Course Description, Focus, and Assumptions:
The catalogue description for this course is as follows:

“Prerequisite: Developmental Reading 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standard in Reading. This course offers an introduction to ideas about such things as the good life, reality, God, the acquisition and characteristics of knowledge, and the nature of humans. Students will evaluate both ancient and modern theories about these issues in terms of their logic, historical significance, and meaning in everyday life, as they practice the methods for doing philosophy.”

Of course, when we "do philosophy," we know that we are undertaking controversial topics -- that is, there are almost no conclusive answers. On the other hand, as humans we must all, in some way, address the problems and questions that make up the subject matter of philosophy: “What is the origin of the universe?” “What is it to be human?” “Do we survive death?” “Are my actions really free?” “What can we really know?” “What is the ultimate nature of reality?” “How should we live our lives?” “What is the meaning of my life?”

This course will be conducted primarily as a reading and discussion class; therefore, your active participation is required for successful completion of the course. We will consider a wide range of issues in philosophy. In addition to our own responses to these critical issues, we will consider the ideas of philosophers and others who have given their attention to the important problems and issues in philosophy.

Instructor’s Aspirations for Students:
This course should have a direct connection to and influence on your life, your life as a student, of course; however, even more important to me is that this course has a positive impact on your life beyond the walls of the college. My primary aspiration is to help you
walk the earth when you complete this course in a way that is at least somewhat different from the day you began. In short, I hope that when we part you are a changed person, that I am a changed person too, and that we both have changed for the better. My aspiration in teaching this course is for us to have a learning adventure together. Students who have curious, active minds and who are eager to engage the topic and material are encouraged to join me in this adventure.

Learning Objectives for the Course:
It is important to understand and acknowledge that in courses in the humanities, such as philosophy, some of the most important learning objectives cannot be easily measured or are impossible to measure. For example, some of the learning objectives in Introduction to Philosophy that are difficult or impossible to measure are as follows:

- developing intellectual humility
- developing intellectual courage
- developing intellectual empathy
- developing personal and intellectual integrity
- developing intellectual perseverance
- developing confidence in reason
- developing self knowledge
- developing a sense of wonder

The fundamental course objective that can be measured is that students are introduced to philosophy. In learning philosophy students will develop further their own capacities in three specific and interrelated areas: 1) as active participants in doing philosophy; 2) as critical thinkers; and, 3) as students with mastery of particular content.

1. As active participants in doing philosophy students will:
   - improve ability to use reason
   - recognize the importance of impartiality and fair-mindedness
   - develop further appreciation for facts and evidence
   - develop skills in listening to reason
   - appreciate the importance of revising positions when appropriate
   - appreciate questions with no conclusive answers
   - appreciate a sense of wonder

2. As critical thinkers in philosophy students will understand that critical thinking:
   - has a purpose, objective, or function
   - is an attempt to figure out something, settle a question, or solve a problem
   - is based on information, evidence, experience, or research
   - involves inferences from which we draw conclusions
recognizes that conclusions are only as sound as the assumptions on which they are based
- is expressed through and shaped by concepts and ideas
- has implications and, when acted upon, has consequences
- occurs within some frame of reference or point of view
- strives to be fair-minded
- strives to distinguish between what one knows and does not know
- is willing to challenge popular beliefs
- requires that one demands the same standards from oneself as one expects others to meet
- requires working through complexities and frustrations without giving up
- recognizes that good reasoning is the key to living a rational life, and to creating a more fair and just world
- involves taking responsibility for one’s thinking, beliefs, morals, and values
- involves working to overcome native egocentric, ethnocentric, and culture-centric tendencies
- involves self-directed, self-monitored learning
- involves placing questions at the heart of one’s learning
- involves reading carefully, reflecting, and understanding the most important ideas in texts
- involves identifying central issues and reasoning well through those issues
- involves developing skills in recognizing bias

3. As students with mastery of particular content one must understand:

- the value of doing philosophy
- ideas regarding the nature of philosophy
- the legacy of Socrates
- a number of the ideas of numerous philosophers (e.g. Socrates, Russell, Hume, Descartes, Locke, etc.)
- some of the classical problems in philosophy (e.g. the existence of God, the problem of evil, life after death, personal identity, mind-body problem, the problem of free will and the case against free will, problems of knowledge, views of the meaning of life, etc.)

