



NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education
The first private university in Bangladesh

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of History and Philosophy

Course Syllabus

PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy Prof. Dr. N.K. Swazo
Summer Semester 2015: **Section 1**, MW, 9:40-11:10AM; Rm. NAC 213
Summer Semester 2015, **Section 2**, MW, 1:00-2:30PM, NAC 309
Office: ADM 622; Email: norman.swazo@northsouth.edu; Office phone: x.2112
Office Hours: SMTW, 8:30-9:30AM, 2:40-3:40PM; other times by appointment; drop-in welcome

INTRODUCTION

It has been said often that, "philosophy begins in wonder." We may wonder about any number of questions, issues, or problems that puzzle or interest us. Philosophers, like some of us, take up these questions with a view to resolving them with more or less *reasonably definitive* answers, working thereby to *clarify concepts* and *evaluate beliefs* to distinguish *justified true beliefs* from *unjustified* or otherwise *false beliefs*. We may ask, e.g., "Why is there anything at all rather than nothing?" We may ask, e.g., "What does it all mean?" We may ask, e.g., "What is the meaning of human existence?" And, so on and so on with such "philosophical" questions.

During the course of this semester, we will review some philosophical questions, considering how various prominent philosophers in the history of the Western philosophical tradition engage these problems and attempt to provide some reasonable answers. Sometimes the answers provided are unsatisfactory, leaving us with opinions yet subject to doubt, although many of these opinions will have reasonable justification, i.e., they satisfy some basics of logical reasoning even as they may have legitimate criticism. We are free to consider these efforts to resolve the questions, either to find ourselves in agreement or in disagreement. Either way, hopefully we will find ourselves enlightened by the ways in which these questions are examined.

LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals: 1. Introduction to philosophical concepts; 2. Introduction to philosophers (presented in historical order—ancient Greek;

medieval/scholastic; modern; contemporary); 3. Introduction to philosophical methods of reasoning.

Instructional Learning Outcomes:

1. Ability to *identify* and *explain* some *philosophical concepts* (associated with each assigned reading);
2. Ability to *identify various philosophers* and *identify at least one philosophical issue/question* associated with a given philosopher (from assigned readings);
3. Ability to *explain* some elements of a given *philosophical method* (related to a given philosopher and the assigned reading).

TEXTBOOK

Lee Archie, John G. Archie, *Reading for Philosophical Inquiry: A Brief Introduction to Philosophical Thinking*, version 0.21, January 2004 (An Open Source Reader, available on the internet: <http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/introbook2.1/book1.html>)

Additional Links for Assigned Reading:

For the Ortega y Gasset reading:
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/ortega-a.pdf>

For the Huxley reading:
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/huxley.pdf>

GRADING

The final course grade will be calculated with the following components included: 3 *in-class writing exercises*, each counting for 10%, for a total value of 30%; two *midterm examinations*, each counting for 20%; a *final examination*, counting for 20%; *class participation*, counting for 10%. Final letter grades indicating the quality of course work completed will be posted and interpreted according to NSU grading policy:

<u>Numerical Scores</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
93 and above	A Excellent
90 - 92	A-
87 - 89	B+
83 - 86	B Good
80 - 82	B-
77 - 79	C+
73 - 76	C Average
70 - 72	C-
67 - 69	D+

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY/COURSE POLICIES

1. Academic Honesty

Any means of unauthorized assistance in preparing materials which a student submits as original work is deemed to be cheating and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action. Instructors are expected to use reasonably practical means of preventing and detecting cheating. Any student judged to have engaged in cheating might receive a reduced grade for the work in question, a failing grade in the course, or such other lesser penalty, as the instructor deems appropriate. Serious instances may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee in the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

2. Class Attendance

A student is expected to attend all class meetings in a course. It is the responsibility of the instructor to inform the student of the consequences of absence from class. It is the responsibility of the student to keep instructors informed regarding absences from classes.

A student who knows of necessary class absences should consult instructors in advance. A student who misses a class is not excused from obligations to instructors. Instructors will determine the manner in which assignments and exams missed may be made up. A student may be dropped from a course for absence in three consecutive classes.

3. Grade Change

Grade change is strongly discouraged. Letter grades may be changed only for posting errors or errors in calculation. If a grade change is inevitable, it must be completed within one semester following the submission of the grade. (See policy for relevant procedure.)

4. Incomplete (I)

The grade of Incomplete (I) may be used in special circumstances. The Incomplete may be given only at the end of a semester to a student whose work is progressing, "but who has left unfinished a small amount of work for completion without further class attendance..." (See policy for relevant procedure.)

5. Abandoning a Course

A final course grade of "F" will be recorded for students who have not fulfilled academic obligations and have not obtained a grade,

and for students who abandon their courses without officially withdrawing from a course.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

The following schedule of assignments includes assigned reading, to be done in advance of class meetings, as well as scheduled dates for in-class writing exercises and examinations. "No class" days are listed according to the NSU semester calendar listing of holidays or other observances.

Classes begin 18 May 2015;

Holidays: No Classes: Wednesday, 03 June; Wednesday, 15 July; Friday, 17 July; Saturday/Sunday, 18/19 July; Saturday, 15 August

Last Class Day MW Schedule: Wednesday, 12 August 2015; **Final Exams begin** Sunday, 16 August;

Final exams end: Wednesday 26 August

Week 1 (18/20 May): The Nature of Philosophical Inquiry

Reading: Text, Chapter 3

Week 2 (25/27 May): "Seek Truth rather than Escape Death," by Plato

Reading: Text, Chapter 5, Plato cont'd.

Week 3 (01/03 June): Aquinas, "From the Nature of the Universe,"

Reading: Text, Chapter 13, [**Holiday 03 June**]

Week 4 (08/10 June): Hume, "Critique of the Design Argument,"

Reading: Text, Chapter 15, *IWE 1*

Week 5 (15/17 June): Hume, cont'd.

Reading: Text, Chapter 15; First Midterm Examination

Week 6 (22/24 June): Friedrich Nietzsche, "Slave and Master Morality"

Reading: Text, Chapter 24

** **27 June: Added class day for MW sections**

Week 7 (29 June/01 July): Nietzsche, cont'd.

Reading: Text, Chapter 24; *IWE 2*

Week 8 (06/08 July): Ortega y Gasset, "Man, as Project,"

Reading: Text link:
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/ortega-a.pdf>

Week 9 (13/15 July): Ortega y Gasset, cont'd. (on 13th July only)

Reading: Text, Ortega y Gasset; [**** Holiday 15 July; 17th, 18th, 19th Holidays****]

Week 10 (20/22 July): Bertrand Russell, "What is Truth?"

**** 20 July:** No class day

Reading: Text, Chapter 31, Second Midterm Examination

Week 11 (27/29 July): T.H. Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics,"

Reading: Text link:
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/articles/huxley.pdf>

Week 12 (03/05 August): Huxley, cont'd.

Reading: Text, Huxley; *IWE 3*

Week 13 (10/12 August): "Technoscience in the Third World: The Politics of Indigenous Resources,"

Reading: Highlights *Handout* (from D. L. Kleinman, *Science and Technology in Society: From Biotechnology to the Internet* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005))

****Final Examination (as scheduled by the Registrar)**

****If the local political situation with hartals disrupts semester class sessions, a bonus IWE may be given towards the end of the semester.*