

# Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 2300.001

Summer II, 2017

Instructor: Dr. Kenneth Williford

Meeting Time: M-Th, 10:30-12:30

Meeting Place: Preston Hall (PH) 306

Office and Office Hours: 305 Carlisle Hall  
M-W 2:00-3:30PM & By Appointment

## Course Dates

July 11-August 10, 2017

**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?' 'Is there an afterlife?' 'How should I treat others?' and 'What should I do with my life?'

At the end of the course, students will be able to explain key philosophical concepts and the positions of major figures and will demonstrate skill in philosophical argumentation. Finally, 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.

***This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirement in Language, Philosophy & Culture.***

**Learning outcomes.** Students who attend all classes and study properly will: (1) understand the nature of reasoning and argumentation (Critical Thinking Skills); (2) understand many of the ways in which historical philosophers have attempted to address philosophical problems, including the problem of the relation of the individual to society in both its ethical and political dimensions (Personal and Social Responsibility); (3) be able to identify various philosophical themes and influences and specify their relation to the contemporary world; (4) demonstrate competency in oral and written communication (Communication Skills); and (5) work effectively in a collaborative environment.

## Core curriculum objectives

- Critical Thinking Skills: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills: effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- Social Responsibility: intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to



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engage effectively in regional, national and global communities

- Personal Responsibility: the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

**Signature assignment.** The take-home midterm (see “Evaluation” below) will be used to assess the student’s achievement of the Core Curriculum Objectives. In order to excel on this midterm, the student must demonstrate critical thinking skills, communication skills, and an understanding of arguments about the nature of social and personal responsibility.

**Required Texts** (These books should be available at the UTA Bookstore.)

*A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, by Anthony Weston, Hackett, 2009

*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and Other Writings*, David Hume, Cambridge University Press, 2007

*Dream Conversations on Buddhism and Zen*, Muso Kokushi, Shambhala, 1994

*Transformative Experience*, L.A. Paul, Oxford University Press, 2014

*Four Futures: Life after Capitalism*, Peter Frase, Verso, 2016

## Evaluation

- (1) Attendance, participation (25%)
- (2) One take-home essay exam (25%)
- (3) Five quizzes (25%)
- (4) An in-class final exam (25%)

### *Attendance and Participation*

Attendance will be taken everyday; a student may have up to two unexcused absences without this affecting his or her grade adversely. For each further unexcused absence the attendance/participation score will be reduced by 10 points. Participation will be noted throughout the session. The more you participate in discussions, raise questions about the readings, give your own arguments and counter-arguments, etc., the higher your participation grade.

### *Five Quizzes*

There will be a quiz at the end of each class week over the material covered and readings assigned that week.

### *Take-home Essay Exam*

On Monday, July 24, I will assign a take-home examination consisting of three short answer questions. Each answer will need to be no more than two pages in length (typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font). In order to answer the questions adequately, the student will need to be familiar with the reading and lecture material. Your answers will be due in class on Monday, July 31.

### *In-class Final Exam*

The in-class final will be an essay exam consisting of three to four questions. It will be cumulative. The exam may also contain a vocabulary portion. It will be on the scheduled exam day for this course: **Monday, August 14, 10:30-12:30.**

## Course Schedule

TE=*Transformative Experience*

DC=*Dream Conversations on Buddhism and Zen*

DNR=*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

FF=*Four Futures: Life after Capitalism*

RA=*A Rulebook for Arguments*

Q=Quiz

Phil=Philosophy

Args=Arguments

Intro=Introduction

### Week 1 (7/11-13)

Tu 7/11: RA, Intro, Ch. I, Appendix II; TE, pp. 1-19. Topics: Argument, Definition, Decision Theory, Philosophy of Mind

W 7/12: RA, Ch II; TE, pp. 19-51. Topics: Epistemology, Decision Theory, Subjectivity

Th 7/13: RA, Chs. VI and IX, Appendix I; TE, pp. 52-70. Topics: Deductive Logic, Rhetoric, Fallacies, Life Choices, Values **(Q1)**

### Week 2 (7/17-20)

M 7/17: RA, Ch. IV; TE, pp. 71-104. Topics: Life Choices, Values, Personal Identity, Self

Tu 7/18: RA, Ch. VII; TE, Ch. 4. Topics: Transformative Experience, Responsibility, Personal Identity, Values, Rationality

