I. Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Andrew Hookom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>I enjoy the opportunity to meet with students one-on-one. Please come see me during my office hours on Wednesdays from 1:30pm until 3:30pm at the library Starbucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Please don’t look for me in my office. My office hours will be at the library Starbucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ahookom@westga.edu">Ahookom@westga.edu</a> (preferred method of contact)</td>
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</tbody>
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II. Course Description

In this course, we will engage with a variety of philosophical problems. Students will be asked to explore and evaluate their own beliefs and assumptions in response to influential philosophical arguments from the past and present. Our goal is to gain a deeper understanding of our place in the cosmos and society.

Here are some of the big questions we will likely touch on during the semester:

Metaphysics

1) Is there a God?

2) What is it that makes you the person you are? What is it to be a human being?

3) What is the mind? Is consciousness a brain process, or does it require something immaterial like a soul? Could a machine be conscious?

4) What is free will? In light of developments in neuroscience, should we continue to believe that people have free will?

Epistemology

5) What makes an inquiry scientific? What is the difference between science and pseudo-science?

6) What is the proper way to balance reason, desire and emotion as sources of information about ourselves and the world?

Ethics/Politics

7) What makes a human life go well? What should we value? What are the biggest threats to human flourishing?
8) How does justice require society’s resources to be distributed? When might government coercion be justified?

9) How should we respond to wrongdoing as a society and as individuals?

III. Learning Outcomes

The aim of this course is to ask you to examine your place in the world by means of engaging with some of the major questions that have driven philosophers throughout history. We will address these questions through reading, writing about, and discussing primary philosophical texts. By the end of the semester students will be able to:

- Define and distinguish among the philosophical terms and concepts used in the course.
- Describe the views of at least three major philosophers from the Western tradition.
- Contrast the competing views of major philosophers on some of the philosophical issues explored in the course.
- Explain and critically assess their own views and those of others on the philosophical issues and theories explored in the course.
- Discuss in both oral and written discourse the philosophical theories and issues explored in the course.

IV. Communication Policies

In general, email is the best way to get in touch with me.

If you email me something requiring a response and have not received a reply within 2 days, you should re-send the message and ask me about it in person.

You are responsible for any material or assignment information I send to your UWG email address or post on the CourseDen website. I will make changes to the course schedule and assignments as needed. To stay updated, you should plan to check the CourseDen website and your email at least every 2 days.

V. Texts

All required readings for the course will be posted to the CourseDen website in PDF format. You should print these out, read them, and bring them to class.

Our texts will be drawn from a mix of historical and contemporary authors. The style, length and difficulty of the texts will vary widely. The authors will frequently disagree with each other, and I will openly disagree with them. Do not assume what you read is true just because it is in the reading! Philosophical understanding comes by way of exploring disagreements and the reasons for them.

Please anticipate that reading philosophy can be much harder than other kinds of reading. In recognition of that fact, I will try to keep readings short (usually under 20 pages -- with some exceptions). In many cases you may have to read something several times before understanding it at all.
VI. Assessment

You will be evaluated based on your ability to understand, explain and critique the various positions discussed in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. You will also be evaluated on your ability to think critically about complex problems.

Your final grade for the course will be based on your performance in the categories of work listed below:

Quizzes/In-Class Assignments: 10%

Assorted Short Writing Assignments (~10 pages total): 30%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Midterm Paper (5 pages): 20%

Final Exam: 20% (Note: Monday, December 5th 11am-1pm)

Brief quizzes will sometimes be given on the assigned reading material and/or the material discussed in previous class sessions. Quizzes may be given at the beginning of class or through CourseDen.

The exams will include multiple choice and essay components. I will distribute a study guide in advance of each exam that will include a list of topics you may be asked about. It will also include a list of possible essay questions.

Quizzes and exams will contain questions based on material covered in lecture that is not in the readings. Missing class can make it very difficult to do well on the exams.

The short writing assignments are described in detail below.

The grading scale:

90-100=A 80-89=B 70-79=C 60-69=D 0-59=F

VII. Classroom Expectations

Obviously, I expect you to arrive on time and prepared for class. You should be alert, engaged, cooperative and respectful. Avoid things that distract me or your classmates (e.g., talking to classmates, noisily eating or drinking, playing with your cell phone, coming in late).

I consider it very rude and distracting when students use their phones during lectures and class discussions. If I see you using your phone in class, I’m going to be upset with you. I may deduct 1 percent directly from your grade. I may also simply ask you to leave. Please respect my wishes and keep your phone put away during class so that this does not become an issue.

I strongly prefer that students not use laptops in class. If you feel this will impose an undue burden on you, please talk to me about it.
VIII. Short Writing Assignments

I like to mix things up with the writing assignments. Sometimes I may ask you to post your writing on CourseDen. Other times, I will ask you to bring your assignment to class. In some cases, I may ask you to write some reflections on a topic before we read about it and discuss it in class. In other cases, I may ask you to write up a summary or evaluation of something we have already discussed.

