

# Bowie State University

## PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy

SPRING  
2010

Instructor: Dr. Frederick B. Mills

301-860-3605

Office Hours

T/TH 08:15-09:25AM, 12:25-01PM,  
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### I. Prerequisites: ENGLISH 101

### II.

#### Course Description

**The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to the theory of knowledge, ethics, and metaphysics through a multicultural survey of the history of philosophy.**

**Non-traditional learning objective for Spring 2010: Basic Concepts in Buddhism**

### III.

#### Required Reading (Two books)

**Moore, B. N. and Bruder, K. (2005 or later). *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas, Sixth Edition*. New York: McGraw Hill. (Available at the Campus Book Store)**

**Thich Nhat Hanh. (1998). *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*. New York: Broadway Books. (Available at the campus Book Store)**

**BlackBoard is required because it will offer course materials.**

**The student should not rely exclusively on the textbook as a source for attaining the learning objectives because class lectures and discussion form**

**the most substantial amount of content for the course.**

#### **IV. SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND HOW COMPETENCY WILL BE DEMONSTRATED:**

**Objectives (outcomes)**

**Students will be able to:**

1. Compare the ethical theories of Plato and the Sophists; J. S. Mill; Kant; Saint Thomas Aquinas (or Kierkegaard); and Nietzsche.
2. Apply ethical theory by assessing debates on contemporary public policy issues, such as climate change.
3. Identify the distinguishing features of the the epistemology and metaphysics of Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Husserl (phenomenology).
4. Critically analyze a variety of approaches to the philosophy of mind, including early behaviorist, functionalist, computationalist (cognitivist); evolutionary biological and psychological perspectives; and distinguishing between the basic views of Hofstadter, Dennett, and Searle.
5. Compare selected non-traditional philosophy (Buddhism) to Plato's allegory of the cave.

**How the objectives will be demonstrated.**

Students will demonstrate the attainment of these competencies by: scoring an overall average of 'C' or above on essay and objective exams that test for

1. an understanding of basic concepts in three broad areas of philosophy: Ethics, Epistemology, and Metaphysics (including the philosophy of mind) and
2. an understanding of each particular learning objective above.

**V.**

#### **Teaching Methodology**

BlackBoard tools, Lecture/discussion, video, written response, internet and library assignments, debates, group discussions.

- **CLASSROOM RULES**

Any plagiarism will result in an 'F'(zero) for the assignment. This includes copying material from books, articles or the internet or citing any text without proper quotation

marks and reference identification.

Cell phones must be off during the entire class.

If you need to put your head down to nap you must leave the classroom.

After the first five minutes lateness is recorded as an absence unless there is inclement weather.

- **PERIODIC EXAMS.**

Periodic exams, approximately every two weeks, are not all announced and usually consist of essay questions. Students who are absent are still responsible for class discussion, assignments, or any materials they missed. These periodic exams are worth 50% of the final grade.

- **PERIODIC EXAM GRADING CRITERIA:** An essay will achieve a grade of 'A' (90-100) if it is well organized, demonstrates a knowledge of the assigned reading, demonstrates an understanding of class lecture and discussion, and offers a critical assessment of the concepts in question. There are few or no mechanical errors.

An essay will achieve a grade of 'B' (80-89) if it generally meets the criteria of an 'A' essay, except that it needs some improvement in one of the following areas: organization, mechanics, knowledge of the concepts, critical assessment.

An essay will achieve a grade of 'C' (70-79) if it demonstrates a basic but incomplete grasp of the concepts in question or has too many mechanical errors.

An essay will achieve a grade of 'D' (60-69) if it demonstrates only a minimal grasp of the concepts covered and does not show evidence of having read the assigned text and/or listened attentively to classroom lecture and discussion.

An essay that does not meet even the minimal requirements of a 'D' essay will receive a grade of 'F'.

Note: absence from class will not excuse a student from getting notes from peers and being prepared for an exam.