Learning Activities:
Too often, I believe, we limit the way we think about learning. First, real learning is something we all love to do and have loved to do since we were babies. Learning is exciting and fun, and that’s part of the reason we love it. We are fortunate to be able to use technology to assist us in our learning together. As for the structured learning experiences that will lead to an evaluation of your work for this course, there are five main learning activities:
a) Taking quizzes;

b) Taking four examinations over material covered;

c) Writing a reflection paper (approximately 5 pages in length);

d) Submitting Really Cool Fun Things assignments; and

e) Participating in group PowerPoint presentations

**Evaluation:**
Your final course grade will be determined on the following basis: You will earn numerical grades for your performance in each of the above learning activities. The maximum number of points that one could make is 1000

900+ = A  
800 - 899 = B  
700 - 799 = C  
600 - 699 = D  
Below 600 = F

a) Quizzes: (10 separate grades) there will be random quizzes over the course of the semester, worth 20 points each. On the days we have quizzes (which could be on ANY day for which there is assigned reading...be prepared always!), they will be given out at the beginning of class. If you are more than ten minutes late to class, you may NOT take the quiz. There are no make-ups for quizzes. (Maximum of 200 points)

b) Examinations – (4 separate grades) you will be given four examinations (including the final examination) during the course. Each examination will be worth a total of 100 points. **There are no make-ups for exams** (see note below regarding late/missed work). (Maximum of 400 points)

c) Reflection paper – (1 grade) you will be assigned to write a paper (see handout in ecampus). (Maximum 100 points)

d) Really Cool Fun Things — (4 grades) There is a list (see handout in ecampus) of Really Cool Fun Things you can do over the course of the semester. These are REQUIRED (yes!!! I will FORCE you to have some fun!!). You must do four over the course of the semester. Each assignment is worth 50 points. (Maximum of 200 points). **You will not be able to receive a passing grade in the course if you submit fewer than two of these assignments by their respective due dates.**
e) Group PowerPoint presentation: (1 grade) you will be assigned to a group which will create and present a PowerPoint to the class (see handout in ecampus). (Maximum 100 points)

f) Coffee (or tea) Talk: State of the Student: at some point during the semester (after the first exam and before week fourteen) you are required to visit my office for us to discuss how things are going (and have some tea or coffee). I will have sign-up sheets in class.

See specific dates/course outline below.

Texts:
*Phaedrus* by Plato (trans. Christopher Rowe, ISBN 9780140449747)

You will also be assigned various additional readings for which I will provide handouts or links.

**Important note regarding late work/missed assignments:** Please be aware that I do not accept late work. If you miss a quiz, there is no make-up for that quiz. If you miss an exam, there is no make-up for that exam (exceptions to this rule will be made on an individual basis; if, for example, you know in advance that you will be absent on an exam day, you must make arrangements with me AT LEAST a week ahead of time. If you do not notify me at least a week in advance and make arrangements with me, you will not be allowed to make up a missed exam. If an emergency occurs and you are unable to take an exam, I will require documentation of some sort that sufficiently excuses you [having to work is not a sufficient excuse]). Really Cool Fun Things will not be accepted late; you must be present with your group for the group PowerPoint presentations. The final paper will not be accepted late.

Assignments submitted in ecampus are due by 11:30 pm on the due date.

Because I do know all too well that ‘life happens’, I will make ONE exception over the course of the semester regarding late work. This exception ONLY applies to the Really Cool Fun Things assignments. You may turn in ONE of these late during the semester IF AND ONLY IF you submit it within 72 hours of the due date.
**Academic Honesty:**
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.

**NB:** ANY violation of the academic honesty policy will be punishable by an F IN THE COURSE.

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. [https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm](https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm)

(see additional information below)

**Attendance and participation:**

In order to be successful students must attend and participate in enrolled courses. Regular attendance is imperative because this course involves a good deal more than simply reading a text; further, you cannot receive credit for a class you have not regularly attended. **You may not miss more than six consecutive class hours or nine cumulative class hours; there are no excused absences.** Students who miss more hours than are allowed are advised to drop, as they will not receive a passing performance grade. Those who miss too many classes and do not drop the course will receive an F for the course. Three tardies of 14 or fewer minutes constitute one absence, while any tardy of 15 or more minutes counts as an absence.

**Academic Progress:**

Students are encouraged to discuss academic goals and degree completion with their instructors. Specific advising is available throughout the semester. Check [www.richlandcollege.edu/admissions/process.php](http://www.richlandcollege.edu/admissions/process.php) for more details.

**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 Thursday, November 15, 2012. 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. For more information about drop deadlines, refer to the current printed Credit Class Schedule, contact the Admissions/Student Records office at 972-238-6100 or 6101 (Thunderduck Hall, T170), or contact the division office.

