Syllabus for *Introduction to Philosophy*

**University of West Georgia**

**PHIL 2010** Spring 2020 (3 credit hrs)

**Instructor:** Mr. W. R. Crawford, M.A. Phil.

**Location:** Carrollton Campus - M-W 8:00 a.m -9:15 a.m. PAFF_206.

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**Course Description:** This course is a critical exploration of topics such as knowledge and belief, God and the problem of evil, freedom and determinism, the right and the good, language and meaning, mind and body, appearance and reality, and man and the world.

**Course Prerequisites:** Satisfactory placement scores/READ 0099.

**Course TextBook:** Steven Hales, *This Is Philosophy: An Introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) [ISBN 9780470658833] (additional readings, videos, etc. will be provided as needed either in class, D2L, or both).

**Course Objectives:**

1. Define and distinguish among the philosophical terms and concepts used in the course.
2. Describe the views of at least three major philosophers from the Western tradition.
3. Contrast the competing views of major philosophers on some of the philosophical issues explored in the course.
4. Explain and critically assess the philosophical issues and theories explored in the course.
5. Discuss in both oral and written discourse the philosophical theories and issues explored in the course.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to

- discuss the views of at least three major historical figures of philosophy;
- critically analyze and explain a philosophical issue in written communications;
- incorporate and defend a philosophical position in oral communications.
Course Evaluation

Assignments (subject to change upon class size/constraints)
Course assignments will consist of required readings/media, One Weekly Reflection Discussion, and Two ‘Exams (Mid/Final). Readings will be from the textbook or made available through the course website/handouts. Most weeks will require a short Reflection Discussion (RDs) due by end-of-each-class - delivered in person. Reflection Discussions (RQs) are short writing assignments (one page; 500 words) simply engaging with prompt/topic(s) of class discussion for the week (These are found on your Courseden). I highly suggest that students "jot down" notes of main ideas during class in order to help provide structure to his/her Discussion Post. These will be submitted and graded through the course website. Midterm and Final ‘Exams:’ Students will collect all thoughts/summaries regarding topics of interest from the lectures up until the point of the exam week. These can include discussions, RDs, etc. and will culminate into a Midterm Exam. This process will be repeated for the Final exam week. Advice concerning construction of ‘Reflection Discussions (RDs) - Each class period, the student should compose one page of thoughts, objections, agreements, and interactions with the philosophical topic being discussed for that particular week. If the students performs this task each week the ‘Reflection Discussion’ will have “composed itself” by the time of the exam week in which it is due for grading.

Grading
Your final grade is your cumulative assignment grades in the following proportions:
Reflection Discussions 30%
Midterm Exam or Reflection Collection 35%
Final Exam Reflection Collection 35%
The numerical value for the final grade on a 100 point scale determines the final course grade. A is 90 or higher, B is 89-80, C is 79-70, D is 69-60, and F is any value below 60. There is no curve. Grades are available for inspection on the course website in order for students to monitor their own course progress. I will not respond to requests for me to email grades, but please email me if you have questions about the accuracy of the grade book or the grading criteria used.

Early Warning Program
University of West Georgia requires that all faculty members report their students’ progress throughout the course of the semester as part of the institution-wide Early Warning Program (EWP). The objective of the program is to support academic success by reviewing early indicators of satisfactory student progress. In accordance with EWP, faculty members provide the Registrar’s Office with academic reports of each student enrolled in their course(s) at checkpoints staggered throughout the semester. The following
success factors are reported at their corresponding checkpoint: Week 2: Notification of Non-attendance; Week 6: Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory Progress.

**Midterm grades**
A midterm grade of “S” or “U” will be posted on Banner/SCORE by Week 8 (see calendar). If you have a C or better average in the course, you will receive an “S.” A “D” or “F” will receive a “U.” The “S” or “U” is advisory only and does not affect your overall grade in the course. It is provided in order for you to make an informed decision about continuing in the course. See the course calendar for the Withdrawal Deadline.

**Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity**
Students shall conduct themselves always in a way conducive to academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, and falsification in all coursework. Students may be asked to provide sources for papers and to submit through Turnitin.com. Students should maintain possession of returned exams and not share with other students. Violations may result in penalties including no credit for the assignment, forfeiting extra credit, and failure in the course.

**Attendance and Absences**
Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. Contact me by email, in advance if possible, if your personal circumstances will have you absent. Requests for excused absences should be emailed to the instructor, in advance and by email when possible. Regardless whether your absence is excused or unexcused, you are responsible for finding out what you missed from another student or from the course website. If you have missed class due to an emergency, an illness or injury requiring medical attention, or a death in the immediate family, your absence is excused, though I may request written verification (for example, a note from a doctor). Other situations may be excused at the instructor’s discretion. Both unexcused tardiness of more than five minutes and unexcused early departure from class count as unexcused absences. Excused absences for missing class do not excuse missing assignments submitted through D2L; requests for late submission must be requested separately. If you have missed an in-class assignment due to an excused absence, no penalty but also no credit will be given for the assignment.

**Completing assignments**
All readings and assignments should be completed before class. A missed assignment may be made up for credit only if the conditions for an excused absence are met. All assignments, including late assignments but excepting the Final Exam, due by 5pm on the last class day of the semester.

**Conduct**
I expect students to participate in class discussions. I require that every student act with respect toward other students and the instructor. Students who do not comply with this requirement will receive one warning, after which further
violations may result in no credit on the related assignment, dismissal from class, or forfeiting opportunity for extra credit. Failure of respect includes flagrant uncharity (especially argumentative uncharity) toward other students, failing to silence a cell phone, or using an electronic device (for example, a laptop or smartphone) during class without permission. No food or drink in the classroom.

**Communication**
Important communication for the course will be through the course website. Students should check email and D2L course announcements at least twice weekly. I expect a response to emails requiring a reply within two business days; students may expect a reply to emails sent to the instructor within two business days.

**Accommodation**
University of West Georgia has resources available for students with certain disabilities. If you believe you are entitled to accommodation due to a disability, please discuss this need with me early in the term. Accommodations (such as providing materials in alternative formats, ensuring physical access to classrooms or being sensitive to interaction difficulties that may be posed by communication and/or learning disabilities) are made through Student Support Service. For more information please contact:
https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php

**Special circumstances**
Federal regulations state that if a student receiving financial aid did not attend classes and received failing grades, then the grades were not earned and financial aid needs to be reduced accordingly. Please be advised that any student receiving a 0.00 GPA will be required to prove that the 0.00 GPA was earned by attending classes or completing requirements for each class. Students who have earned at least one passing grade for the semester will not be affected by this regulation. If a student has properly withdrawn from all classes, the student’s financial aid should be adjusted from the time they signed the withdrawal form. If you are a student in Learning Support courses and you withdraw from a Learning Support course, all of your courses will be dropped.

**Tobacco-Free Campus**
University of West Georgia prohibits the use of tobacco products on any property owned, leased, or controlled by UWG. All faculty, staff, students, visitors, vendors, contractors, and all others are prohibited from using any tobacco products (i.e., cigarettes, eCigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, etc.) while on UWG property.

**Problems and “Campus Carry”** - link - https://www.usg.edu/hb280
Please know that if you have a problem or concern with any aspect of the class, I want to hear from you about it and, if possible, settle any issue.

**Disclaimer**
The calendar, schedule, and policies on this syllabus are subject to change. Students should consult the course website for the current calendar of
assignments and syllabus.

Course Map for Introduction to Philosophy (tentative)
1. What is Philosophy?
2. Logic and Truth: What is Truth? How Do We Reason? Why care about either?
3. Epistemology: How can we Know; Where do we Begin? What is Knowledge? What do we Know?
5. Ethical Theories and Ethical Topics: What is Right? What is Good?

The surest way by which to maintain control/knowledge of select readings and assignments will be had by consistently visiting the syllabus - and by asking your instructor.

