



**Philosophy 2300: Beginning Philosophy** is an introduction to philosophy via some of its central questions: What is the moral way to conduct our lives? Do we have free will? What is the self? Is there a difference between the mind and the brain? How do we know the answers to these and other questions? Each of these questions will correspond to a section of our course: ethics, free will, personal identity, the mind-body problem, and the theory of knowledge.

This course satisfies the Texas Tech University **core curriculum requirement in Humanities** (now called 'Language, Philosophy and Culture') and therefore it has no prerequisites. Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture reflect and affect human experience. These courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures (*Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Statement on Language, Philosophy, and Culture courses*). Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to think critically and evaluate possible multiple interpretations, cultural and historical contexts, and values (*TTU College-Level Core Competence Statement*).

THECB OBJECTIVES	TTU S.L. OUTCOMES	COURSE S.L. OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS
<b>Critical Thinking Skills</b> include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.	Identify methodologies of historical, literary, philosophical, and/or aesthetic research and recognize their applicability to everyday life.	Students will learn how to read philosophical texts carefully and with a view to discerning the views and arguments therein; they will identify methodologies of philosophical research and recognize their applicability to everyday life.	A midterm exam (30%), a term paper (30%), and a final exam (30%).
<b>Communication Skills</b> include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.	Develop analytical arguments in written and/or oral forms.	Students will develop analytical arguments in written and oral forms and learn to express ideas clearly and cogently orally and in writing.	Same as above. Exam format includes short-answer questions and essay questions.
<b>Personal Responsibility</b> includes the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.	Demonstrate ways in which the humanities are fundamental to the health and survival of any society.	Students will learn about the three major ethical traditions in the history of thought and reason through numerous examples so as to grasp	Careful and timely study of assigned readings. 13 quizzes in discussion sessions, 3 lowest grades



		the fundamentals of ethical thought.	dropped. (x2%=10%).
<b>Social Responsibility</b> includes intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.	Evaluate events, ideas, and artistic expressions in terms of multiple cultural contexts and value systems.	Students will engage with the work of philosophical thinkers from antiquity to the present, and from numerous countries across the globe, in translation and in the original English.	Regular class attendance (75% minimum). Engaged class participation. Academic Integrity Quiz & Honor Pledge (required before taking any graded assignments) Respectful and non-disruptive classroom behavior.

This course includes a mandatory **weekly discussion session** conducted by Prof. Ribeiro's Teaching Assistants on **Wednesdays in the Philosophy building**:

- **Ms. Xiang Yu:**
  - **Office hours:** T 12-2pm, PHIL 262 **Email:** [xiang.yu@ttu.edu](mailto:xiang.yu@ttu.edu)
  - **Section 705** (W 12-12:50pm, room 151).
  - **Section 707** (W 2-2:50pm, PHIL 151).
- **Mr. Paul So:**
  - **Office: hours:** M 2-3pm, T 4-5pm, PHIL 263 **E-mail:** [paul.so@ttu.edu](mailto:paul.so@ttu.edu)
  - **Section 706** (W 1-1:50pm, PHIL 151).
  - **Section 708** (W 2-2:50pm, PHIL 152).

**Course requirements:** See 'Assessment Methods' in table above.

*Nota bene: In order to comply with University policy concerning student privacy, no grades shall be sent via e-mail. All assignments must be picked up in person.*

**Required reading:** *The Experience of Philosophy*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Edited by Ray Martin and Daniel Kolak. Oxford, 2005, plus a handout on the Pre-Socratics.

**Recommended reading:** Douglas J. Soccio, *How To Get The Most Out Of Philosophy*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (or any earlier edition).

**Special accommodations:** Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as



possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405. Further information may be found at [www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu](http://www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu). *I require a letter from SDS during the first week of classes. No special arrangements will be granted after the first week.*

**Classroom manners:** The Texas Tech pamphlet on the subject, titled "Civility in the Classroom" (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentaffairs/publications/civility2002.pdf>) states: "Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave the class."

*Disruptive behavior will in addition incur a penalty of **ten points off your final grade for each occurrence**.* I may also report you to the Student Counseling Center for any behavior that I deem disruptive, aggressive, or otherwise inappropriate towards your fellow students, your TAs, or me. This includes any use of cell phones, and trips outside the classroom in the middle of class. SEE THE PLEDGE.

