

St. Petersburg College
Department of Humanities and Fine Arts

COURSE SYLLABUS

PHI 1010, Sections #4549 & 2352
Introduction to Philosophy
0490 – Fall 2014

INSTRUCTOR:

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ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT:

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Introduction to Philosophy

Prerequisite:(ENC 0020 or ENC 0990) or EAP 1695 or satisfactory score on the placement test. This introductory survey of the perennial issues in human existence provides a rich evaluation of life's meaning. A critical examination is conducted of the fundamental assumptions, terminology, and schools of thought addressing the issues in metaphysics, epistemology and axiology (ethics and aesthetics). Discussion as well as lecture will focus on both classical and contemporary readings, such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Sartre and de Beauvoir. This course partially satisfies the writing requirements outlined in the General Education Requirements. Credit is not given for both PHI 1010 and PHI 1010H. 47 contact hours.

Be advised that this section is both BLENDED and INTERACTIVE. Blended courses are essentially online classes with face-to-face meetings once per week. All work

will be completed via SPC's learning management system (ANGEL). Class meetings are meant to supplement and clarify independent learning done via other course materials. *Interactive* classes are classes "simulcast" at more than one SPC site. This section is being offered at **both** Tarpon Springs and St. Pete Gibbs, so the instructor will alternate sites for equal access. The interactive classroom will allow you to watch live-streamed lecture and engage in discussion with the students at the other site. Note that in the case of technological issues, this class will be largely online. It is **essential** that you have access to a functioning computer.

Major Learning Outcomes:

1. Understanding the major areas of philosophical inquiry, including metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.
2. The ability to distinguish philosophical problems from issues in other areas of inquiry (e.g., math and science).
3. Gain facility in philosophical argumentation, including critical and constructive evaluation of arguments.
4. Knowledge of historically important philosophers and their contributions to human thought.
5. Recognition and familiarity with significant philosophical literature (e.g., Plato's *Republic*).
6. Practice in philosophical reading and writing.

Course Objectives:

You will achieve the course goals by:

1. Understanding and summarizing major philosophical positions (e.g., rationalism vs. empiricism).
2. Examining perennial philosophical problems such as the problem of free will, the problem of evil, the nature of the soul, and so on.
3. Evaluating reasons given for and against major positions and arguments on specific issues.
4. Demonstrating understanding of philosophers and their works via assignments, exams, and papers.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK & OTHER RESOURCE INFORMATION:

Required Textbook: *Philosophy Here & Now*, Author: Vaughn, Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19-976522-5

The instructor will provide open source materials (free of cost) for other required readings.

Library: <http://www.spcollege.edu/central/libonline/>.

MEETING INFORMATION:

Course Location: SPG TE-012 and TS BB 119

Meeting Days: Wednesday

Class Times: 9:30-10:45 a.m.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Course Dates: 8/18-12/11 2014

Drop/Add: 8/22

Withdrawal Date: 10/23

Financial Aid: <http://www.spcollege.edu/pages/dynamic.aspx?id=800>

RESOURCES:

We will rely upon ANGEL heavily because this is a blended course. If you are unfamiliar with ANGEL, log on by going to angel.spcollege.edu, or by clicking the link for ANGEL on our MySPC page. Enter your student number/username and password (which should be the same as your college email account). Start by browsing the site, making sure to use the ANGEL Tutorial you'll find under the Lessons tab.

You will find units, including assignments, lecture notes, drop boxes for work, etc., under the Lessons tab. Due dates and the course schedule (including the readings) are listed in the Calendar. Other important college dates will be listed there as well.

To email me, click the Communications tab. Be sure to click the "to" button by the recipient line and check the box that says "all course faculty" to reach me.

You can find many supplemental links and interesting content times, including open source primary literature, under the Lessons tab on ANGEL as well. If you would like to dig deeper into philosophical literature, please let me know and I'm happy to point you in the direction of all sorts of goodies.

ATTENDANCE:

The college-wide attendance policy is included in the Syllabus Addendum

<http://www.spcollege.edu/central/asa/addendum.htm>. The policy notes that each instructor is to exercise professional judgment and define "active participation" in class (and therefore "attendance"), and publish that definition in each syllabus. For this class, attendance is defined as showing up on time and ready to participate, and participation in online activities. If you have **more than three** unexcused absences by the 60% point of the semester (the last day to withdraw), you will not have satisfied my criterion for "active participation," and I will recommend you receive a grade of WF for the course.

Online attendance will be measured by on-time submission of unit quizzes and discussion forums.

Absences may be excused with documentation of an emergency or arrangements made with me prior to the missed class period. Unless those prior arrangements are made or documentation is provided, I will not excuse absences after the fact.

GRADING:

Your grade is based on total points out of 500 (see the scale below):

A: 450-500 points.

B: 400-449 points

C: 350-399 points

D: 300-349 points

F: fewer than 300 points.

You will accumulate points via discussion forums, quizzes, exams, term paper, and (potentially) extra credit opportunities. If you want to know your current points for the semester, refer to the course ANGEL page and click on the Reports tab. I will keep your records in ANGEL so you may access them. If you want to know your current

“grade,” divide your total earned points by the total number of possible points at that time. The calculation will yield your percentage.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Quizzes: 10 pts. Per quiz, 100 points total.
Each unit will include a quiz.

