**University of North Texas**

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**PHIL 1050**

Instructor: Hyun Yang

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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, 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?

**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.

# Supplementary material

# Taylor, Paul, *Principles of Ethics*, Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1975.

Geoffrey, Thomas, *An Introduction to Ethics*, Duckworth Publisher, 1993.  
 Loux, Michael, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2006.   
 Rawls, John, *Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, 1999.  
 Pangle Thomas and Burns Timothy, *The Key Texts of Political Philosophy*, 2015. Munitz, Milton. *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy*, Macmillan Publishing, 1981.

# You are not required to buy every supplementary material. Other reading selections will be provided digitally (if possible).

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. 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 20 classes. Each quiz consists of 4 true/false questions or multiple choices about that reading 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 first essay one more time to improve your grade of the essay.

There is no specific document format required for the essays. The recommended length is 1,000-3,000 words. The topics of each essay posts 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.

\*First Essay Due Date: 09 June 2023.

\*Second Essay Due Date: 24 June 2023.

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).

**VI. Course Schedule**

\*Philosophy General

1 Definitions and Branches of Philosophy (Kessler ch.1).

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

\*Ethics General

3 Ethics, Relativism, and Egoism (Taylor ch.1-3).

\*Normative Ethics

4 Aristotle (Kessler ch.3.5, Geoffrey ch.3.9)

5 Kant (Kessler ch.4.2, Taylor ch.5)

6 Mill (Kessler ch.4.3, Taylor ch.4)

\*Applied Ethics

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

\*Meta-Ethics

8 Cognitivism, Noncognitivism, and Descriptivism (Taylor ch.8)

\*Political Philosophy

9 Marx (Kessler ch.5.3, Pangle and Burns ch.12)

10 Rawls (Kessler ch.5.4)

\*Epistemology

11 Descartes (Kessler ch.7.3)

12 Hume (Kessler ch.7.4)

\*Theory of Truth

13 Three Theories of Truth (Truth, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

\*Philosophy of Science

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

\*Metaphysics

15 Realism (Loux ch.1)

16 Nominalism (Loux ch.2)

17 Concrete Particulars (Loux ch.3)

18 Possible World (Loux ch.5)

\*Philosophy of Language

19 Frege & Russell (Munitz ch.3, 4)

\*Philosophy of Mind

20 Chinese Room (Kessler ch.11.3)

**VII. 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.

**VIII. 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.