**Email Policy:** Please send emails only when necessary—speak to me in person whenever possible. I will ignore emails asking me for assignments and materials handed out in class or with questions whose answers are in the syllabus. Please go to your TA if you missed a handout.

#### Important details:

- *Do not dispose of any graded assignments before the end of term.*
- *I do not give out class notes. If you miss a class, try to obtain class notes from one or two classmates as soon as possible. Once you have those, you can come see me and/or your teaching assistant with any questions you may have about the material you missed.*
- *I do not give extra credit assignments. No exceptions.*

**Academic integrity:** "Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures that grades are earned honestly and gives added value to the entire educational process. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their



educational and professional careers.” For more on academic integrity, please see: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

*Academic dishonesty of any kind will result in automatic failure of the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Programs.* Students found guilty of academic dishonesty by SJP may be put on probation or expelled from their programs. If you have any questions about this policy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### Tips for success:

1. *Attend class.* Doing philosophy is not a matter of rote memorization, but an active dialogue in which your views will be as important as those of the philosophers we read. Moreover, philosophy texts are difficult: they are rather abstract and they are on issues you have probably not thought about before, making the contextualization and clarifications that occur in lecture and in discussions essential to understanding. Class time is your opportunity to think about fundamental issues deeply and rigorously, and to receive immediate feedback.
2. *Read the assignments in advance* (underline, write questions and comments in the margins, take notes and jot down your responses to the text. Re-read afterwards).
3. *Participate in discussion.*
4. *See your professor and/or TA during office hours.* Your professor is available in her office three hours per week, and your teaching assistant two hours per week. Their office hours are an excellent opportunity to ask questions about course material, discuss the exams, consult about your paper, or just talk about a philosophical issue that has aroused your interest.
5. *Outline and draft essays before the exam.*
6. *Start working on your paper well in advance;* read it out loud, share it with your classmates, run a draft by your TA.
7. *Do not book travels when class is still in session.* Many students like to skip town early for Spring Break or Thanksgiving. Do not make their mistake. There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

**Resources:** In addition to office hours, there are many other resources to supplement your learning:

- The TTU Writing Center (<http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>).
- The Philosophy Department Library and the TTU Library.
- *The Philosophy Café* (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/philosophy/events>).
- *The Philosophy Department Speaker Series* (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/philosophy/events>), a series of talks on various issues in philosophy by guest speakers or local faculty.
- NYU Professor Jim Pryor’s advice on reading and writing philosophy:  
(<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>)  
(<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>).
- The TTU Counseling Center (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc>).



**Tentative Course Schedule:** Changes are possible and will be announced **in lecture**. It is your responsibility to be informed.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
Week 1: Jan 21	What is Philosophy?	The Pre-Socratics	
2: Jan 26-28		Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i>	QUIZ 1
3: Feb 2-4	How do I live?	Aristotle	QUIZ 2
4: Feb 9-11		Mill	QUIZ 3
5: Feb 16-18		Kant	QUIZ 4
6: Feb 23-25	Am I free to choose?	Holbach James	QUIZ 5
7: Mar 1-3		Moore	QUIZ 6
8: Mar 8-10	Review on Tuesday (time allowing)	Exam on Thursday	MIDTERM: ETHICS & FREE WILL
9: Mar 15-17	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASSES	
10: Mar 22-24	Who am I?	Locke Hume	QUIZ 7
11: Mar 29-31		Reid	QUIZ 8
12: Apr 5-7	Is the mind the brain?	Dretske Zuboff	QUIZ 9
13: Apr 12-14		Jackson	QUIZ 10
14: Apr 19-21		Nagel	QUIZ 11 TERM PAPER DUE ON THURSDAY IN LECTURE
15: Apr 26-28	What is reality, & how do we know it?	Descartes	QUIZ 12
16: May 3-May 5		Armstrong Nozick (43)	QUIZ 13
17: May 10		Review/catch up	
Saturday, May 14 4:30 pm Same classroom	FINAL EXAM:	PERSONAL IDENTITY,	MIND-BRAIN & EPISTEMOLOGY
May 18	Grades due for	graduating students	on Raiderlink.
May 23	Grades due for	all students	on Raiderlink.