I'm willing to be flexible. If you are interested in writing about something different than what I have assigned, I'm very open to letting you write on your own topics but you should consult with me about doing so.

Grading Guidelines:

In many cases, I will simply give everyone credit who turns in the assignment. In cases where I decide to grade a short writing assignment, I will use these criteria:

1) Makes a good faith effort at wrestling with the assigned issue
2) Accurately represents the beliefs of others and the reasons for those beliefs
3) Contains clear sentences without grammatical mistakes or garbled phrasing
4) Properly cites any words or ideas borrowed from others (any citation format is acceptable as long as the source is noted)
5) Meets the length requirement

Grading Rubric:

Very Good (√+, 100) Your paper exceeds expectations by demonstrating especially careful or original thinking
Decent (√, 85) Your paper meets the expectations for the assignment as listed above.
Falling Short (√-, 65) Your paper fails to meet at least one of the expectations listed above.
Rewrite Under some circumstances, I may not grade your paper but instead request that you rewrite it. If this happens, you should rewrite it within one week of getting it back. There will be no penalty if this happens on the first paper. On subsequent papers, it will result in a 10% penalty. You may refuse to rewrite it, in which case you should turn back in the original paper and I will assign a grade.

Plagiarism rules (below) apply to these response papers. I advise you not to consult sources outside of the assigned course readings in writing these papers. There is no rule against doing so, but it probably will not help, and at any rate is not expected of you. If you do use any outside source, you are responsible for appropriately citing it and supplying a “Works Cited” page in some accepted format (e.g. MLA, Chicago, APA). Failure to do so will count as plagiarism.

Feel free to discuss your papers with other students in the class and with me. If you do so, simply make a note of that in some way (such as a footnote saying, “Anita Gonzalez helped me...”
develop the response below” or “This idea came from Anita.”). You may not collaborate with others on the actual writing of the paper itself.

Students who are unsatisfied with a score they initially earn on a response paper should ask me what can be done to improve that score. I may offer to replace the score based on further work on the paper.

IX. Make-ups

Quizzes and in-class assignments cannot be made up. Part of their purpose is to give credit to those who come to class prepared. If you miss them, it means you weren't in class at all, so you shouldn't get credit as if you were. On the other hand, sometimes people do miss class for good reasons. As such, I'm happy to drop your 2 lowest grades in this category.

In general it is also not possible to make up the final exam except when planned with me in advance or in case of a genuine emergency (as determined by me). I reserve the right to request documentation of such emergencies by legitimate authorities (e.g. not mom or dad).

Now, if you miss a midterm or a short writing assignment, I encourage you to do a make up! Any such make-ups need to be turned in before the next midterm or final exam after the missed assignment (so there are 3 deadlines for make-ups).

For make-up midterms, a penalty of up to 30% will be deducted from whatever score is earned. A student who has missed the midterm exam or paper deadline should contact me immediately.

If you miss a writing assignment, I may ask you to make it up by writing on a different topic. Therefore you must consult with me if you plan to make up a short writing assignment. 25% will be deducted from whatever score you earn on it. It is still totally worth it!

X. Withdrawal

The college's withdrawal deadline is Sept 30. If you wish to withdraw, you must take care of the paperwork yourself with your advisor and/or the registrar. However, feel free to ask my advice about whether you should do so. I will not be offended.

XI. Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

All of your work must be in accordance with the rules of the UWG Honor Code.

I have the right to fail you for the course for academic dishonesty. You may also be subject to more severe penalties from the administration including expulsion. In rare cases, I may choose a lesser penalty such as failure of the assignment. Academic dishonesty includes things like plagiarism, cheating on a test, copying someone else’s work and letting someone else copy your work.

Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It occurs when an author uses the words or ideas of others—whether a famous philosopher, an on-line source, or a friend—as if they were her own original thoughts. Using material found on the web without citation is an example of plagiarism.

Plagiarism may be unintentional. It can be avoided by always acknowledging one’s debt to others by citing the exact source of a quotation or paraphrase. You are morally and legally
obligated to give the original author credit. Doing so is a matter of fairness and is expected in academic writing.

Please ask if you have any questions about this policy.

XII. Further Policies

From time to time, I find a student’s assignment that can be instructive, either as an example of what to do or what not to do. If yours is one of those, I may use it for instructional purposes, now or in the future. (Your name would be removed.)

Everything in this syllabus can change (and something always does).

You are responsible for all changes given adequate notice, which will be posted on CourseDen.
COMMON LANGUAGE FOR COURSE SYLLABI
Updated June 30, 2015

Students should review the following information each semester.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

**Accessibility Services:** Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services](#).

**Center for Academic Success:** The [Center for Academic Success](#) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

**University Writing Center:** The [University Writing Center](#) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

ONLINE COURSES

UWG takes students’ privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the [UWG Online](#) site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the [Online/Off-Campus Student Guide](#).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the [UWG Cares](#) site. [Online counseling](#) is also available for online students.

HONOR CODE

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia
assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

**UWG EMAIL POLICY**

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

**CREDIT HOUR POLICY**

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).