

Syllabus
Philosophy of Law (PHIL 3320-001)
The University of Texas at Arlington
18 January 2012

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Office Hours: 11:00 to 12:00, MW

Time and Place of Class Meetings: 10:00 to 10:50, MWF, 308 Woolf Hall

Description of Course Content: Philosophy of law is a branch of philosophy which takes as its subject matter (1) the nature of law; (2) legal processes (e.g., legislation, adjudication, administration, constitutional amendment); (3) legal doctrines (e.g., *stare decisis*, the exclusionary rule, consideration, assumption of the risk); (4) legal concepts (e.g., entrapment, negligence, privacy, guilt); and (5) legal reasoning. The field of philosophy of law is vast, so we will focus on a few perennially important (or topical) issues, such as the legal status of animals, drunk driving, the Second Amendment, civil disobedience, torture, smoking, capital punishment, homosexual marriage, bad samaritanism, drug legalization, and affirmative action. This is not a law course, so if you learn any law in here, it will be by accident. There are no prerequisites, but the course will be difficult for anyone who has not had a previous philosophy course.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who study properly and attend all classes will be able to (1) state and discuss the main arguments on each issue, (2) state and discuss the main criticisms of each argument, and (3) state and discuss analyses of key concepts that arise in the course of the various arguments and criticisms.

Requirements: (1) A 50-minute, in-class examination, which constitutes one-third of your grade. This examination will be given during class on Monday, 20 February. (2) A 50-minute, in-class, noncomprehensive examination, which constitutes one-third of your grade. This examination will be given during class on Monday, 2 April. (3) A 50-minute, in-class, noncomprehensive examination, which constitutes one-third of your grade. This examination will be given on Monday, 7 May, from 8:00 to 8:50 AM (note the earlier time). The aim of the examinations is to test the breadth and depth of your knowledge and skill. You are responsible for all of the readings, handouts (if any), blog posts, lectures, and discussions. (Yes, discussions.) I do not duplicate lectures in my office or provide notes to students; nor do I allow audio or video recording of my lectures. If you miss a class, you must ask another student for assistance. I *strongly* recommend that you find a partner the first week of class and meet regularly during the semester to study. I do not give quizzes, assign homework, or permit extra credit. There are no early examinations. Makeup examinations are given only for the first and second examinations and only in emergencies. All emergencies must be documented (for example, by a note from a physician). I, as your instructor, am the arbiter of what constitutes an emergency,

and there is no appeal from my decision. If you miss the final examination, you will receive a grade of F for the course.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials: All course materials are available free of charge (except for the paper on which to print them) from the UTA library (online) or from the course blog. Each student is responsible for locating and printing these materials. See the handout entitled “Reading List” for details. It is incorporated herein by reference.

Descriptions of Major Assignments and Examinations: See “Requirements” above.

Attendance: I do not take attendance, but you should be aware of two facts. First, it will be difficult to pass the course—certainly it will be difficult to do *well* in the course—if you do not attend class regularly. Second, I do not write letters of recommendation for students who have less than perfect attendance (or close to it). See “Requirements for Letters of Recommendation,” which is posted on the course blog. Do not come to class late; it is disrespectful and disruptive. Be seated in the classroom, ready to learn, by 10:00. Leave your house, apartment, or previous class early enough to arrive on time.

Grading: The maximum score on each of the three examinations is 100 points, for a total of 300 points. Grades will be assigned as follows:

270-300 points = A
240-269 points = B
210-239 points = C
180-209 points = D
0-179 points = F

In principle, everyone can receive an A. In principle, everyone can receive an F.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility officially to withdraw if he or she does not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and the letter of all federal equal-opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on

the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: At UT Arlington, academic dishonesty is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form, including (but not limited to) “cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts” (UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2). Suspected violations of academic-integrity standards will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline by calling (817) 272-6107, sending a message to resources@uta.edu, or visiting www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign

any themes, research problems, or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.