THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Course Syllabus

PHIL 3331-001 (and 061): Modern Philosophy
Combined section course: 061 is online | 001 meets MW 10:10-11:05
Instructor: Gregory L. Bock, Ph.D.
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Required Textbooks:

Meditations on First Philosophy – Descartes ISBN: 9781107665736
Leviathan – Hobbes ISBN: 9781624665202
Second Treatise of Government – Locke ISBN: 9780915144860
Fifteen Sermons – Butler ISBN: 9780199657568
Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion – Hume ISBN: 9780872204027
Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals – Kant ISBN: 9781107401068

Catalog Description:

A study of the main issues and movements in philosophy from the seventeenth century through the twentieth century

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to...
1. articulate a basic understanding of the questions and importance of philosophy
2. identify the precursors to the philosophical ideas of the modern period
3. explain the influence of modern philosophy on contemporary thinking
4. explain the importance of Descartes' metaphysics and epistemology
5. articulate Hobbes' view of human nature
6. discuss Butler's moral philosophy
7. explain Hume's skepticism
8. summarize and evaluate Hume's argument against miracles
9. explain and apply Kant's moral philosophy

Grading Scale:

A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F=less than 60%

Grading:

Initiator Posts (6 @ 100 points each)	500 points (lowest dropped)
Response Post Assignments (6 @ 10 pts each)	50 points (lowest dropped)
Participation	100 points
TOTAL	650 points

Assessment:

Discussion Board Assignment: You'll make a minimum of six contributions to each discussion board: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6 total posts (minimum). These posts will be spread out over three days, for example 1 initiator post on Friday night, 2 response posts on Saturday, and 3 response posts on Sunday. In other words, I want to see you posting to the board on at least three different days.

INITIATOR POSTS: You'll write one initiator post for each of the six modules. An initiator post is one that starts a thread based on the discussion prompt on the discussion board. A good post will offer a clear point of view and support it with material from the book.

I require a minimum of three direct quotes from the relevant reading. These quotes should be followed by a parenthetical citation, such as "yada, yada" (Kant, 35) and an explanation of what the quote means in your own words. Don't just drop the quote in and move on without discussing it. Since there are different versions of each book, I expect a reference list at the end of your post so that I can look up your citation if necessary. References need to be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). See here for CMS examples and see how proper citations affect the grade in the rubric below.

The post must be at least 500 words. There's no maximum word count, but keep in mind that grades are not based on quantity of words but on demonstrated comprehension and critical thinking. The grading rubric below shows exactly what is expected.

The due dates for initiator posts can be found on the discussion boards.

You must post first in order to view other posts. The edit function will be disabled. If you want to edit after posting, you may reply in the thread with corrections or request that I delete the post. There must be a very good reason for deletion. For grading purposes, I consider your first post to be the initiator post even if it is blank or incomplete.

Late initiator posts can be turned in for a lower grade before the board officially closes. A late penalty of half a letter grade per day applies in each case unless accompanied by a valid excuse (e.g. a doctor's note that indicates a serious illness). *Connectivity issues are not valid excuses for late work unless they are the university's fault.*

DISCUSSION BOARD RUBRIC (INITIATOR POSTS)	
0-25 points	Point of view is clear and well-supported.
0-25 points	At least three direct quotes made to relevant course readings. Quotes must be cited correctly.
0-25 points	Conveys respect for other points of view even if it takes a contrary position.
0-25 points	The grammar is polished, and citation style conforms to Chicago Manual of Style.

RESPONSE POSTS: In addition to the initiator post, you'll write at least five response posts for each module (for a total of 6 contributions: 1 initiator post + 5 response posts = 6). A response post is one that replies to a classmate's post and continues the conversation. One that ends the conversation or just says "I agree" in so many words does not qualify as a response. Good posts carry on the conversation in an interesting and relevant way and draw other students into the discussion. The minimum requirements for receiving credit for a response post are the following:

1. The post is 50 words.

2. The post is relevant to the thread.

3. The post ends with a question.

Posts under 50 words don't count toward the required number of response posts. If you happen to post a few that are under 50 words, just make sure to post a few extra posts that are 50 words.

If some of your posts don't end in a question, a deduction of **1 point** will be applied to the response post grade.

The penalty for not spacing out your posts over three days will be applied to the response post grade as a **3 point** deduction.

If you post extra response posts that meet the requirements above, you'll receive extra credit of 1 point each post up to five posts.

Response posts are due after you post your initiator post and before the board closes.

Late response posts will not be accepted. Once the board closes, there are no further opportunities to complete the assignment, so it's advisable to post early to avoid unforeseen events such as last-minute technical problems. Encountering technical issues is not a valid excuse for late work, unless the issues are the university's fault.

