

PHL 310 (41900)
Knowledge and Reality
MWF 1:00-2:00pm
WAG 302

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Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00 (or email to set up another time)

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Disclaimer

This syllabus, especially the topics and readings for each day, may change as the semester progresses. If it changes I will upload a new version to Canvas at least a week before the dates for which the changes were made. A change in the syllabus is no excuse to have not done the readings or be prepared for a test on a given day.

Texts

There are no required texts for this course. I'll upload all of the readings to Canvas.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken. For every unexcused absence your total grade drops by 5%. However, you can be excused from class for a documented illness, family emergency, religious holiday, or any other condition specified by the university OR if you email either of us before class begins on the day you will miss to tell us (truthfully) why you cannot attend.

Attendance not guarantee a full participation grade. You must also engage with the class on an at least semi-regular basis.

Assignments

There is good evidence that frequent testing correlates well with high retention of course material. To that end, instead of a single final exam and one or two large exams throughout the term there will be an in-class single prompt essay exam roughly every two weeks (for a total of eight). Two days before each exam you will receive via Canvas a set of three essay prompts. At the exam you will be given two of those three from which you will choose one to answer. You are encouraged to work with other students in the class to construct and practice writing essays for these exams. I believe Canvas allows you some ability to communicate with the rest of the class.

There is one other assignment: visit either of us during office hours within the first three weeks of the term to introduce yourself.

Grade Distribution

In-class Essays (eight)	90%
Participation	5%
Office Visit	5%

Accessibility

I try hard to make all aspects of my course accessible to all students. If you have an academic accommodation through Services for Students with Disabilities, please ask them to set up the relevant accommodation with me (See <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>)

If you have some concern regarding course accessibility that falls outside the purview of SSD, please come speak to me about it. I would like to help you get as much out of this course as possible.

Academic Dishonesty

If you are found engaging in any form of academic misconduct on an exam or other course-related task you will, at a minimum, receive a zero on that assignment. You may also fail the course and face official disciplinary hearings. Please ask me if you are unsure whether something counts as academic misconduct.

Electronics Policy

There is a lot of evidence that the presence of electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) in class is a detriment to both those using the devices and those around them. For that reason I don't allow any electronic devices to be used in class. That being said, if you think you are an exception to this rule and would benefit from the use of a laptop, please come speak to me. I am more than willing to make exceptions.

Tentative Course Outline

If the schedule changes I'll upload a new version to Canvas and email the class.

Week	Date	Material	Readings
Week 1	01/17	Introduction	—
	01/19	Regress of Justification	Pritchard, Regress of Justification
Week 2	01/22	Regress of Justification	Pritchard, Regress of Justification
	01/24	Regress of Justification	Zagzebski, Skepticism
	01/26	Global Skepticism	Zagzebski, Skepticism
Week 3	01/29	In-class Essay One	—
	01/31	Global Skepticism	Descartes, First Meditation [Opt: Lemos]
	02/02	Global Skepticism	Descartes, First Meditation [Opt: Lemos]
Week 4	02/05	Perception & Illusion	Pritchard, Perception [Opt: Feser]
	02/07	Perception & Illusion	Pritchard, Perception [Opt: Feser]
	02/09	Perception & Illusion	Pritchard, Perception [Opt: Feser]
Week 5	02/12	In-class Essay Two	—
	02/14	Consciousness	Heil, Consciousness
	02/16	Consciousness	Heil, Consciousness
Week 6	02/19	Consciousness	Ravenscroft, Consciousness
	02/21	Consciousness	Ravenscroft, Consciousness
	02/23	Consciousness	Ravenscroft, Consciousness
Week 7	02/26	In-class Essay Three	—
	02/28	Free Will	Conee & Sider, Free Will
	03/02	Free Will	Conee & Sider, Free Will
Week 8	03/05	Free Will	Conee & Sider, Free Will
	03/07	Free Will	Conee & Sider, Free Will
	03/09	In-class Essay Four	—
Week 9	03/12	Spring Break	—
	03/14	Spring Break	—
	03/16	Spring Break	—
Week 10	03/19	Moral Skepticism	Shafer-Landau
	03/21	Moral Skepticism	Shafer-Landau
	03/23	Moral Skepticism	Shafer-Landau
Week 11	03/26	In-class Essay Five	—
	03/28	Personal Identity	Conee & Sider, Personal Identity [Opt: Whiting]
	03/30	Personal Identity	Conee & Sider, Personal Identity [Opt: Whiting]
Week 12	04/02	Personal Identity	Conee & Sider, Personal Identity [Opt: Whiting]
	04/04	Vagueness	Sainsbury, Vagueness
	04/06	Vagueness	Sainsbury, Vagueness
Week 13	04/09	In-class Essay Six	—
	04/11	Vagueness	Sainsbury, Vagueness
	04/13	Composition	Conee & Sider, Composition
Week 14	04/16	Composition	Conee & Sider, Composition
	04/18	Composition	Conee & Sider, Composition
	04/20	Rationality	Sainsbury, Rationality
Week 15	04/23	In-class Essay Seven	—
	04/25	Rationality	Sainsbury, Rationality
	04/27	Rationality	Sainsbury, Rationality
Week 16	04/30	Time Travel/Grandfather Paradox	Lewis, Time Travel
	05/02	Time Travel/Grandfather Paradox	Lewis, Time Travel
	05/04	Time Travel/Grandfather Paradox	Lewis, Time Travel