GENERAL INFORMATION
College Name: Cedar Valley College
Division: Liberal Arts
Semester/Term & Year: Fall 2012

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Name: Scott Shiffer
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Telephone: 817-298-9913 (Cell)
Office Number: 214-333-8832
Office Hours (FT faculty): By Appointment.

COURSE INFORMATION
Course Number: PHIL 1301
Section Number: 1301-3420 (PHIL-1301-9010)
Credit Hours: 3
Class Meeting Time: Online
Course Title: Introduction to Philosophy

Course Description:
Philosophy 1301 is an introduction to ideas about such things as the good life, reality, God, the characteristics of knowledge and the nature of persons. You will have the opportunity to evaluate both ancient and modern theories about these issues in terms of their historical significance and meaning in everyday life, while practicing the methods of doing philosophy.

What will I study in this course?
Life questions? Big Questions? What do we know about our universe? Life after death? How do we know about God and beliefs of others? How do we make good moral decisions for families, work and ourselves? Your work in this class will involve discussions on these and other contemporary topics!

Course Prerequisites:
One of the following must be met: (1) Developmental Reading 0093 AND Developmental Writing 0093; (2) English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 AND 0054; or (3) Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading and Writing standards.

Exemplary Educational Objectives:
The objective of a communication component of a core is to enable the student to communicate effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion and audience.
As part of the Core Curriculum, this course satisfies some of the Exemplary Education Objectives in the Communication Component Area, as set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. They are shown below.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

During this course you will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills by explaining and assessing strengths and weaknesses of a philosophical position or theory.
2. Argue for informed answers to selected philosophical questions.
3. Research complex issues, synthesize data and present conclusions about issues.

Throughout the course you will find that an open mind that researches and listens is a key requirement for good discussion and analysis of issues.

During this course you will study key concepts and questions that address what are called the “Big Questions” across academic disciplines, such as government, science, and religion as well as philosophical questions. Since this course is an introduction to the “Big Questions” of life you will have opportunities to directly discuss texts and media from different time periods. Through your work in this course you will be able to:

1. Evaluate theories and philosophical questions presented by scholars from different time periods and discuss their relevance and impact.
2. Research complex issues, synthesize data and present conclusions about issues.
3. Critically evaluate media from any format with a view to application in day-to-day work and life, in problem-solving or making decisions about work, family and life and to present your findings orally and in writing.

**At the end of the course, we anticipate that you will:**

- Find that an open mind that researches and listens is a key requirement for good discussion and analysis of issues; and
- Discover how a continuing engagement with texts and media enhance your own philosophical approaches and lead to better decisions

**Objectives Intellectual Competencies:**

This course reinforces some of the Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

1. **READING:** Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials—book, article and documents.
2. **WRITING:** Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience.

3. **CRITICAL THINKING:** Critical thinking embraces methods of applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address and identify task.

4. **COMPUTER LITERACY:** Computer Literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems and acquiring information.

5. **SPEECH:** Speech at the college levels means the ability to present research and information in a variety of oral communication methods.

**Course Outline:**

There follows a general outline of topics considered in this course. For maximum success in this course you should spend a minimum of 9 hours per week working on course material.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<td>Chapter 1: The Nature of Philosophy</td>
<td>Introductory Discussion Board 1</td>
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<td>Session 3 9/10-9/23</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Reality and Being</td>
<td>Written Reflection 1</td>
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<td>Session 4 9/24-10/7</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Philosophy and God</td>
<td>Discussion Board 3</td>
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<td>Session 5 10/8-10/21</td>
<td>Chapter 5: The Sources of Knowledge</td>
<td>Written Reflection 2</td>
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<td>Session 6 10/22-</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Truth</td>
<td>Discussion Board 6 Research Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Chapter/Assignment</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<td>11/4</td>
<td>Written Reflection 3</td>
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<td>11/5-11/18</td>
<td>Session 7</td>
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<td>11/19-12/2</td>
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<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Postscript: The Meaning</td>
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<td>of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/10-12/12</td>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Exam 4</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE** – The Instructor reserves the right to adjust or amend the following Course Schedule or even supplement it. It is the responsibility of the Student to gain information about any revisions made when the Student was absent.