The discussion board is the focus of this class, the main learning tool (notice the percentage of the grade). I will be active on the boards and hope to be involved in some rich conversations. Be sure to return regularly to the threads to reply to questions and comments, especially in your

own thread. Learn how to search for posts, including mine, by using the search function on the board. When I reply to a post, I often take a contrary position as devil's advocate. My response to your posts should be interpreted as "constructive" and an opportunity to strengthen your argument. It doesn't mean that I don't like you or that I have a different viewpoint or political stance than you. In fact, it is nearly impossible to figure out my personal beliefs from my posts. If I express a point of view, I do so for teaching purposes, to help you think more carefully about your own position and to extend the conversation. By the way, it is possible to get an A in this class and disagree with my personal philosophy. In fact, it happens quite regularly.

Cases of plagiarism earn an automatic zero and a possible F in the course. Plagiarized posts may be sent to UT Tyler Judicial Affairs to receive additional consequences. In short, do your own work, and be careful to give credit to the original author when you quote or paraphrase. You may use A.I. to study for this assignment, but you cannot use A.I. to write your post for you. You must be the author of your post.

Participation: This assignment is different, depending on whether you've signed up for the class in its online or in-class (on-ground) format.

ONLINE STUDENTS: For online students, this assignment requires completing the weekly reading quizzes. There are ten quizzes, and they correspond roughly to the first ten weeks of readings. These quizzes can be found under the Quizzes tab or in Modules. The quizzes are open book but timed. You must work alone and not receive help from the Internet or a friend.

IN-CLASS STUDENTS: In-class students will be graded for their attendance and in-class participation. On-ground students do not need (and aren't permitted) to take the online reading quizzes in place of coming to class. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's reading and ask a question about the reading. I will begin each class session by taking time to answer questions about the reading.

Course Policies:

Late work policy: Assignments must be submitted by the deadline. A penalty of half a letter grade per day up to two letter grades will be assessed for late assignments. This penalty will be waived only under special circumstances (e.g. a serious illness accompanied by a doctor's note).

Communication policy: The best way to communicate with the instructor is through UT Tyler e-mail (gbock@uttyler.edu) or in Canvas. Students can expect replies within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. Students who do not receive a reply within this timeframe should attempt to contact the instructor again. The instructor communicates with the class via Canvas emails and announcements. It is important that students check their email and allow push notifications for class announcements.

Class conduct policy: The subject matter of this class can make some people hot under the collar. This said, all comments and behavior must be classroom appropriate. What does "classroom appropriate" mean? It does *not* mean that students cannot express unpopular opinions. It means practicing reasoning and logical argumentation. It means being civil and listening with respect. Insults, snide comments, name-calling, cutting someone off, derogatory tones, sarcasm, ridicule, cussing, vulgarity, personal attacks, racial slurs, misogynistic remarks, etc. will not be allowed. If you are unsure about what counts as disrespectful, consult the instructor or the Golden Rule. The instructor will act as the final word on what is or is not classroom appropriate. Violators may be ejected from the class.

Cell phone policy (face-to-face sections): Mobile devices can be used in the classroom if it is related to what is going on in class. If you have an electronic textbook or plan to take notes on your device, please let me know early in the semester. They are permissible as long as they don't distract you or your classmates from the lesson.

Arriving late or leaving early policy (face-to-face sections): Arriving on time can sometimes be challenging, but it is better to be late than never. However, late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive. For this reason, please don't make a habit of it. If it becomes a regular issue, points will be deducted from the attendance grade.

Extra credit policy: Extra credit is available in the class but only on discussion boards and only when they're open. Each extra post (up to five max) will receive one point.

"It is what it is" final grade policy: Grades are final once the final grade percentage has been calculated in Canvas at the end of the semester. No changes will be made unless the instructor has made a mistake. Grades are not bumped up unless the student is within .5% of the next letter grade. For example, an 89.5% is an A. An 89.4% is a B. No extra credit opportunities will be given during the last week of class. The conditions for an "incomplete" are stated in the university handbook: "(a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due." The terms and deadline for satisfying an "incomplete" will be set by the instructor.

Plagiarism policy: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is taking credit for material that is not your own whether it is copied from a classmate, textbook, or online source. Plagiarism is cheating, and cheating is the way of the Dark Side. If that isn't enough of a deterrent in itself, plagiarizing will result in an F on the assignment and a possible F in the course. It could also mean suspension from the school. So, students should be sure to use proper citations and do their own work. If students are not sure whether something constitutes plagiarism, they should contact the instructor to ask about it before submitting the assignment. The penalty will apply whether the act of plagiarism is intentional or not. You may use A.I. to study for this class, but you cannot use A.I. to write your posts for you (or read the assigned readings for you).

UT TYLER HONOR CODE

I embrace honor and integrity.
Therefore, I choose not to lie, cheat or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.