2. Critical Discussion Forums: 5 pts. Each, 50 points total.

You will do at least ten discussion forums in which you will write 250+ word **thoughtful reflections** on the material covered in a given unit. **DO NOT WRITE SUMMARIES.** Summarizing the reading requires little to no reflection and is therefore insufficient for credit. Also, you are not required to respond to classmate posts—I just want to see your *thoughts* on the unit’s content. Note that these reflections should not be emotional—I do not care how you feel about the unit—tell me what you *think* about the presented ideas. These forums will be graded for thoughtfulness, length, and composition. Practice your writing skills. Forums are due when the units close; due dates are found on the ANGEL Calendar. Note: Each unit has more than one discussion forum; there are 10 units, so you must post to at least one forum. You may do more than ten overall—your best ten scores will count toward your final grade.

Forums are set to “post first” mode, so you will be unable to read classmate posts until you write your post.

3. Term Paper: 100 points

Write a 2,000 word paper. Pick from one of the three options below:

- A. A book or article review of a major philosophical work (see me for suggestions).
- B. An argumentative essay regarding one of the major issues we discuss in class (e.g., free will, mind/body problem, rationalism vs. empiricism).
- C. A summary of your world view in which you discuss your position on the major issues we discuss in class. How do all these perspectives fit together for you?

You will find a Turnitin.com drop box for the paper under the Lessons tab on ANGEL. The paper due dates posted on the ANGEL calendar.

4. Exams: 50 pts. Each, 150 points total.

There will be three online open book/ open note multiple choice tests worth 50 points each. You will have one hour to complete each test and you cannot save and come back to the test later once you start. The dates for the exams are listed on the ANGEL calendar.

Final Exam: 100 points.

There will be a cumulative final exam worth 100 points. The exam will be an in-class Scantron exam, unless **there are no instances of academic dishonesty** in this section. If everyone is academically honest, I will make the exam online, open book & notes.

Note: I will **not** accept late work unless you can document an emergency. Due dates for all forums, papers, and exams are defined clearly on the ANGEL calendar. I expect you to meet those parameters.

STUDENTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND INSTRUCTOR’S EXPECTATIONS

This course may involve thinking about and discussing some controversial topics. As such, the rules of this course aim to facilitate learning the course material, generate an atmosphere of respect, and make a good forum for discussing arguments. I expect you to observe these rules at all times, including in any online communication. I will also honor these rules as your instructor.

Rule #1: Turn off **all electronic devices** when class begins. This includes laptop computers, cell phones, tablets, and so on. You may, with permission, use recording devices for lectures or have an exemption from this rule if you can provide documentation of a relevant disability from the Office of Students with Disabilities.

Rule #2: Treat your classmates with respect. Insulting, yelling at another student, or being disruptive to the learning environment is intolerable. If you mistreat a classmate or behave disruptively, I will ask you to leave the classroom and pursue further discipline with the Associate Provost's office. Each person should feel safe to express and defend his or her ideas.

Rule #3: Expectation of academic honesty. To put it bluntly, cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. If you cheat on **any assignment**, I will fail you for the course. This includes even "small" assignments like discussion forums. I have zero tolerance for academic misconduct. It is your responsibility to be familiar with SPC's policies, rules, and the consequences of violations. The policy is accessible via the following link:

http://www.spcollege.edu/webcentral/catalog/current/stu_affairs_honesty.htm

To promote academic integrity, you will be asked to submit your term paper in a Turnitin.com Drop Box. Should you opt not to do so, you will be required to submit a research prospectus, list of sources, annotated bibliography, and an outline of your term paper.

Rule #4: "Off-site" Behavior: Because this course is "interactive," it poses special challenges. I will divide my weeks between St. Pete Gibbs and Tarpon Springs (my "classroom" will be listed in the ANGEL Calendar). When I am streaming remotely to your site, I expect the same standards of behavior that would obtain were I in the classroom with you. I will not tolerate any disrespectful, disruptive, or academically inappropriate behavior—period. Mistreatment of classmates or college facilities will be punished harshly (e.g., I will remove the offender from the course).

Rule #5: Technological Disruptions. Should we face technological problems from the video conferencing equipment or other disruptions, we will continue the course in the "blended" format, but your required "in class" meetings will **only** be those at your site. Otherwise, the course should be treated as an **online** course. In the event of a hurricane or major catastrophe, instruction will continue as if the course is an online course. Do **not** treat technological interruptions as excuses to avoid the unit work.

STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION:

The student survey of instruction is administered in courses each semester. It is designed to improve the quality of instruction at St. Petersburg College. All student responses are confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for the purpose of performance improvement.

CALENDAR

Details the chapters and topics to be covered on a weekly basis and due dates for assignments.

SIGNATURE PAGE:

I have read, understand, and agree to abide fully by the parameters set in this syllabus and Syllabus Addendum.

Student Signature:

Date:

