"Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains.”
~ Alfred North Whitehead

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In addition to a concern with the goals, nature, and methods of philosophy, this course focuses on issues concerning philosophical theories of knowledge and reality, drawing on ideas from a variety of disciplines. Possible topics: the nature of philosophy, the problem of skepticism and knowledge, mind and personal identity, and the nature and existence of God. Emphasis is on the nature of philosophy and its relation to education, logic, and critical thinking.

II. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES:

A. Problem Learning Outcomes:

- This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

B. Exemplary Educational Objectives:

- Awareness of the scope and variety of texts dealing with various philosophical issues.
- Understanding of the historical and social contexts of philosophical movements.
- Ability to respond critically to works in philosophy.
- Ability to formulate, express, and support opinions on the philosophical issues covered in this course.
➢ Knowledge of cross-cultural influence of philosophy.

III. GRADE POLICIES, COURSE REQUIREMENTS, & TESTING INFORMATION:

A. Course Policies and Requirements:
   ➢ 25% Mid-Term Exam (Exam 1)
   ➢ 25% Research Response Paper to *Amusing Ourselves to Death*
   ➢ 25% Cumulative Final Exam (Exam 2)
   ➢ 25% Analysis Papers of Peter Akins vs. John Lennox Debate (God, science, and atheism) and William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz Debate (morality)

B. Attendance is expected. A complete attendance report may be filed with the student’s dean and the registrar with the final course grade. In fact, more than one absence, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of “F” for this course.

Please do not miss class! In view of your interests, too much is at stake.

C. All students are required to be present for announced exams. Any missed exam without a cogent documented excuse will be counted numerically as a zero (00). This is considerably lower than an average F.

D. Because of the nature of these exams over assigned readings and lecture material, it is in your best interest to attend class and proactively engage material, especially since each exam counts 33.3% towards your final grade.

E. Required Books:


1. This book will stimulate our thoughts regarding ultimate questions like:
   a. Where did we come from? (origin)
   b. What are we? Who are we? (identity)
   c. Why are we here? (meaning)
   d. How should we then live? (morality)
   e. What’s gone wrong with the world? (evil)
   f. What can be done to fix the problems of the world? (hope)

F. **Exam Information:**

- Each exam may involve multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short discussion, and/or essay. You need scantron (882E) and blue books for mid-term exam. Please bring writing utensil, scantron, and blue book. I will not be in a position to keep additional bluebooks, writing utensils, and 882E scantron. For final exam, all you need is 882 E scantron and number 2 pencil.

- Each exam will cover lecture material and assigned readings as dictated on course schedule or as directed by professor.

- I may add additional required readings as deemed appropriate. I will inform you if the additional material will be added to quizzes or exams when I distribute the material in class.

- Take good notes. Recordings of any sort are not allowed for class lectures (except for ADA compliance).

- Any student who has to miss the mid-semester exam must personally contact me with a cogent documented excuse to re-take the exam within two class days. Otherwise, you will receive no credit (00). If you miss the final exam, contact me to take the exam immediately; otherwise, you receive no credit for the exam (00).

G. **Assignment: Research Response Paper:**

- You will examine, summarize and critique the major arguments in *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman.

- This will be a 8-10 page paper. Cover sheet, proper citation, and bibliography is required. 12 size font. Romans/New Times. Proper Grammar and punctuation is expected.

- Paper is due 21 March. No exceptions! No exemptions.

H. **Two Analysis Papers over two debates:**

- You will take two classes to examine, summarize and critique the major arguments in two video debates on youtube:

- John Lennox vs. Peter Atkins on God, science, and atheism ("duelling professors"). Both scholars are from Oxford University and the debate is very interpersonal. 1.38 minutes long.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yx0CXmagQu0

➢ “Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?” William Lane Craig vs. Paul Kurtz. This debate took place at Franklin and Marshall College.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F6y_6fljAY

➢ Each debate will involve a 3-5 page paper totaling 6-10 page paper total. Cover sheet, proper citation, and bibliography, if any source used, is required. 12 size font. Romans/New Times. Proper Grammar and punctuation is expected. Both analyses may be put into one paper.

➢ Paper is due 21 March. No exceptions! No exemptions.

IV. GENERAL RULES:

➢ No use of cell-phones, text-messaging, games, I-Pods (or equivalent), social utilities, or internet in class. No use of any technological device (unless ADA) that may be a distraction to the learning process. Laptops used exclusively for class-notes are acceptable. Please silence cell-phones before class. **If you use the computer for other purposes than taking notes, then you will be asked to leave class.**

➢ No smoking or use of tobacco will be permitted in the classroom.

➢ All university rules governing academic dishonesty will apply.

➢ Lectures may not be taped, recorded, or video transcribed.

➢ No reading of newspapers, magazine, kindle books, and other materials for other classes.

➢ Respect your classmates and professor.

➢ If you have to step out to the restroom be sure to do so quietly.

➢ Do not bring attention to yourself.

➢ Attendance is expected. *In fact, more than one absent, whether excused or unexcused, means you will receive a final grade of “F” for this course.*

➢ I will be taking attendance at beginning of class. It is imperative that you be present and on-time.

➢ If you are late to class you must inform me at end of class or you will be counted as absent.
➢ If you are more than fifteen minutes late to my class, then you will be counted as absent.

➢ If you are gone more than 15 minutes from class, then you will be counted as absent.

➢ For every three times you are tardy to class (under 15 minutes), your excessive tardiness will be counted as one absence.

V. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

➢ Carefully read assigned work. Proactively bombard your assigned readings with the following questions: why, where, what, when, who, and so what?

➢ Consider making an outline of the major units of thought in your readings. As you formulate your outline from the reading, ask yourself the following question: “What do I see?” The more observations you make, the better your interpretation of the author’s position or claim may be. Afterwards ask, “What does it mean?”

➢ After you outline the author’s position/claim go back and see what arguments are being provided to support that position or claim. Keep asking yourself, “What is the issue?” Then consider what objections can be raised against that issue, position, or claim. Lastly, what replies can be given to defend the position or claim?

➢ You should consult with me as often as possible to make sure you are understanding the material. Do not wait until the day before a test to begin studying. This is not the kind of course for which you can cram and expect to do well. Take advantage of the office hours.

➢ Consider forming study groups to prepare for quizzes and exams.

➢ Those who sit front and central statistically do better on their exams.

➢ Try to read when you are at your best (e.g., if you are a “morning person”, then make a way to study philosophy in the morning and not late at night).

➢ Make sure you are able to contact another student for lecture material in case you happen to miss a class (es).

➢ Eight Strategies for First-Rate Studying:

   Read Thoughtfully
   Read Repeatedly
   Read Patiently
   Read Selectively
   Read Imaginatively
   Read Purposefully
   Read Acquisitively
Read Telescopically

If you want to improve your reading comprehension skills I would encourage you to purchase Mortimer J. Adler’s informative work, *How to Read a Book.*

10 maxims I encourage you to inculcate into your life in order to achieve academic success:

1. Be focused! Your energy, time, and discipline need to be bent on becoming the very best. Focus on what really counts. Do not allow yourself to become diverted by the trivial and unimportant.

2. Be holistic! Pro-actively make decisions and pursue interests in your daily life that will assist you in obtaining success. Your resources must always be redirected to your goal.

3. Be undivided! Do not separate one area of your life from another. Pursuing opposing interests may marginalize your success because it divides up your energy, time, resources, and attention.

4. Be determined! Academic progress is rough, ever so time-consuming, and ever so demanding. Meet every demand with a determination for excellence. Learn from your mistakes. Pick yourself up when you fail and press on!

5. Be resilient! Do not give up. You will perhaps fail some time or another during your program. You may even become depressed from the critical feedback you receive from your professors and peers. When those times come, and they do for most if not all, you must pick yourself up again-for accomplishing the goal is worth facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

6. Be sacrificial! Purposefully let go of those things that will hinder your success. Willfully discard every hindrance and degenerative influence that will keep you from achieving your goal with a passion for excellence. Routinely examine your life and see what is encouraging or discouraging you from reaching excellence.

7. Be healthy! Realize, as Aristotle states, that one area of your life impacts all other areas, whether intellectual, physical, or moral. Take very tender care of your mind, soul, and body. You need to strive to be holistically healthy—so if you are not mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy, then you may easily become fatigued, develop inner angst, regret, disappointment, and waiver in the completion of your goals. Remember, a good night sleep is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

8. Be supported! Cultivate a network of people who will exhort you to succeed! Develop relationships with peers who are also bent on achieving success.
9. Be excellent! Successful students realize the importance of cultivating a disposition, i.e., an inner character, which desires intellectual and moral excellence. Seek to desire excellence. Aristotle encourages us to do deeds of excellence until excellence becomes habitual in our personhood.

10. Be balanced! Learn how to balance “having fun” with “hard work.” Don’t ignore those opportunities to relax or play hard. In fact, pursue them! But do not allow those opportunities to displace your study opportunities. Remember, learning is pleasurable!

One of the dangers for those who do achieve success is the problem of malnourishment. Successful people may reach their long-term goals, but so many of them starve themselves in the process. Do not so focus on your goals that you miss out on dynamic opportunities that can nourish your person, inform your circumstance, grow your character, and enlarge your world. In other words, do not so focus on the future that you neglect the blessings that are right in front of you.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, & ASSIGNED READING:

Depending upon class context, I may alter our readings and topics. Notwithstanding, follow this outline unless otherwise directed by professor. Sometimes I may ask you to re-read certain chapters or portions from required readings or articles.

“When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
~Friedrich Nietzsche

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>I will be introducing you to some important ideas from the following books and authors:</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 February</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology: Ancient (Plato; Aristotle), Plato’s Republic</td>
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<td>Power of Ideas, Chapters 3-4.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Notes</td>
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<td>8 February</td>
<td>Medieval (Plotinus; St. Augustine; St. Aquinas)</td>
<td>Metaphysics &amp; Epistemology continued: Plato's Republic</td>
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<td>Stoicism and Epicureanism</td>
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<td>Berkeley; Leibniz; Spinoza; Locke; Hume; Kant; Reid</td>
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<td>15 February</td>
<td>Continental Philosophy: Critical Theory; Structuralism; Postmodernism; Post-Structuralism; American Pragmatism: Experience as the starting point; Analytic Fallacy (problem of reductionism)</td>
<td>Descartes' Meditations</td>
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<td>Power of Ideas, Chapters 7-9.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>BE ON TIME TO CLASS!</td>
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<td>Bring Scantron form 882 E, number 2 pencil, and bluebook essay.</td>
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<td>29 February</td>
<td>Dr. John Lennox vs. Dr. Peter Akins.</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, chapter 10</td>
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<td>This video debate is available on YouTube titled “Duelling Professors” Atheist and Oxford Professor Dr. Peter Akins (a chemist; atheist) debates theist and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox (a mathematician, philosopher, and atheism) on God, science, and atheism. This interpersonal debate is 1.38 hours long.</td>
<td>Begin reading Amusing Ourselves to Death.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>7 March</td>
<td>Spring Break is from 12 March to 20 March</td>
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<td>21 March</td>
<td>Introduction to Ethics: Virtue/Consequential Ethics</td>
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<td>Consequential Ethics; Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill); Egoism; Relativism; Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice</td>
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<td>Nicomachean Ethics</td>
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<td>Selection 10:2, Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (beginning on pg. 292)</td>
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<td>Continue reading Amusing Ourselves to Death</td>
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<td>Selection 10:6: Utilitarianism (beginning on pg. 299)</td>
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<td>Selection 10.7 Friedrich Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil (beginning on pg. 301).</td>
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- Begin reading *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman Assignment is due on 21 March. No exceptions.
- William Lane Craig (theist) Paul Kurtz (atheist; American pragmatist): *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?* Franklin & Marshall College. This debate is also 1:01 minutes long.
- We will not meet this Monday; Class will be watching video debate and writing a 3-5 page paper summarizing the arguments presented and a personal critique of their positions.
- This video debate is offered on YouTube.
- We will not meet this Monday; Class will be watching video debate. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman Assignment This paper is due on 21 March: No Exceptions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading/Lecture</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>(Carol Gilligan)</td>
<td>Amusing Ourselves to Death Paper is due today</td>
<td>Be working on epistemology paper.</td>
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<td>Your analysis paper on John Lennox vs. Peter Akins “Duelling Professors”) is due today. No exceptions.</td>
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<td>Your analysis paper on Paul Kurtz vs. William Lane Craig on “Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?” debate is due today. No exceptions.</td>
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<td>28 March</td>
<td>Continuation of Ethics</td>
<td>Plato's Republic; Gandhi’s Political Writings</td>
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<td>Refine and Review Epistemology Paper</td>
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<td>4 April</td>
<td>Conclusion to Ethics</td>
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<td>Review Reading</td>
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<td>11 April</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion Existence of God: Arguments; Evidences; Existential; Religious Experience Problem of Miracles (Hume); The Problem of evil (Finite God; Author of evil; Natural evil; Gratuitous Evil); Why Isn’t God’s existence more obvious?</td>
<td>St. Augustine Thomas Aquinas Pascal’s Pensees</td>
<td>Power of Ideas, Chapter 13 Read selection 13.2 Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas</td>
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</table>
Read “Aesthetic Universals” by Denis Dutton |
| 25 April | Existentialism (Theistic; Secular; Nihilism)  
Introduction to Aesthetics: Historical Survey: From Plato to Kuspit  
Read and discuss “Aesthetic Universals” by Denis Dutton | Re-read *Power of Ideas*, chapter 8, pages 145-89 on Existentialism and Nihilism.  
Read selection 8.1 “Existentialism and Humanism” by Sartre  
Read Selection 8.2 “The Myth of Sisyphus” by Albert Camus |
| 2 May | Aesthetics continued: Objective/subjective beauty; aesthetic value; aesthetic experience | Re-read *Power of Ideas*, chapter 9, pages 206-208 on Pragmatism  
*Power of Ideas: pages 566-572 on “What is Art? And Related Problems in Aesthetics” |
| 9 May  
December | FINAL CUMULATIVE EXAMINATION | 6:45pm-8:45pm | Need Scantron 882 E and number 2 pencil |

You must be on time for final exam!  
No exceptions!
VII. OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:

A. Topics, Assignments, Tests, Reading Materials, and Office Hours are subject to change per professor’s discretion.

B. I’m here for you. It is best to contact me by e.mail at sumphutos@gmail.com to make an office appointment.

C. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic honesty in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. According to the SFA policy located at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp,

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another person in another in act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Anyone who commits an act of cheating or plagiarism will receive an F for the course. Moreover, the student is required to meet with the instructor to discuss the incident, and a formal Report of Academic Dishonesty will be submitted to the student’s permanent file. If you feel the instructor’s determination of academic dishonesty is in error, there is an appeal process described in full at www.http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_appeals_students.asp.

D. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
E. **Students with Disabilities:**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**EXTRA NOTES:**

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.”

~ Dr. Seuss