



Introduction to Philosophy PHIL 1301

Fall, 2025

Sul Ross State University

Department of Behavioral & Social Sciences

SYLLABUS

Professor: Benjamin Barrientes Email: benjamin.barrientes@sulross.edu

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202 Lawrence Hall Office Hours are prior to class (and by appointment)

Class meets in Lawrence Hall Room 201 Tuesdays/Thursdays 2-3:15

Course Description:

This “Introduction to Philosophy” course examines topics in Western Philosophy through the lens of influential thinkers. Your professor does not presuppose prior experience in philosophy but does affirm Aristotle’s first line in his *Metaphysics* that “men, by nature desire to know.”

Course Objectives: upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate about the various topics that shape the discipline of philosophy;
2. Think critically about the foundations of the Western Philosophical Traditions;
3. Think critically about their own philosophical ideologies;
4. Appreciate and **respect** the views of their classmates;
5. Through group inquiry, participate in a dialogue that started many years ago;
6. Work on reaching a level of logical precision in expressing and writing their ideas.

Texas Domain III Competency 19: The educator understands and applies critical thinking knowledge and skills to plan, organize/implement instruction, and assess learning.

Texas Domain III Competency 23: The educator understands and applies knowledge of core concepts including ways that individuals and groups achieve their goals through distinct and unique systems and approaches for thought.

Americans with Disability Act Statement:

To receive accommodation for exams or assignments, proper documentation must first be provided to the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services. Students must contact Mary Schwarze-Grisham, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and she'll get back to you as soon as she can during working hours), or email mary.schwarze-grisham@sulross.edu. The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and the mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Attendance and Plagiarism Policies:

Each class meeting informs subsequent class meetings. Participation and regular class attendance is the minimal expectation of each student. Please communicate to inform me that you will miss class.

Sul Ross State University has a zero-tolerance policy on cheating, plagiarism, or collusion. Procedures for dealing with these acts are addressed in the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy. Plagiarism is a serious matter; thus, if anyone needs “clarification” please let me know.

Libraries:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers free resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website: library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123). The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website: library.swtjc.edu. The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

Our duty to each other:

The atmosphere in our classroom requires that we are each accountable for what we say and what we do. Please conduct yourself in a manner that demonstrates your observance of the Golden Rule. The University should be a place where we exchange ideas and points of view on a variety of issues. We should all feel comfortable and safe by trusting our atmosphere to express our point of view with clarity, precision,

and measured language. *With the advent of email, communication between teacher and student is better served. I will respond to your communication(s); I expect you to respond to mine.

No Electronic Devices: Our classroom will resemble a Seminar. Our subject matter is complicated, our reading is dense, our discussions will be lively (and stimulating); thus, it is necessary to omit the trappings (and distractions) of electronic devices during our meetings.

There is no required textbook for this course (mostly all readings are part of the public domain; you will be furnished with some readings that are not easy to locate online).

Grading: Each student will take two exams: Midterm and Final Exam

Midterm Exam: 35% of your grade

Final Exam: 35% of your grade

Class Participation: 15% of your grade

Philosophy Journal: DUE EACH FRIDAY: 15% of your grade

Grading System: A:90-100; B: 80-89; C:70-79; D: 60-69; F: 59 and below.

Philosophy is the mother of all discipline. Essentially, doing work in Philosophy is necessary to develop critical thinking skills and critical writing skills. I will attempt to define philosophy in as many ways as possible. Our initial working definition for Philosophy is: the human activity of examining questions for which there are no acceptable answers.

It is my belief that “words” make a difference. You’ve been doing Philosophy all of your lives; thus, you may want to invest time in getting to know “words” that are *utilized* in expressing ideas. Doing this will help you read purposefully. You want to acclimate yourself to reading with the idea that you will improve reading comprehension. Changing your reading habits will enable you: to think critically, examine your ideology, write better, ask interesting questions, and grow as a human being. Thinking, feeling and engaging in discussion is what human beings *can* do to improve the world. Marx famously claimed that the task of the philosopher is “not to interpret the world but to change it.”

A Course Schedule will be separately available to all students the first week of the semester.