**PHIL 1103, Introduction to Philosophy**

**CR# 63775**

**Fall 2020**

Class Location: Online, Web-Assisted Instructor: Michele Merritt, Ph.D.

Class Meeting Times: Variable Office: Blackboard Collaborate

Section: 003 Office Hours: by appointment

Email: [mmerritt@astate.edu](mailto:mmerritt@astate.edu)

**Course Description**

Basic problems of philosophy based upon readings in the works of selected leading philosophers. A prerequisite for upper level philosophy. This course is intended to introduce students to the fundamental ideas, principles, and history of philosophy. We will examine questions such as *How can we tell the difference between true and false claims?, What is real?, Who are we and what makes us different than other animals?, What is justice? What should we do if we want to be ‘good’?* By attempting to better understand how others have tried to answer these perennial questions, students will also learn to develop their own answers and in so doing, will sharpen their reflective and critical reasoning skills.

**Learning Outcomes**

Developing an appreciation of the arts and humanities

GOAL: Students should develop an appreciation for the arts and humanities. They

should be aware of the role of art and literature in human civilization and contemporary

culture.

OUTCOMES: Students will be able to recognize works of literature or fine art and place them in their historical, cultural, and social contexts, and interpret works of fine art or literature.

**Course-Specific Learning Outcomes**

This course satisfies the following general education goal for the arts and humanities: to develop a lifelong appreciation of the arts and the humanities. Expected student learning outcomes are that students should be able to 1) recognize works of literature or fine art and place them in their historical, cultural, and social contexts, and 2) interpret works of fine art or literature.

Other learning goals of the course include, but are not limited to:

* Learning to integrate ideas into a coherent argument. (This supports one of A-State's university-wide goals, namely, Thinking Critically)
* Develop and hone the ability to interpret works of philosophy. (This supports one of A-State’s General Education Goals, namely, Developing an Appreciation of the Arts and Humanities.)
* Reading critically. (This supports Philosophy B.A. Goal #1: students will develop the critical skills necessary to coherently discuss and evaluate various philosophical figures and ideas.)

**Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

Besides the required assignments described below, student learning outcomes will be assessed by way of a post-test designed to measure improvement in each outcome over the duration of the course.

**Required Materials**

Online readings, videos, handouts. See Blackboard.

**Grading Scale**

90-100 points = A

80-89 points = B

70-79 points = C

60-69 points = D

Below 60 points = F

**Assignments and Grading Distribution**

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| Assignment | Points Possible | % of Total Grade |
| Reading Journal Entries | 150  (each journal entry is worth 10 points) | 15 |
| Critical Analysis Projects | 450  (3 required projects; each project is worth 150 points) | 45 |
| Quizzes | 150  (3 quizzes; each quiz is worth 50 points) | 15 |
| Debate | 50 | 5 |
| Final Exam | 200 | 20 |

**Description of Assignments**

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| Reading Journal Entries  For nearly every assigned reading, you will answer the same set of reading questions, in the form of a journal entry. The purpose of these journal entries is to demonstrate your reading comprehension as well as provide you with concise summaries of the readings to better prepare you for other assignments and the final exam. The journal entries are due *before I provide lectures about the relevant readings.* There are 18 possible journal entries of which I will count 15. In other words, you can skip a few, or, if you do terribly on a few of them, it should not hurt your overall grade. Because three are dropped, there are no ‘make-ups’ under any circumstances. Please consult the schedule below to see when each journal entry is due.  The questions you will answer for each reading are: 1. What are your reactions to this reading; in other words, what did it make you question or think about more deeply? 2. What do the author(s) try to convince the reader of in this reading, or what is the overall point of the reading? 3. What are some examples in popular culture, the media, history, or even your personal life, that relate to what the author(s) discuss?   There is no required length to these journal entries, though if they are lacking in substance, I will let you know on the first few you turn in. Generally, you should expect to write at least a few sentences for each question. Plagiarizing *from any source* will result in an automatic zero on the assignment, and if it is egregious enough, could result in you failing the course. |

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| Critical Analysis Projects  Throughout the semester, you will have a writing assignment that involves searching the internet, thinking of a current or historical event, or a relevant example from popular culture that exemplifies some aspect of what we are discussing in class at the time. Each assignment is unique, but all of them involve a 2-3-page write-up of your findings, how these findings relate to relevant readings we are covering on those topics, and your own arguments about the issues. There are 4 projects to choose from, but only 3 are required, so you can choose which 3 to complete. A separate document will be placed on Blackboard with the potential assignments and their respective due dates. |

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| Quizzes  There will be three quizzes on Blackboard as the semester proceeds. I will announce these quizzes in advance and you will have a window of time to complete each one. They are meant to test your knowledge at various stages and better prepare you for the final exam. Since they are on Blackboard, they will be ‘open book,’ but there will be time limits on them, and the questions are developed based on the assumption that you have been keeping up with the readings/discussions. |

