**PHIL 2300-001**

**Introduction to Philosophy**

**MWF: 10-10:50, PH 207**

**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:** Dr. Miriam Byrd   
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**Office hours:** M,W 12-1 and by appointment

**Course Description:** This course provides an interactive approach to the study of philosophy. Not only will students learn about important philosophical figures, movements, and methodology, but they will be encouraged to identify their own philosophical positions and consider how these positions relate to those of the philosophers we’ve studied. Students are also encouraged to consider how particular philosophical issues have been important in their own lives and to discuss philosophical problems with friends and family outside of class.

Representative topics covered in this course include epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Discussion of these topics will give rise to such questions as ‘what do I really know?’, ‘am I free?’, ‘am I morally responsible for what I do?’ ‘does God exist?’ ‘how should I treat others?’ and ‘what should I do with my life?’

**Text:** William F. Lawhead, *The Philosophical Journey*, 6th ed., McGraw Hill, 2014. The loose leaf version of this text, packaged with Connect, is available at the campus bookstore.

Students wishing to save money by purchasing the e-book and Connect without a hard copy should visit <http://www.mheducation.com/highered/product.0078038340.html>. When asked for the course website, enter <http://connect.mheducation.com/class/m-byrd-spring-2016-mwf-10-1050>.

**Course Objectives:** Students will be able to explain key philosophical concepts and the positions of major figures and will demonstrate skill in philosophical argumentation. Students will have awareness of their own philosophical positions and the evaluative skills needed for building and improving upon their overall worldview in the future.

**Grades:**

Homework 20%

Quizzes 30%

Essay Exams 40%

Attendance 10%

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F 59 and below

**Homework:** Throughout the semester, students are responsible for taking online reading quizzes. Online reading quizzes are found in the “Homework” area of Blackboard, and each quiz will be made available a week before its due date. You are allowed two attempts for each quiz. A schedule of online reading quiz due dates is posted under “Course Materials” in Blackboard.

**Quizzes:** There will be three in-class quizzes, each taking approximately 25 minutes to complete. Students should bring Scantron form 882-E on quiz days.

**Exams:** There will be two take-home essay exams. Students are required to submit these writing assignments through Blackboard using SafeAssign. I will provide an assignment description two weeks before each exam is due.

**Attendance**: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. **As the instructor of this section, I have chosen to require attendance, and you will receive an attendance grade that makes up 10% of your final grade.** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class period. You begin with the grade of 100, and each *unexcused* absence lowers your grade by 3 points. In order to have an absence excused, provide me with documentation such as a physician’s note. Students either arriving after roll has been called or leaving early may be counted as absent.

**Missed Work:** You may make up missed in-class quizzes if you provide acceptable documentation for your absence and take the quiz within 1 week of returning to class. There are no make-ups for missed reading quizzes, but your three lowest reading quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester.

**Blackboard**: The syllabus, online reading quizzes, essay assignments, grades, and slides will be posted on Blackboard. In order to access this course in Blackboard, go to <http://elearn.uta.edu> and login with your university NetID and password (the same ID and password you use for your UTA email).

**Course Schedule**

All assigned readings are from *The Philosophical Journey*.

1/20 Course Introduction

1/22 1.1 SOCRATES AND THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM

1/25 1.2 PLATO’S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

1/27 1.3 ARGUMENT AND EVIDENCE: HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT TO BELIEVE?

1/29 3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

2/1 3.1 SKEPTICISM

2/3 Continued

2/5 3.2 RATIONALISM

2/8 Continued

2/10 3.3 EMPIRICISM

2/12 Continued

2/15 3.4 KANTIAN CONSTRUCTIVISM

2/17 Continued

2/19 Discussion, **\*\*Quiz 1\*\***

2/22 2.0 OVERVIEW OF METAPHYSICS, 2.1 OVERVIEW: THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

2/24 2.2 DUALISM

2/26 2.3 PHYSICALISM

2/29 2.4 FUNCTIONALISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

3/2 Continued

3/4 Discussion

3/7 Essay Conferences

3/9 2.5 OVERVIEW: FREEDOM AND DETERMINISM

3/11 **\*\*Midterm Essay Exam Due 6pm**\*\*

3/14-19 Spring Break

3/21 2.6 HARD DETERMINISM

3/23 Continued

3/25 2.7 LIBERTARIANISM

3/28 Continued

3/30 2.8 COMPATIBILISM

4/1 Continued

4/4 Discussion, **\*\* Quiz 2\*\***

4/6 5.0 OVERVIEW OF ETHICS

4/8 5.1 ETHICAL RELATIVISM VERSUS OBJECTIVISM

4/11 Continued

4/13 5.2 ETHICAL EGOISM

4/15 Continued, 5.3 UTILITARIANISM

4/18 Continued

4/20 Continued

4/22 5.4 KANTIAN ETHICS

4/25 Continued

4/27 Continued, 5.5 VIRTUE ETHICS

4/29 Continued

5/2 Continued

5/4 Moral Dilemmas

5/6 Course Conclusion, **\*\*Quiz 3\*\***

5/9 **\*\*Final Exam Due 10:30 am\*\***

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. –Miriam N. Byrd.*

**Additional Course Policies**

**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 to officially withdraw if they do 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://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations: UT** Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).** Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

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](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*. For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) 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.

**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” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**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.

**Student Support Services**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better 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 visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exits, which are the stairs at each end of this hall. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**Emergency Phone Numbers**: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381