**Required Materials:**
All students enrolled in this course also are automatically enrolled in an online module for the course available at: ecampus.dcccd.edu.

The Syllabus is available on ecampus along with homework assignments and other materials, i.e. handouts and instruction sheets, so that they are readily available for you. A Gradebook is available on ecampus where you can follow your grades. Check this frequently during the semester.

**Required Textbook:**
Exams and Assignments, Evaluation Procedures, and Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (4 @ 100 pts. each)</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Reflections (5 @ 40 pts. each)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussions (10 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Movie Analysis</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Critical Essay Review</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
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Grading Scale:

- 900-1000 = A
- 800-899 = B
- 700-799 = C
- 600-699 = D
- 599 or below = F

Exams and Assignments:

**Note:** All assignments will be submitted in course material, inside the folder for the given week. To submit assignments, click on the name of the assignment inside the folder and then attach your document when prompted. Do not email assignments.

**Philosophy at the Movies Assignment** 100 Points:

Students will write a movie review this semester. In the review the student will discuss the basic plot and themes, discuss the philosophical issues that are raised, evaluate the philosophical conclusions of the film, and critique the film as a work of art. The student should focus on the overall message of the film and how it is presented by the director and portrayed by the actors. The review should not simply be a summary of the movie (ex. This happened then this happened, etc.). The review will be approximately four (4) pages, double spaced.

**Written Reflections** 200 Points (5 @ 40 points each):

Written reflections will demonstrate critical thinking and reflection on the assigned questions. Each reflection must be typed and submitted in class on the due date according to the course schedule. No late reflections will be accepted. The length of the reflection will be determined...
by how much the student chooses to elaborate on the questions. Each question should be answered in 3-4 sentences.

The Written Reflection for each chapter contains reflection questions that I ask you to respond to based on the reading. The questions are available in the Course Materials on ecampus.

Research Paper 100 Points:

For the Research Paper you may choose one of the following topics:

1. **Interview of Understanding and Attitude Towards Philosophy**: Conduct an interview with someone who has never taken a philosophy class and ask them the following questions- (1) Define Philosophy. (2) What is the reputation that the discipline of Philosophy has with you? (3) What are the basic philosophical issues? (4) What is the role of intellect and reason in your daily life? (5) Who were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? Then, after they have answered these questions, report their answers in 1-2 paragraphs. After reporting on their answers, use your textbook and at least four other sources to answer these same questions. Finally, come up with one way that you can help the person you interviewed (and yourself) to become a better thinker and philosopher.

2. **Analysis of Plato’s Cave Analogy**: Read and give a brief summary of Plato’s cave analogy. After describing the analogy, give a similar story of how something opened your eyes to a greater truth in your own life. Finally, give at least two applications of the cave analogy and how it can help others in present day circumstances.

3. **Research a Person**: Explain the basic teaching of one of the following philosophers: Aquinas, Descartes, Kierkegaard, James, or Nietzsche. In addition to explaining the person’s teachings, also give a brief history of the person, including the time of death and birth, and in 2-3 paragraphs, explain why you do or do not agree with what they taught.

4. **Research a Topic**: Choose one of the following issues to research. (1) Climate change – arguments pro and con, (2) Religion and Science – the debates involving these factors, (3) Human Rights in China, Nigeria or Egypt, (4) Democracy - in new democracies, i.e. Hungary, Afghanistan, Poland or a Latin American country, or another country of your choice in interest if democracy is a new form government within the last 50 years, or (5) Poverty: its impact on education and health care in either Honduras, the Sudan or the U.S.

