

Suffolk Community College, Selden, New York 11784
PHL 101 - 115: ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY

Instructor: Dr. Gertrude Postl
Fall 2021 -- CRN 91447
Time: T/R 9:30-10:45 am
Location: Southampton Bldg. 30

Office: Southampton Building 120
Tel. 451-4513 (Dept. Office: 451-4093)
postlg@sunysuffolk.edu
Office Hours: M/W 12:30 - 1:30 pm
T/R 11:00 - 12:00 am

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of Issues in Philosophy (PHL 101), the student will be able to:

- (1) identify traditional and current issues in epistemology and metaphysics
 - (2) distinguish between and critically assess major approaches in epistemology, such as Empiricism, Rationalism and Skepticism
 - (3) distinguish and critically assess competing metaphysical approaches, for example, in Mind-Body, Personal Identity, and Freewill
 - (4) demonstrate skills of information management (basic on-line and/or library research).
- Procedures for accomplishing these objectives: lectures, class discussion, written assignments

TEXTBOOK

Robert C. Solomon, Kathleen M. Higgins, Clancy Martin, eds., *Introducing Philosophy. A Text With Integrated Readings*, 12th ed., Oxford University Press, 2021.

REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **THREE GUIDED REACTION PAPERS** (deadlines: 9/28, 11/2, 11/23)

Papers of about 400 words (papers may be longer but not shorter) on specific questions related to the texts discussed in class during the first three sections. Topics and detailed instructions will be provided separately. Papers received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Criteria for judging Reaction Papers: comprehension of the given text; willingness to engage with it; quality of own arguments and ideas in response to the text; concise and persuasive presentation of own arguments; creative connections made.

- 2) **ONE MIDTERM AND ONE FINAL EXAM** (10/26 and 12/23)

Exams will consist of brief essay questions and multiple-choice questions on the readings and the course material.

- 3) **CLASS PARTICIPATION, READING ASSIGNMENTS AND BEHAVIOR**

Class participation means to participate in the common effort of discussion in order to complement the reading material and to accomplish the aims stated in the course objectives. Unwillingness to participate will result in a lower final grade. Reading assignments have to be completed before class meetings. Disruptive or inconsiderate behavior will affect the grade. **Cell phones have to be switched off during class time, NO TEXTING!!!!**

- 4) **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The college defines excessive absence as more than the equivalent of one week of class meetings during the semester. In this course, students are allowed **no more than three absences!** Any additional absence will affect the grade. Excessive absence or lateness may lead to failure in the course or removal from the class roster. If a student is late, the time will be added up and will thereby also contribute to the amount of absences. It is **the student's obligation to sign the sign-up sheet.** If a student misses a class due to sickness or other justifiable reasons, **evidence needs to be shown as soon as possible!** In this case the absence will be excused.

GRADING

Three Reaction Papers:	45%
Two Exams:	40%
Participation:	15%

W GRADE

Students can withdraw before the official withdraw date (11/10) without faculty approval. After this date faculty approval is required.

ATTENDANCE ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

As provided for in New York State Education Law §224-a, student absences from class necessitated by religious observance will be deemed an excused absence, with no academic consequences. Students must notify their professor in advance of their religious observance, via their College email accounts or otherwise in writing, of their intention to be absent from a particular class due to a religious observance; notification should occur at least one week prior to the religious observance. Observing students shall be granted reasonable arrangements and/or be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up missed quizzes, tests, assignments, and activities covered in their absence. Please refer to the College's Religious Observance Policy, which is available on the Office of Legal Affairs' website, for additional information.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Suffolk County Community College provides reasonable accommodations to registered students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the Office of Disability Services. Once approved for reasonable accommodations, such students will be provided with a laminated letter, describing the specific accommodations. Students must present this laminated letter to each of their professors before accommodations can be provided. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential consultation.

Disability Services Contact Information:**Ammerman Campus**

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-451-4045, email the Office at disabilityserv-ammr@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment at Room 202 in the Ammerman Building.

Eastern Campus

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-548-2527, email the Office at disabilityserv-east@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment at the Student Success Center in the Peconic Building, Room 122.

Michael J. Grant Campus

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-851-6355, email the office at disabilityserv-west@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment in Caumsett Hall, Lower Level 20.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY -- PLAGIARISM

Suffolk County Community College provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge by submitting coursework that is uniquely theirs and giving proper attribution to the work of others. Participating honestly in the SCCC academic community ensures that students can take pride in their education and their contributions to scholarship. Without academic integrity, students gain unfair advantage over others and prevent their own intellectual progress. As a student in this class, you are expected to uphold the SCCC core value of Integrity and understand the Special Procedures for Academic Dishonesty in the relevant sections of the SCCC Student Code of Conduct.

The Code prohibits academic misconduct, which includes any action that results in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, or receiving credit for work that is not their own. Academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the

following behaviors: **cheating** on exams; **plagiarizing** - using another person's work or ideas without crediting them; **complicity** - helping a student, or being helped, to engage in academic misconduct; **multiple submissions** - submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the instructor's permission; **falsification and forgery** - inventing information or falsifying the identity of a student.

Information about the Student Code of Conduct, plagiarism and the citation process is in the [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Guide](#).

Plagiarism:

"Students should realize that presenting the words and ideas of others as their own is dishonest. In writing, students must fully credit the source of any quoted, paraphrased, or summarized passages and any ideas which they have borrowed. Failure to conform to these academic standards is plagiarism and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or serious disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Conduct" (SCCC College Catalogue, Section on "Academic Integrity").

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In alignment with our institutional mission and strong support of diversity, equity and inclusion, Suffolk County Community College reaffirms its commitment to providing access to higher education and a welcome environment to **all** students. No matter your age, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, family status, U.S. citizenship status, religion, socio-economic status, political ideology, military-connected status, or intellectual or physical ability - you belong here. Therefore, in this class, we will maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect, civil discourse and cross-cultural communication.