Outline:

Week 1: What is Philosophy; Why do it?
"Quid est Veritas" What is Truth and the Principle of Contradiction
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaFsa31gGtc
Recommended Reading: Principle Of Contradiction - LINK - And - http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/mcm/ph/ph_01philosophyyouth5.html
Discussion Prompt: “Why is the LNC so foundational to, literally, all thought?”

Week 2: What is Logic? Informal Fallacies
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/mcm/ph/ph_01philosophyyouth8.html
Recommended Reading: ‘Critical Thinking‘ - LINK
Discussion Prompt: Identify three Informal Fallacies on either Facebook, CNN, or FOX, websites.

Week 3: Epistemology: What Can We Know/Skepticism
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: TIP: 243-261; “Against Skepticism,” Augustine 1) LINK 2) LINK
Discussion Prompt: How are both radical Skepticism and Scientism Self-Defeating?

Week 4: Epist. Continued: Rationalism, Empiricism, Descartes/Hume/Kant/Aristotle-Aquinas
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: See above TIP.
Recommended Reading: A-T realism - A-T Realism theory
Discussion Board Prompt: Is it possible to move from ‘the head’ to the ‘real world’ on Rationalism?

Week 5: Is there reason to believe God exists? Does it matter?
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: TIP: 88-95 and Craig video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWRoJ9myovY
Recommended Reading: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV4oIqnaXlG
Discussion Prompt: What do you believe to be Craig’s most potent point? Why?

Week 6: GOD: Cosmological/Teleological/Moral Arguments
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: TIP: 67-87 and DEBATE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o
Recommended Reading: Modern version of a Teleological Arg: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmIc42oRjm8
Discussion Prompt: Share your insights and reactions to the debate between Craig and Hitchens.

Week 7: Is there reason to believe that God does not exist?
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: TIP: 95-106
Recommended Reading: Bertrand Russell
Discussion Prompt: Are you close with any Theists/Atheists? What are your conversations like?

Week 8: Is there reason continued: Problem Of Evil; Pluralism; Falsification, etc.
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: Theology and Falsification - Lewis - MORALITY
Recommended Reading: Brett Kunkle - Everyone's Problem
Discussion Prompt: If Lewis is correct, then why does the P.O.E, if used against God, seem to fail?

Week 9: ETHICS: GROUNDING AND OVERVIEW
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: “Cruel Logic” - Video link AND Crawford: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHFyXmlzqhA
Recommended Reading: Continued from above Part 2: http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2011/07/does-morality-depend-on-god.html
Discussion Prompt: How are the ‘Cruel Logic’ video and the Crawford video making the similar claim(s)?

Week 10: ETHICS: RELATIVISM
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Recommended Reading: Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6s98Z4tlunA
Discussion Board Prompt: What is logically flawed with the claim that “One ought not impose one's morality”?

Week 11: ETHICS: UTILITARIANISM
Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.
Required Reading: TIP: 27-42
Recommended Reading: [Oderberg Link](#)
Discussion Prompt: Should one take into account the consequences of his actions? Does this prove Utilitarianism?

**Week 12: ETHICS: DEONTOLOGY (KANTIAN)**

*Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.*

Required Reading: TIP: 42-52
Recommended Reading: TBA
Discussion Prompt: How does Kant identify what is Absolutely, and Objectively, wrong?

**Week 13: ETHICS: DIVINE COMMAND THEORY**

*Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.*

Recommended Reading: TBA
Discussion Prompt: Are all Theistic Ethical theories somehow traceable back to DCT? Why or why not?

**Week 14: ETHICS: NATURAL LAW AND VIRTUE THEORY**

*Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.*

Recommended Reading: [http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/mcm/ph/ph_01philosophyyouth9.html](http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/mcm/ph/ph_01philosophyyouth9.html)
Discussion Prompt: Kant's Ethical system is proudly “Rational.” Is the NLT “Rational” as well?

**Week 15: CONCLUSIONS And FINAL**

*Lecture: Listen to the on-campus lectures.*

FINAL: Presentation or Cumulative “EXAM”
Activity: Students will compose, and (possibly) upload, a video of themselves responding to list of questions.