- **Make-up exams.**

There are no make-up exams for the midterm and final. If there is a documented medical emergency for the midterm exam, the midterm will simply not count towards the final grade at all. Instead, the final exam grade will increase in value from 25% to 50% of the final grade for the course. If there is a documented medical emergency for the final exam, the student may submit a written request for an incomplete within 24 hours of the final exam. This request must include proper documentation. The student must verify that the instructor received the request by phone or email.

Make-up PERIODIC exams are only given in the case of urgent issues such as medical emergencies. Students are responsible for arranging the make up date and time with the instructor by email. Make up exams must be taken within two weeks of the original exam. All make up exams are written essays.

- **MIDTERM**

The midterm is objective, multiple choice, cumulative and counts as 25% of the final grade.

- **FINAL EXAMS.**

The final exam is, objective, multiple choice and is a comprehensive assessment of the

student's achievement of the learning objectives. It can be taken only on the officially scheduled date. The Final counts as 25% of the final grade.

## **VII. Grading/Evaluation Procedures**

Average score of periodic exams: 50%

Midterm exam: 25%

Final exam: 25%

TOTAL: 100%

A = 90 - 100, B = 80 - 89, C = 70 - 79, D = 60 - 69, F = below 60.

MIDTERM GRADE = 50% (EXAMS) PLUS 50% (MIDTERM)

## **VIII. ADA Information**

Students who have a disability and who would like accommodations should report immediately to Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 1328 in the Business and Graduate Studies Building or call Dr. Michael S. Hughes, DSS Coordinator at 301-860-4067.

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## IX. Outline of Course

**Learning Units and Reading Assignments, Weekly.**  
**Expect periodic exams in class.**

<b>Week Assigned</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>	<b>Assigned Reading</b>
1-3	<p><b>Introduction: Philosophy as a way of Life</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buddhism (Thich Nhat Hanh).           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Role of Suffering (pp. 3-5).</li> <li>▪ The Middle Way (pp. 6-8).</li> <li>▪ The Four Noble Truths; Eight Fold Path (pp. 9-11).</li> <li>▪ The Causes of Suffering; Nirvana (pp. 19-23).</li> <li>▪ Stopping, Calming, Resting, Healing (pp. 24-27).</li> <li>▪ Mindfulness, Deep listening, Speech (pp. 64-83).</li> <li>▪ Right Action (pp. 94-98).</li> <li>▪ Right Diligence, Store Consciousness (pp. 99-100).</li> <li>▪ Samadhi (p. 107).</li> <li>▪ The Wave Analogy; Impermanence, Non-self (pp. 124-125).</li> <li>▪ The Three Dharma Seals. (pp. 131-142)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Plato. The Allegory of the Cave: From Ignorance to Knowledge. Compare Plato and Hanh.</li> </ol>	<p>Moore:(Buddhism) 498-503;(Plato) 40-43.            Hanh:See learning objectives.            Allegory of the Cave            Text:            Blackboard Course Materials.</p>

4-7	<p><b>I. Ethics (How ought I live?)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classical Greek (Plato).</li> <li>2. Utilitarianism (J. S. Mill).</li> <li>3. Rationalism: The Categorical Imperative (Kant).</li> <li>4. Religious (St. Thomas Aquinas or Soren Kierkegaard).</li> <li>5. Relativist: The Death of God (Nietzsche).</li> <li>6. Practical Ethics (ethics applied to current events).</li> </ol>	<p>Moore and Bruder, Introduction, 250-254;  Plato, 255-260;  Kant, 278-281; 295-296;  Mill, 281-285, 297-300;  Gyges Ring, see BlackBoard assignment for link.  Aquinas: BlackBoard or Kierkegaard, hand out.  Nietzsche 285-286, 300-303.  MIDTERM EXAM, objective, cumulative.</p>
8-11	<p><b>II. Early Modern Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge) and Metaphysics (Fundamental Features of the Universe).</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Methodology: Getting Started. Importance of method for the sciences.</li> <li>2. The Cartesian Method (systematic doubt) What can I know?</li> <li>3. Primary Qualities (observer independent) and Secondary (observer dependent) Qualities (John Locke). Representational Theory of Knowledge.</li> <li>4. Critique of Representationalism (Bishop George Berkeley).</li> <li>5. A Note on Hobbe's and Materialism.</li> <li>6. Critique of Metaphysics (David Hume).</li> <li>7. What is phenomenology?</li> </ol>	<p>Moore and Bruder, (Descartes) 103-109, 124-126;  (Hobbes) 109-111;  (Locke) 117-120;  (Berkeley) 121-123, 131;  (Hume) 133-139, 148-150.  On phenomenology, 174-180; other assigned reading.</p>

