcomes:**

By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

* accurately and fairly represent the thoughts and ideas of another
* think critically about a text or set of ideas
* clearly and compellingly communicate their own conclusions in conversation with others
* articulate what social and personal responsibility looks like in particular circumstances

**III. Course Requirements:**

# Class attendance and participation policy:

Since the course will be asynchronous, *on-time attendance is not mandatory*. However, it is highly recommended to watch the whole video lecture to participate in the discussion boards and prepare the essays.

# Course readings:

# Required text: Kessler, Gary, *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader,* 9th edition, Cengage Learning, 2016.

1. Assignments

Final grades will consist of the following:

Class participation 20% or more

Quizzes 20%

Two Essays 60%

Class Participation: Students get participation grades in proportion to the number of posts on the Discussion board. Too short posts (less than 50 words) cannot be counted as a part of your participation grades. A student who uploads 10 independent posts will get full participation grades. The discussion topics will be posted in a row after the third week of the semester. Since there is no limitation on the number of points you can earn for posting, any posts in excess of 10 will improve your final grade, even if you already get full participation grades.

There is no specific document format required for the posts.

Quizzes: A reading quiz is required for each class. Each quiz consists of 4 true/false questions or multiple choices about readings and is automatically assigned and graded on CANVAS.

Two Essays: Students should submit two essays. Each essay comprises 30% of your course grade. You can resubmit the essays one more time to improve your grade of the essay.

There is no specific document format required for the essays. The minimum length is 1,000 words. The topics of each essay will be posted on CANVAS.

You must specify your references when you write the essays to get more detailed feedback and avoid plagiarism. Citations without attribution will receive 0 points.

To detect AI-generated essays, the instructor will use the Turnitin program in CANVAS. Too high AI score can result in a low assignment score.

\*First Essay Due Date: March 7, 2025.

\*Second Essay Due Date: May 5, 2025.

4.Late assignments:

All work is expected to be submitted by the designated due date. Late assignments will be docked 3% for each day late (2 days late: 6% deduction, 3 days late: 9% deduction, etc).

**IV. Grading Policies and Procedures**

Grading rubrics will be used to evaluate class participation, assignments, and exam essays.

GRADING SYSTEM:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 90-100 % |
| B | 80-89 % |
| C | 70-79 % |
| D | 60-69 % |
| F | 0-59 % |

**V. Course Schedule**

\*Philosophy General

1 Kessler, What is Philosophy; Midgley, Philosophical Plumbing

2 Methods of Philosophy and Philosophical Arguments (Kessler ch.2).

\*Axiology

3 Buddha& Confucius (Kessler ch.3.2, 3.3); Bhagavad-Gita (p. 84-92)

\*Normative Ethics

4 Aristotle (Kessler ch.3.5)

5 Kant (Kessler ch.4.2)

6 Mill (Kessler ch.4.3); Al-Ashari (p.139-40)

\*Applied Ethics

7 Peter Singer & Tom Regan (Kessler ch.6.8)

8 West & Pharr (p. 237-48); Williams (p. 249-59)

\*Political Philosophy

9 Marx (Kessler ch.5.3) & MLK (p. 215-225)

10 Rawls (Kessler ch.5.4)

11 Plato (Kessler ch.5.5) & Social Contract Theory

\*Epistemology

12 Descartes (Kessler ch.7.3)

13 Al-Ghazali (Kessler ch. 7.2); Koller (p. 350-55)

14 Hume (Kessler ch.7.4); Berkeley (Kessler ch.9.5)

\*Philosophy of Science

15 Popper & Kuhn (Kessler ch.8.3, 8.4)

\*Metaphysics

16 Laozi (p. 421-442 ); Shankar (p. 443-451) ; Plato (Kessler ch.9.3)

17 Determinism; Sartre (Kessler ch.10.1, 10.3)

\*Philosophy of Mind

18 Chinese Room (Kessler ch.11.3)

19 Dennet (Kessler ch.11.6); McCloskey (p. 558-63)

\*Philosophy of Religion

20 Mackie (Kessler ch.12.3)

**VI. Academic Integrity**

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty.

According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

1. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
2. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
3. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university;
4. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or
5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage.

The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to:

1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and
2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

**VII. Accommodations for students with disabilities (ADA statement)**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.