The Research Paper is to be 5-8 pages in length. The sources you use are to be cited consistently. The paper is to have a title page, a bibliography, and a section for content. The content of the paper should include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Your thoughts should be supported by evidence. The paper is to be written in Times New Roman Size 12 Font. The paper should be typed with 1 inch margins on each side of the page.

Research Paper Grading Rubric:

- Thesis Statement____(10 Pts.) (Does the paper have a clear thesis? Does the paper do what it claims to do?)
• Introduction and Conclusion_____ (20 Pts.) (Does the paper have a clear introduction and conclusion?)

• Body of the Text_____ (20 Pts.) (This item will be assigned a number 1-4 based on the numbers below.) (Is the paper well organized? Does it stay on Task? Are the writer’s thoughts clear and easy to follow?)

• Evidence/Claims_____ (20 Pts.) (This item will be assigned a number 1-4 based on the numbers below.) (Are the claims made by the writer supported with good academic resources? Does the writer present enough evidence to prove his or her claims?)

• Analysis/Argumentation_____ (20 Pts.) (This item will be assigned a number 1-4 based on the numbers below.) (Does the writer deal effectively with the counterarguments? Does the writer analyze the evidence of the counterarguments as well as the arguments that support the thesis?)

• Grammar_____ (10 Pts.)
  (Are the sentences complete as opposed to fragmented? Are their few grammatical mistakes? Are there any spelling mistakes? Is the format of the paper consistent? Are there a title page, a table of contents, and a bibliography? Is the paper typed in Times New Roman, Size 12 font, with 1 inch margins on the sides and 1 inch margins on the top and bottom? Are the pages numbered?)

Rubric Scores and Values (Taken from Rubric for the Holistic Assessment of Critical Thinking across the Curriculum © Valencia Community College Version June 10, 2005)

(4) Accomplished (precise, insightful, balanced, perceptive, and unified)

Does all or almost all of the following:

• Interprets information (data, ideas, or concepts) accurately, appropriately, and in-depth in new contexts
• Employs formulas, procedures, principles, or themes accurately, appropriately, and/or creatively in new contexts
• Explain—accurately and thoroughly—multiple solutions, positions, or perspectives that balance opposing points of view
• Creates a detailed conclusion or complex solution that is complete, well-supported, logically consistent, and often unique
• Integrates ideas or develops solutions that are exceptionally clear, coherent, and cohesive

(3) Competent (accurate, relevant, multiplistic, logical, coherent)

Does many or most of the following:

• Presents information (data, ideas, or concepts) accurately and appropriately in familiar contexts
• Applies formulas, procedures, principles, or themes accurately and appropriately in familiar contexts
• Describes two or more solutions, positions, or perspectives accurately
• Organizes a conclusion or solution that is complete, logical, and consistent with evidence presented
• Connects ideas or develops solutions in a clear and coherent order

(2) Developing (correct, appropriate, dualistic, reasonable, consistent)

Does many or most of the following:

• Reports information (data, ideas, or concepts) in familiar contexts with minor inaccuracies, irrelevancies, or omissions
• Uses appropriate formulas, procedures, principles, or themes in familiar contexts with only minor inaccuracies
• Identifies simple solutions, over-simplified positions, or perspectives with only minor inaccuracies
• Offers an abbreviated conclusion or simple solution that is mostly consistent with the evidence presented, with minor inconsistencies or omissions
• Arranges ideas or solutions into a simple pattern

(1) Beginning (inaccurate, inappropriate, singular, illogical, fragmented)

Does all or almost all of the following:

• Copies information (data, ideas, or concepts) often inaccurately, incompletely, or omits relevant information
• Labels formulas, procedures, principles, or themes inaccurately, inappropriately, or omits them
• Names a single solution, position, or perspective, often inaccurately, or fails to present a solution, position, or perspective
• Attempts a conclusion or solution that is inconsistent with evidence presented, that is illogical, or omits a conclusion or solution altogether
• Lists ideas or expresses solutions in a fragmentary manner, without a clear or coherent order

Note: An item assigned a number of 4 will receive 20 points, 3 will receive 15, 2 will receive 10, and 1 will receive 5 points.