12-14	<p><b>III. Philosophy of Mind (Are we machines?)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do we explain conscious experience? (John Searle on the four features of the mental.)</li> <li>2. Behaviorist Strategy and its failures (lecture on behaviorism).</li> <li>3. Mind--Brain Identity theory.</li> <li>4. Computational functionalism. (lecture on the Symbol System Hypothesis).</li> <li>5. The Turing Test (see Hofstadter, Coffee House).</li> <li>6. Are we natural born cyborgs?</li> </ol>	<p>Internet Assigned Reading: <u>Douglas R. Hofstadter.</u> Moore 231-238; Searle, assigned reading; Andy Clark, assigned reading. Mind Project Materials (see Blackboard course information for link).</p>
15	REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM.	REVIEW MATERIALS.

## **XI. General Educational Competencies:**

### **i. Written and Oral Communications**

- a. Analyze and discuss critical issues and recurring themes in the discipline.
- b. Make interpretations and present those ideas in writing.
- c. Employ appropriate word choices and diction in oral and written communication.
- d. Conduct research and evaluate information using the appropriate methods of the discipline.

### **ii. Scientific and quantitative reasoning**

- a. Analyze and understand the early modern foundations of scientific objectivism.

### **iii. Critical Analysis and Reasoning**

- a. Systematically evaluate facts, opinions, assumptions and theories from the discipline.
- b. Apply skills in analysis, synthesis and problem solving.
- c. Apply logical reasoning in the examination and resolution of tasks.

### **v. Information Literacy**

- a. Identification of key concepts and terms that describe the information needed.
- b. Selection of the most appropriate investigative methods for accessing needed information.

## **X.**

### **Student Outcomes Relevant to GENED Categories**

1. Students will write periodic essays per week in order to demonstrate the ability to interpret, analyse and synthesize philosophical issues and key terms in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. [GENED i.a,b,c; iii. a,b; v. a]
2. Students will evaluate on objective and essay exams the claims of metaphysical physicalism, phenomenalism, and dualism in order to demonstrate an understanding of basic problems in the natural and social sciences. [GENED i. a,d; ii. a; iii. a, b].
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of indirect realist, realist, and phenomenalist views of the theory of knowledge by solving a written exam problem using an ordinary perceptual experience. [GENED i. a, c; iii. a, b, c]

4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the basic idea of evolutionary cognitive neuroscience and its methodology by correctly answering 80% of exam questions on the philosophy of mind and its relation to allied sciences. [GENED i. d; iii. a, b; v. a]
5. Students will use the Mind Project web site to investigate the concept of computational functionalism and demonstrate an understanding of this concept on exam questions. [GENED i.d; v. a. b.]
6. Students will compare a non-traditional philosophical theme with a traditional theme in reading response essays. [GENED i. a, b, c; iii. a].

## **XII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **CONTEMPORARY**

Suggested supplementary texts:

Soccio, Douglas J. (2007). *The Archetypes of Wisdom*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Mitchell, Helen Buss. (2008). *Roots of Wisdom*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Other texts:

Atherton, M. (1994). *Women philosophers of the early modern period*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Blackburn, S. (1995). *The Oxford dictionary of philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bruder, K., and Moore, B. N. (2002). *Philosophy: The power of ideas*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Dennett, D. (1991). *Consciousness explained*. New York: Little Brown.