**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 6 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 6 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: https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

Campus Emergency Operation Plan

To help ensure your safety on campus, please watch the video on *Keeping Safe in a Campus Emergency* at http://video.dcccd.edu/rtv/DO/emergency_dcccd.wmv

eCampus:

Most of the handouts and other information for the class will be distributed through eCampus. It is your responsibility to check frequently for announcements and to access handouts. A calendar that includes all daily assignments and readings is posted on eCampus. If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for having work submitted on time, as you can access everything you need through eCampus. **Unless eCampus is down for repair, inability to access eCampus is not an excuse for not having work done.** If you have trouble accessing eCampus, you must contact technical support at 972-669-6402. To avoid any problems, I suggest printing things out in advance. You may access eCampus at http://ecampus.dcccd.edu/

Classroom Rules and Expectations:

All students are required to practice courteous, respectful, cooperative behavior at all times. To avoid distractions in the classroom, students will:

- Arrive on time and stay until class is dismissed;
- Be prepared and stay on task;
- Listen courteously to one speaker at a time, with no interruptions and no side conversations;
- Generally behave as mature adults would in the workplace.
Additionally, be aware that if you use your phone for any reason during class time (this includes texting, answering your phone, and leaving the room to answer/use your phone), besides witnessing my head exploding, you will be asked to leave and you will be considered absent for the day.

You may not use laptop computers or iPads for any reason during class.

**Repeating the Course, Third Attempt to Enroll in a 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. All third and subsequent attempts of the majority of credit and Continuing Education/Workforce Training courses will result in additional tuition to be charged. Developmental Studies and some other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 Semester. Visit www.dcccd.edu/ThirdCourseAttempt for a list of courses and additional information.

**Obtaining Final Course Grades Using eConnect:**
Final Grade Reports are no longer mailed. Convenient access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu or by telephone at 972-613-1818. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect, an online system developed by the DCCCD to provide you with timely information regarding your college record. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report, which is available in the Admissions and Student Records Office, T170. At the completion of this course, you should be able to easily know what your assigned grade for the course will be, by checking in the course “grade book” for your total score.

**Financial Aid**

If you are receiving any form of financial aid, you 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.

**ADA(American Disabilities Act) Statement:**
If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the college Disability Services Office at 972-238-6180 (Voice/TTY), visit Thunderduck Hall, suite T120, or go to [http://www.dcccd.edu/Current+Students/Student+Services/Disability+Services/](http://www.dcccd.edu/Current+Students/Student+Services/Disability+Services/)
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 contract with the instructor to take a make-up examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

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

The Richland College Statement on Academic Honesty:
This statement clarifies academic honesty for the Richland College teaching-learning community. It identifies appropriate student behavior and describes teachers’ expectations of students.

We—the Richland College faculty, administration, and staff—are committed to honesty and fairness as we work with our students. We also expect our students to be honest and fair in the work they submit to us. This statement on academic honesty describes:

1) what we expect from students.
2) the consequences of their failing to meet those expectations.

Note: As we use the terms “honesty” and “dishonesty,” we are referring to actions and behaviors; we are not judging the character of our students.

The Richland College faculty believes only a small minority of students “cheat,” However, we believe academically dishonest students cheat the academically honest students. Therefore, we expect students who are aware of cheating to act honorably and report instances of academic dishonesty to the faculty or the appropriate academic dean.

Expectations

1. We believe academic honesty is essential, and students should avoid actions that misrepresent academic success. We believe Richland College students are academically honest, and they want to be fair and honest in the assignments they submit.

These guidelines apply to all testing situations—test administered in the classrooms, tests administered in the Testing Center, and tests administered by someone other than the
2. **All forms of cheating on tests are academically dishonest.** Students cheat when they:

- participate in any activity that falsely represents their ability to answer test questions.
- copy—with or with permission—from another student’s test.
- use notes (either written or electronically stored in calculators or computers) or any other unauthorized materials.
- request answers or assist other students with answers without authorization.
- obtain test questions prior to the test (soliciting or in any other way obtaining test questions, answers, or portions of tests).

3. **Student’s presenting another person’s work as their own is unacceptable.** Often, academic work permits and even encourages students to use another person’s words or ideas, but students must document those words and ideas correctly. Therefore, students cheat when they:

- Summarize, paraphrase, or quote another person without giving proper credit.
- Submit papers written by someone else.
- Copy verbatim (word for word) from other sources (books, Internet, and other similar materials).