MASKING REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, Suffolk requires that all members of our campus community wear masks in the classroom, inside any College buildings, and in any crowded outdoor settings. **These masks should cover both your nose and mouth** and are required regardless of vaccination status. Suffolk may change the masking protocols, course modality or other guidance as the COVID rate is monitored and as required by New York State, SUNY, and the local health department. Students who cannot wear a face mask due to a medical condition or disability, or who are unable to remove a mask without assistance, should seek an accommodation through the [Office of Disability Services](#). Eating in the classroom is prohibited. Students are encouraged to find alternative spaces in the building for eating. If you do not adhere to any of these practices, you will be asked to leave the room. Non-compliance will result in referral to the Student Conduct Office for potential further disciplinary action.

SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

R 9/2: Introduction: issues and areas of philosophy

T 9/7: **Read:** "What is Philosophy?" (Introduction, pp.10-13)
Watch: YouTube: What is Philosophy? Crash Course Philosophy #1

REALITY AND KNOWLEDGE (METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY)

R 9/9: Plato's Allegory of the Cave
Read: "Two Kinds of Metaphysics: Plato and Aristotle;" Plato, from *Symposium* and *Republic* (chapter 1, pp.62-69); Summary (chapter 1, pp.74-75)

T 9/14: Plato continued

- R 9/16: Rationalism
Read: “The Rationalists’ Confidence: Descartes;” René Descartes, from *Meditations I, II, VI* (chapter 3, pp.203-213)
- T 9/21: Empiricism
Read: John Locke, from *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: “Innate Ideas Concerning Human Understanding” (chapter 3, pp. 213-216); “Two Empiricist Theories of Knowledge” (chapter 3, pp. 219-225)
- R 9/23: Rationalism and Empiricism continued
- T 9/28: Feminist Epistemology
Read: Elizabeth Grosz, “On Feminist Knowledge” (pp.268-271)
FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE!

PERSONHOOD AND SELF-IDENTITY

- R 9/30: What is a Self or Person? The Self as Social Product
Read: “Self” (chapter 5, pp. 331-333); “The Individual and the Community,” Kierkegaard (chapter 5, pp.360-363)
- T 10/5: Movie: *Memento* (2000, dir. Christopher Nolan)
- R 10/7: Locke’s Memory Theory of Self-Identity
Read: John Locke, “On Personal Identity,” from *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (chapter 5, pp.335-339)
- T 10/12: No Classes – Professional Development Day
- R 10/14: Hume’s Skepticism – Bundle Theory of Self-Identity
Read: David Hume, “On the Idea of the Self,” from *A Treatise of Human Nature* (chapter 5, pp.339-342)
- T 10/19: Self as Mind or Body – Fictional Accounts
Read: Meredith Michaels, “Personal Identity” (chapter 5, pp.346-349); Derek Parfit, from *Reasons and Persons* (chapter 5, pp. 349-350)
- R 10/21: The Self as Choice – Existentialism
Read: “Existentialism: Self Identity and Responsibility of Choice;” Jean-Paul Sartre, from *Existentialism Is a Humanism*” (chapter 5, pp.350-354)
- T 10/26: **MIDTERM EXAM**

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

- R 10/28: Religion and the Question of a Higher Being – Types of Arguments
Read: “What is Religion” (pp.113-114); “The Western Religions” (pp.119-122)
- T 11/2: The Ontological Argument
Read: St. Anselm, “On the Ontological Argument” (chapter 2, pp. 124-127)

SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE!

- R 11/4: The Cosmological Argument
Read: St. Thomas Aquinas, “Five Arguments for the Existence of God” (chapter 2, pp. 132-136)
- T 11/9: The Teleological Argument
Read: St. Thomas Aquinas, “On the Fifth Way;” David Hume, from *Dialogues on Natural Religion* (chapter 2, pp. 139-140)
- W 11/10: **LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH GUARANTEED W!**
- R 11/11: No Classes – Veterans Day
- T 11/16: Religion as Subjective Experience
Read: Soren Kierkegaard, “On Subjective Truth“ (chapter 2, pp. 162-166);
- R 11/18: Critique of Christianity
Read: Friedrich Nietzsche, from *Beyond Good and Evil, The Antichrist, The Gay Science* (chapter 2, pp. 173-175; pdfs)

ETHICS AND MORALITY

- T 11/23: What is Ethics? Questions and Positions
Read: “Ethics” (chapter 7, pp. 439-443)
THIRD REACTION PAPER DUE!
- R 11/25: No Classes – Thanksgiving Recess
- T 11/30: Aristotle’s Virtue Ethics
Read: Aristotle, from *Nichomachean Ethics* (chapter 7, pp.464-474)
- R 12/2: Deontology – Morality as Duty
Read: Immanuel Kant, from *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* (chapter 7, pp.484-494)
- T 12/7: Utilitarian Ethics
Read: “Utilitarianism” (chapter 7, pp.498-499); John Stuart Mill, from *Utilitarianism* (chapter 7, pp.503-510)
- R 12/9: Existentialist Ethics – Moral Relativism
Read: “The Creation of Morality: Nietzsche and Existentialism” (chapter 7, pp.511-517)
- T 12/14: Existentialist Ethics continued
Read: Jean-Paul Sartre, from *Existentialism Is a Humanism* (chapter 7, pp.517-521)
- R 12/16: Ethics and Gender
Read: Virginia Held, “On Feminist Ethics” (pp.527-531)
- T 12/21: What is Philosophy? Summary, Conclusion, Feed-back...
- R 12/23: **FINAL EXAM**