Critical Essay Review 100 Points:

Each student will write a review on an Introduction to Kantian Ethics. This article will be posted at the top of the course materials page inside of eCampus.

Each student will read the article and write a 3-5 page paper that includes the following:

1. Identify a thesis for the article and explain the thesis.
2. Summarize three to five points in the article.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses; or comparisons and contrasts if appropriate.
4. Write your own conclusion, taking a certain position, or agreeing or disagreeing with a discussion of why you came to that specific conclusion.
5. Explain how you would find this information significant for our world today.

The paper should include an introduction, a summary, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses, the significance of the article for today, and a conclusion.

It will use the same grading scale and rubric that was used to grade the Research Paper.

**Exam One 100 Points**

This exam will cover Chapters 1-2.

**Exam Two 100 Points**

This exam will cover Chapters 3-4.

**Exam Three 100 Points**

This exam will cover Chapters 5-6.

**Exam Four 100 Points**

This exam will cover Chapters 7-9.

Each Exam will be open book, open note. You will be given a week to complete each exam, but once an exam is started, it will have a 1 hour time limit. No late exams will be accepted.

**Class Participation/Class Discussion: 100 Points (10 @ 10 Pts. Each)**

In order to receive full credit for class participation every week, each student must respond to the professor's Class Discussion question, at least two other students' posts, and the student must answer any questions that are asked of him/her by other students by Sunday at 11:55 P.M. in your time zone at the end of that week. Because this is a condensed term, multiple questions will be answered each week. Please be courteous to other classmates by not waiting until the last minute each week to post on the Discussion Board.

**Additional Discussion Board Guidelines (Maria Puzziferro):**

- An acceptable post to the Discussion Board would contain accurate, original, and relevant comments. The comments should stimulate additional thought about the issue being discussed. A simple "I agree" or "I disagree" will not be counted as an adequate comment.
- Your postings should reflect a) facts, b) logical reasoning, c) be related to the topic, d) be written well (no spelling errors, etc.), and e) be on time. Try to avoid sharing your personal opinions if you cannot back them up with facts and/or statistics.
- You may certainly express your views and beliefs in the context of the discussion topic, but DO NOT use your views to attack others. Simply use your best judgment and treat
others with respect. This will be important to bear in mind as we discuss very sensitive and controversial issues.

- Read the assigned chapters before you post your response to the question so that you can tie in the main ideas and facts in the readings to your postings.
- You will be evaluated on the quality and thoughtfulness of how you present your point of view. A quality message is well thought out, clearly presented, and well-formulated.
- When posting, be sure to present your thoughts and point of view in an unbiased way. You can and should cite evidence for your assertions where appropriate. Use your textbook, and other selected web resources as educational aids.
- Your postings should be clear, yet concise. Please do not feel as though you have to write a lot. Think quality over quantity.
- Please try to keep messages to one paragraph (150-200 words), if possible.
- Once you have posted, check back frequently to see if anybody has responded to you.

**Late Work:** All assignments are due at the beginning of each class period. No late work will be accepted unless arrangements have been made with the Instructor prior to the due date of the assignment. Absence from a class does not absolve a student of responsibility for homework or class work assigned for the following day. It is the responsibility of the student to keep up to date on all assignments listed in the syllabus as well as others assigned from time to time by the Instructor.

**Evaluation Procedures:**

90% = A; 80% = B; 70% = C; 60% = D. Below 60% = F

**Attendance Policy:**

You are expected to attend regularly all classes in which you are enrolled.

You have the responsibility to attend class and to consult with your Instructor when an absence occurs. Roll will be taken each class period.

You are expected to be in class when the roll is taken and to remain for the entire class period. Excessive lateness or early departures will result in adjustments to the final grade average.