English, P. & Kalumba, K. (1996). *African philosophy: A classical approach*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kenny, A. (1994). *The Oxford history of western philosophy*. London: Routledge.

Hurley, P. (2006). *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. Mason, OH: Wadsworth

Lewis, D. L., (Ed.). W. E. B. Du Bois: A reader. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

Mandell, N., (Ed.). (1995). Feminist Issues: Race, Class, and Sexuality. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall.

Rauhut, Nils Ch. (2004). Ultimate Questions: Thinking about philosophy. Pearson Education, Inc.

Sterba, J. P. (2005). The Triumph of Practice over Theory in Ethics. New York: Oxford University Press.

Urmson, J. U. O. and Ree, J., (Eds.) (1995). The concise encyclopedia of western philosophy.

Waller, B. N. (2006). Coffee and Philosophy. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

## **CLASSICAL**

Aristotle (1984) *Metaphysics*. In J. Barnes (Ed.), *The complete works of Aristotle: Vol. 2*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ayer, A. J. (1946). *Language, truth, and logic*, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Dover.

Berkeley, G. (1988). *Principles of human knowledge/three dialogues*. In R. Woolhouse, (Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

Burnet, John. (1930). *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th Ed. London: Macmillan.

Copleston, F. C. (1965) *History of philosophy*; 9 vols. New York: Doubleday.

De Beauvoir, S. (1974). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.

Descartes, R. (1968). *Philosophical works*, in two volumes (E. S. Haldane & G. R. T. Ross, Trans.). Cambridge: The University Press.

Dreyfus, H. (1990). *Being in the world: A commentary on Heidegger's "Being in Time," Division 1*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford.

Epictetus (1983). *The handbook of Epictetus* (N. P. White, Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.

James, W. (1979). *The will to believe*. (F. H. Burkhardt, Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1977) *Basic writings*. New York: Harper & Row.

Hobbes, T. (1930) (F. J. E. Woodbridge, Ed.). New York: Scribners.

Kant, I. (1959). *Foundations of the metaphysics of morals* (R. P. Wolff, Ed.) Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Kierkegaard, S. (1986). *Fear and trembling*. New York: Penguin.

Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E. and Schofield, M. (1983). *The presocratic philosophers: A critical history with a selection of texts*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Locke, J. (1959). *An essay concerning human understanding* (A. C. Fraser, Ed.) New York: Dover.

Mill, J. S. (1982). *Utilitarianism*. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Nagel, T. (1987). *What does it all mean?: A very short introduction to philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1978). *A Nietzsche reader* (R. J. Hollingdale, Trans.). New York: Penguin.

Plato. (1961). *The collected dialogues of Plato* (E. Hamilton & H. Cairns, Eds.). New York: Bollingen Foundation.

Spinoza, B. (1930). *Spinoza selections* (J. Wild, Ed.) New York: Scribners.

Vlastos, Gregory (1991). *Socrates: Ironist and moral philosopher*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Waithe, M. E. (Ed.) (1987, 1989, 1991, 1995) *A history of women philosophers*, 4 vols. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff/Kluwer Press.

West, C. (1989). *The American evasion of philosophy, a genealogy of pragmatism*. London: Macmillan.

## **Web sites**

For the philosophy documentation center see: [DOC CENTER](#) This site can also be used as a reference tool.

## **Some publishers of books on philosophy**

For MIT press see: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/>

For Prentice Hall see: <http://www.prenhall.com/>

For Blackwell see: <http://www.blackwellpub.com/>

## **XIII. Announcements**

Modifications to course: The instructor reserves the right to modify the organization and grading of this course to adjust for any unforeseen circumstances.

English Proficiency Examination: After completing ENGL 101 and 102, Composition and Literature I and II, students must take and successfully pass the Bowie State University English Proficiency Examination. Transfer students who completed their English composition requirements at another university should take the English Proficiency Examination during their first semester of enrollment at the University.