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| Debate  You will be placed in small groups and your group will be assigned an issue as well as a side to argue regarding that issue. A formal debate will be held between your group and another group who will be arguing the opposite view regarding the same issue. Your group will be assessed on how well each member utilizes the tools of argument we have learned, equal participation, and degree to which you responded to the other team’s statements and questions. More details will be given about this assignment in the first few weeks of the course. |

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| Final Exam  During final exam week, you will have a cumulative final exam. It will be open book/open notes, but there is a time limit, and like the quizzes, the questions will not be easily answered if you have not been keeping up all along. |

**Course Schedule (subject to modification):**

\*Note: all lectures can be accessed by clicking on the “Yuja Video Channel” link under “Course Materials” on Blackboard. Other links to videos, readings, etc. will be under “Readings, Materials” and/or linked here in the syllabus.

**What is Real?**

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| **Week 1**  August 25: Introductory Lecture (Yuja)  August 27: Philosophy Basics Lectures #1 and #2 (Yuja); Reading Due: “What the Tortoise said to Achilles” |

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| **Week 2**  September 1: Logic Lectures #1 and #2 (Yuja); Begin reading, “On Bullshit”  September 3: “On Bullshit” Lecture (Yuja) Reading Due: “On Bullshit”; **Journal Entry # 1 due Sept 2 by 11:59pm** |

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| **Week 3**  September 8: Watch Pre-Socratic video [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epCOGAa7tRQ)**;** Ancient Philosophy lectures (Yuja); Reading due: Plato’s “Republic”; **Journal Entry #2 Due Sept. 7 by 11:59pm**  September 10: Modern Philosophy lectures (Yuja); Reading due: Descartes’ “Meditations”, excerpts; **Journal Entry #3 Due Sept. 9 by 11:59pm** |

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| **Week 4**  September 15: Problems of Knowledge Lectures (Yuja) Reading Due: Molyneux’s Question; **Journal Entry #4 Due Sept. 14 by 11:59pm**  September 17: Hume’s Fork Lecture(s) (Yuja); Reading Due: Hume’s Missing Shade of Blue; **Journal Entry #5 Due Sept. 16 by 11:59pm**  **DUE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 by 11:59pm: Critical Analysis Project #1** |

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| **Week 5**  September 22: Contemporary Problems in Epistemology Lecture(s) (Yuja); Reading Due: Abrahamson, “Turning up the Lights on Gaslighting”, first half  September 24: Feminist Epistemology Lecture(s) (Yuja) Reading Due: Gaslighting Article, second half  **QUIZ #1 MUST BE COMPLETED BY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 AT 11:59PM** |

**What Am I?**

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| **Week 6**  September 29: Free Will/Determism Lecture(s) (Yuja); Reading Due: Sider, “Free Will and Determinism”; **Journal Entry #6 Due Sept. 28 by 11:59pm**  October 1: Philosophy of Mind Lecture(s) (Yuja); Video: They’re all Made of Meat [**HERE**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-9t9BIBLKw)**;** Reading Due: Nagel, “What it’s Like to be a Bat”; **Journal Entry #7 Due Sept. 30 by 11:59pm**  **DUE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 BY 11:59 PM: CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT #2** |

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| **Week 7**  October 6: Lecture (s) on AI (Yuja); Reading Due: Turing, “Imitation Game”; **Journal Entry #8 Due Oct. 5 by 11:59pm**  October 8: Lecture(s) on Challenges to AI Yuja) Reading Due: Floridi, “Singulatarians, AItheists…”; **Journal Entry #9 Due Oct. 7 by 11:59pm** |

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| **Week 8**  October 13: Lecture(s) on Animal Minds (Yuja); Reading Due: Andrews, first half  October 15: Lecture(s) on Animal Minds (Yuja); Reading Due: Andrews, second half |

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| **Week 9**  October 20: Lecture (s) on Animal Minds (Yuja); Reading Due: Pilley & Reid, “Border Collie comprehends object names as verbal referents” **Journal Entry #10 Due Oct. 19 by 11:59pm**  October 22: Reading Due: CNET article on AIBO; **Journal Entry # 11 Due Oct. 21 by 11:59pm**  **QUIZ #2 MUST BE COMPLETED BY SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 11:59PM.** |

**Who Am I?**

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| **Week 10**  October 27: Reading Due: Dennett, “Where Am I”, Self-Identity Lecture(s) (Yuja) **Journal Entry #12 Due Oct. 26 by 11:59pm**  October 29: Reading Due: Parfit, “Divided Minds and the Nature of Personhood”; More Self-Identity Lecture(s) (Yuja); **Journal Entry #13 Due Oct. 28 by 11:59pm**  **DUE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1 BY 11:59 PM: CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT #3** |