W 7/19: RA, Ch. VIII; TE, pp. 124-150. Topics: Decision Theory, First-Person Perspective, Values, Preferences, Informed Consent

Th 7/20: TE, pp. 150-178. Topics: Bayesian Epistemology, Credences, Ignorance, Probability **(Q2)**

### Week 3 (7/24-27)

M 7/24: DC, Translator's Intro, pp. 1-23. Topics: Asian and Buddhist Phil, Phil of Mind, Phil of Religion, **(Midterm Assigned)**

Tu 7/25: DC, pp. 23-46. Topics: Phil of Mind, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Meditation, Insight, Enlightenment

W 7/26: DC, pp. 46-69 Topics: Phil of Mind, Mysticism, Self, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics, Virtue

Th 7/27: DC, pp. 70-94 Topics: Mind and Body, Essence, Knowledge, Religious Controversies, Ultimate Reality **(Q3)**

### Week 4 (7/31-8/3)

M 7/31 DNR, Parts I-V. Topics: Natural vs. Revealed Theology, Design Argument, Early Modern Phil., Atheism, Fideism **(Midterm Due)**

Tu 8/1: DNR, Parts VI-VIII. Topics: Skepticism, Chance vs. Necessity, Phil of Cosmology, Ultimate Explanations, Epicureanism

W 8/2: DNR, Part IX. Topics: Cosmological and Ontological Arguments, Existence, Contingency, *A Priori* Knowledge, Spinozism

Th 8/3: DNR, Parts X-XII. Topics: Conditional Probabilities, Bayes' Theorem, Problem of Evil, Theodicy, Skeptical Theism **(Q4)**

### Week 5 (8/7-10)

M 8/7: FF, Intro, Ch. 1. Topics: Social and Political Phil, Phil of Technology, Ecology, Economics, Communism, Marxism, Equality, Abundance

Tu 8/8: FF, Ch. 2. Topics: Capitalism, Hierarchy, Abundance, Rentism, Neo-Liberalism, Private Property, Intellectual Property

W 8/9: FF, Ch. 3. Topics: Socialism, Equality, Scarcity, Markets, Ecological Constraints, Externalities, Pessimism

Th 8/10: FF, Ch. 4, Conclusion. Topics: Exterminism, Scarcity, Hierarchy, Oppression, Genocide, Wealth, Inequality **(Q5)**

**Final Exam: Monday, August 14, 10:30-12:30PM in 306 Preston Hall**

**NB: July 20 Last day to drop classes; submit requests to advisor prior to 4:00 pm.**

## IMPORTANT POLICIES OF MINE

**Blackboard:** I will be using Blackboard in this class to post the syllabus, handouts, announcements, links, supplementary readings, slides, class notes, and any class recordings. Be sure to check it regularly. (<https://elearn.uta.edu/>)

**Late Work:** All late work will be docked a full letter grade for every day that it is late.

**Laptops and Phones:** In my class I do not allow students to use laptops, smartphones, or other electronic devices without special permission. Any note taking must be done the old fashioned way. If I see laptops or smart phones out during class, I will ask you to put them up. If you won't put your device away, I will ask you to leave class.

**Homework for Other Courses:** Students are not allowed to read for or do homework for other courses while in my class.

**Incompletes:** I will not give a student a grade of Incomplete (I), unless he or she has a compelling, and documented, reason (e.g., a medical emergency).

**Plagiarism:** No student should have any doubt about what counts as plagiarism. I will assume that every student in this class has seen this tutorial provided by the UTA library and have taken the quiz embedded in it: <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/index.php>. All cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the Office of Student Conduct.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & OTHER USEFUL PIECES OF INFORMATION

**Attendance:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. 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 will follow the policy outlined above. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

**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://www.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://uta.edu/eos). For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).*

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled in this course 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.

**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 [www.uta.edu/resources](http://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” 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.

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR):** Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In Quick Hits sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information.

#### Library Info:

Library Home Page	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library">http://www.uta.edu/library</a>
Subject Guides	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu">http://libguides.uta.edu</a>
Subject Librarians	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php">http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php</a>
Library Tutorials	<a href="http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php">http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php</a>
Connect Off- Campus	<a href="http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus">http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus</a>
Ask A Librarian	<a href="http://ask.uta.edu">http://ask.uta.edu</a>

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**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 exit. 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**.