For each absence in excess of two days of class, deductions will be made at ever-increasing rates such as specified in the following example. The first 2 times that a student misses class no deduction is made. For each successive day absent, deductions are made as follows: on the 3rd absence, 2 points are deducted; on the 4th absence, 3 points are deducted; on the 5th absence, 4 points are deducted and so on thereby reducing the final average. Every late arrival after the first 2 also results in a one-point penalty reduction in the final grade.

**Classroom Policies:**

All cell phones, pagers, palm pilots and other handheld devices, unless being demonstrably used to take class notes, must be turned off and out of sight. The Professor and other students find the interruptions provided by these external communication devices disruptive to the learning
experience for all students. If a cell phone rings during class, this will be considered a disruption of the class and may lead to the offending student being dismissed from the remainder of class and marked as absent. If a student’s cell phone causes frequent or persistent disruptions, disciplinary actions listed in the student code of conduct will be considered.

Students disrupt the class with private conversations while other students or the Professor are speaking. They will be asked to leave the class for the remainder of the session and be recorded as absent. The Instructor may ask any Student to leave the class when he/she is engaging in behavior disrupting the learning environment in the class.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Studies and a Master of Arts in Theology degree with a major in Theological Studies and a minor in Biblical Studies. I am currently finishing a Ph.D. at B.H. Carroll Theological Institute.

I work at Dallas Baptist University as the Assistant Director of Online Education. I love to listening to music (my favorite is Rock), and watching movies. I enjoy looking at issues of faith/spirituality in Pop-Culture, as well as political, ethical, and philosophical themes in books, TV, movies, and music. I am married and we have one child. My wife’s name is Lindsy and she is a constant encouragement to me in everything. We have two daughters, Maren and Addelyn.

Personal Goals for the Course:

The objective for this course is to teach the student to become a great thinker, lover, and doer, intellectually, emotionally, and vocationally, for the purpose of helping each student become a better person.

A. Intellectual Goals
   1. To be introduced to and take part in the “Great Conversation,” philosophically and in relation to the liberal arts.
   2. To become familiar with philosophical questions, ideas, arguments, and perspectives in order to evaluate them in relationship to the students’ culture.
   3. To begin developing a philosophical vocabulary.

B. Emotional Goals
   1. To remove the fear of philosophy from the students’ mindset and stimulate a love for the discipline of thinking critically and reflectively.
   2. To learn to appreciate the questions and influence philosophy has had on past and present cultures.
   3. To value philosophy as a means to developing, evaluating, and understanding a worldview.

C. Volitional Goals
   1. To recognize the value of intellectual curiosity, wonder, and knowledge for any occupational field.
2. To encourage the students to continue studying philosophy and thinking critically throughout life, after this class has finished.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

ADA Statement If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the college Disability Services Office at 972-860-8119.

Religious Holidays Absences for observance of a religious holy day are excused. A student whose absence is excused to observe a religious holy day is allowed to take a make-up examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Honesty Academic honesty is expected, and integrity is valued in the Dallas County Community Colleges. Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct published in the DCCCD Catalog. More information is available at https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat1011/cattoc.cfm

Withdrawal Policy If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally. The withdrawal request must be received in the Registrar’s Office by (semester’s drop date). Failure to do so will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually an “F.” If you drop a class or withdraw from the college before the official drop/withdrawal deadline, you will receive a “W” (Withdraw) in each class dropped.

STOP BEFORE YOU DROP
For students who enrolled in college level courses for the first time in the fall of 2007, Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop.

You may drop no more than six courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated six non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges. For more information, you may access:
Repeating this Course  Effective for Fall Semester 2005, the Dallas County Community Colleges will charge additional tuition to students registering the third or subsequent time for a course. This class *may not* be repeated for the third or subsequent time without paying the additional tuition. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 semester. More information is available at: https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/oepthird_attempt.cfm

Financial Aid  Students who are receiving any form of financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from classes. Withdrawals may affect your eligibility to receive further aid and could cause you to be in a position of repayment for the current semester. Students who fail to attend or participate after the drop date are also subject to this policy.

Disclaimer  The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.