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| **Week 11**  November 3: Reading Due: Young, “Throwing Like a Girl”; Lecture on feminism and the self (Yuja) **Journal Entry #14 Due Nov. 2 by 11:59pm**  November 5: Watch: Crenshaw Intersectionality Talk [HERE](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en) |

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| **Week 12**  November 10: Reading Due: Bettcher, “Intersexuality, Transgender, and Transsexuality”, part 1; Identity and Sex Lecture(s) (Yuja)  November 12: Reading Due: Bettcher, part 2  **QUIZ #3 MUST BE COMPLETED BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 11:59 PM** |

**What Should I Do With This Life?**

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| **Week 13**  November 17: Reading Due: Plato’s Ring of Gyges, BBC article on Virtue Ethics; Ethics Lecture(s) (Yuja); **Journal Entry #15 Due Nov. 16 by 11:59pm (Note: journal entry is about Plato’s Ring of Gyges only)**  November 19: Reading Due: BBC articles on Deontology and Consequentialism; Ethics Lecture(s) (Yuja) |

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| **Week 14**  Thanksgiving Break – No Class |

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| **Week 15**  December 1: Reading Due: Corvino, “Why Shouldn’t Tommy and Jim have Sex?”; Corvino Lecture(s) (Yuja) **Journal Entry #16 due Nov. 30 by 11:59pm**  December 3: Reading Due: Engel, “Between the Species”; Animal Welfare Lecture(s) (Yuja); **Journal Entry #17 due Dec. 2 by 11:59pm** |

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| **Week 16**  December 8: Reading Due: MLK “The Other America”; Social Justice Lecture (Yuja); **Journal Entry #18 Due Dec. 7 by 11:59pm**  December 10: Catch up, review (Yuja)  **DUE SUNDAY DECEMBER 13 BY 11:59PM: CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT #4** |

**The “Fine Print”**

Students are expected to adhere to all guidelines in the Student Bulletin and Student Handbook (found online at astate.edu). In addition to all the guidelines therein, students in this class are expected to comply with the following:

* + Attendance Policy: As this is an online class, I will not be recording attendance, but required lectures are monitored for % of time watched, so I will use those numbers, along with student communication with me, to determine whether there is an attendance problem. If students are not participating in required activities and not watching lectures, I reserve the right to deduct points from assignments.
  + Inclement Weather Policy: Information on campus closure can be found on the A-State web page, KASU, and local radio and television stations. If inclement weather prevents you from being able to come to class and campus is not closed, please call the university for further instruction.
  + Cheating: Just Don't Do It! I reserve the right to maximally penalize you if I catch you cheating in any way (including failing you from the course). If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, just ask. Better to be safe than sorry. Here is the official statement from the Handbook:

**Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Plagiarism (the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one’s own) is a serious offense against academic integrity which could result in failure for the paper or assignment, failure for the course, and/or expulsion from Arkansas State University. Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intention of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent manner. For further information, including specifics about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see ASU’s Academic Integrity Policy at: <http://studentconduct.astate.edu/AcademicIntegrity.html>.

* + If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to succeed in this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Your privacy will be respected and every effort will be made to meet your needs. All students requesting accommodations for disabilities should be registered through A-State’s Disability Services (870 972 3964). If Disabilities Services determines you should be able to take tests in their office, it is your responsibility to schedule the test for the same time and date as the exam is administered to other students.
  + Policy on Missed Assignments/Make up work: The only reasons I will accept late or missed assignments are documented emergencies, illnesses, deaths in the family, or weather related issues.
  + Email Policy: You must email me with essential information, such as who you are, what class of mine you are in, and what your question or concern is. I try to adhere to the 24-hour response rule of thumb – if I have not responded to you within 24 hours, feel free to send a follow-up, but be aware that if you have not addressed me properly, told me who you are and what exactly you need, I reserve the right not to respond.
  + Negative Points: I reserve the right to take away points already earned on assignments for cheating, disrespectful behavior, or any other violations of the university and course policies.
  + Inclusiveness Policy: I am part of the SafeZone community network of trained A-State faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you. As a SafeZone Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you face that interfere with your academic success, particularly issues of sexual violence, hateful acts, or concerns faced by individuals due to sexual orientation/gender identity. Likewise, racism, bigotry, and xenophobia have no place in our class or at this university. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus. Acts of discrimination will not be tolerated, and by agreeing to take this course, you also agree to treat others with inclusivity and equity. Every Red Wolf counts.
  + Extra Credit policy: As a rule, there are no opportunities to do extra work to ‘make up’ for missed assignments or to earn extra points. However, one exception to this rule is that if you demonstrate the whole semester that you have read this syllabus in its entirety, I will add some points to your overall grade. This means if you ask me a question such as “when is the first critical analysis paper due?” you will forfeit your chance to earn extra credit. If you ask me a question that cannot be answered by reading the syllabus carefully, then you can still potentially earn the extra credit. Note: this rule applies to all other syllabus-specific rules and guidelines so read carefully!