When they have questions about when and how to credit other sources, students must seek clarification from the faculty. **These matters are the student’s responsibility.**

4. **Unauthorized collaboration on assignments or tests is unacceptable.** Richland College supports authorized collaborative, cooperative learning. Therefore, we encourage study groups when students are preparing for tests, but students cheat when they:

- Provide other students with answers on homework assignments.
- Present work completed by someone else.

If they have a question about the appropriateness of collaboration, students should seek clarification from the faculty. These matters are the student’s responsibility.

**Consequences**

1. Faculty determine the appropriate consequences for students who fail to be academically honest. Even if the course syllabus fails to address the matter, students are obliged to be academically honest. By enrolling in a course, students are promising to be
academically honest.

2. As consequences for academic dishonesty, faculty may:

- assign a performance grade of “F” for the assignment or test.
- document the incident in the student’s Richland College file.
- assign additional work.
- take over appropriate disciplinary actions.

Repeated violations may result in the student’s expulsion or suspension from the college. Students must understand that academic dishonesty carries serious consequences. However, if they believe they have received unfair treatment, students can file a grievance as described in the “Student Code of Conduct” in the Richland College Catalog or published in the DCCCD Catalog at [http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm](http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm)

**Course Calendar:**

Please note: Quizzes will be unannounced. Regardless of where we are with regard to discussion, you are responsible for having read what is assigned for any day on that day (in other words, you should not decide to fall behind with reading if we are behind in discussion; as you will soon see, some of the topics will get us into deep discussion and we could fall behind with regard to the calendar; nonetheless, you should follow this calendar unless I tell you not to!)

Also, I will not announce assignment due dates in class, so you should check this calendar often and make sure you know when assignments are due.

( below references to numbered sections such as '1.7' are all from Chaffee text

**Week One:**

T 8/28  
• Course Introduction

Th 8/30  
• Discussion: “What Is College for?” , “Is Philosophy the Most Practical Major?”, “In a New Generation of College Students, Many Opt for the Life Examined” (links in eCampus under ‘Links to Readings’) and 1.4-1.5

**Week Two:**

T 9/4  
• Discussion: 1.6

Th 9/6  
• Discussion: 2.1-2.3

**Week Three:**

T 9/11  
• Discussion: 3.1, 3.3, 3.5

Th 9/13
• Discussion: *Phaedrus*

**Week Four:**
T 9/18
• Discussion: 3.6, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies* (sections TBA)
• Really Cool Fun Thing #1 due (see assignment instructions in eCampus)
Th 9/20
• Discussion: 3.7, 3.10, 3.12

**Week Five:**
T 9/25
• Exam One: bring a Green Book to the Exam (these can be purchased in the bookstore)
Th 9/27
• Discussion: 4.1, 4.2

**Week Six:**
T 10/2
• Discussion: 4.3, 4.4
Th 10/4
• Discussion: 5.1, 5.2

**Week Seven:**
T 10/9
• Discussion: 5.3
Th 10/11
• Discussion: *Meditations, Objections, and Replies* (sections TBA)

**Week Eight:**
T 10/16
• Exam Two: bring a Green Book to the Exam
Th 10/18
• Discussion: 6.1, 6.2

• Really Cool Fun Thing #2 due (see assignment instructions in eCampus)

**Week Nine:**
T 10/23
• Discussion: 6.3

Th 10/25
• Discussion: 6.5

**Week Ten:**
T 10/30
• Discussion: 7.1-7.4
Th 11/1
• Discussion: 7.5

Week Eleven:
T 11/6
• Exam Three: bring a Green Book to the Exam
Th 11/8
• Discussion: 8.1, 8.2

• Really Cool Fun Thing #3 due (see assignment instructions in eCampus)

Week Twelve: Thursday of this week is the last day to drop a course and receive a grade of ‘W’
T 11/13
• Discussion: 8.3, 8.4
Th 11/15
• Discussion: 9.2, 9.3

Week Thirteen:
T 11/20
• Discussion: Utilitarianism
Th 11/22
• No classes

Week Fourteen:
T 11/27
• Discussion: “All Animals Are Equal” and “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” by Peter Singer (in eCampus under ‘Links to Readings’)

• Really Cool Fun Thing #4 due (see assignment instructions in eCampus)
Th 11/29

• Group PowerPoint Presentations

Week Fifteen:
T 12/4
• Discussion: 9.5
• Final paper due (see assignment guidelines in eCampus)
Th 12/6
• Discussion: *Blood Meridian*

**Week Sixteen:**
T 12/11 11:00-12:50
• Exam Four: bring a Green Book to the exam