Philosophy 1301, Introduction to Philosophy
Richland College, Humanities Division
Online Internet Course
3 Credit Hours
October 22-December 13, 2012

Instructor: Luisa Forrest
Office: WH 229
Office Hours: by appointment
Office Telephone: 972.761.6834 (but best to reach me by email)
Email: Lforrest@dcccd.edu

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 online 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 the influence this course has on your life beyond the walls of the virtual 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 the 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 four main learning activities:

a) Writing Protocol Papers (each approximately 750 words in length) in response to assigned readings in the course. (The Protocol Paper assignment can be viewed in “Assignments” -- Unit One. You will also find a sample protocol to give you an idea of what is expected on these papers, which are designed primarily as a way for you to study and learn the material.) ;

b) Taking four examinations over material covered. The course is made up of 8 separate Units. Each examination covers two course units;

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

d) Reading chapters, articles, essays, and course “lectures” on questions and problems in philosophy; and

g) Using the “Discussion Board” to interact with your professor and other students about ideas that emerge from the above activities.

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) Protocol Papers – (6 separate grades) you will be provided with a simple protocol to follow in preparing these short papers as responses to what you have read. You will also be provided with a sample paper before the first assignment is due. There will be six protocol papers assigned, and each will be worth a total of 50 points. (Maximum of 300 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. Examinations are timed. If the time limit is exceeded the grade may be adjusted accordingly. (Maximum of 400 points)

c) Final Paper – (1 grade) you will be assigned to write a final paper (approximately 5 pages in length). (Maximum 100 points)

d) Class Participation – (4 separate grades) as participation class “discussions” are an essential aspect of success in this course, you will receive a class participation grade that is based upon your contributions to the discussions on the Discussion Board. There will be 4 in-depth discussions during the course, so your participation in each discussion will be worth a maximum of 50 points. (Maximum of 200 points)

**Important note regarding late work**
Papers and tests should be completed by their due dates. Any assignments submitted after their due dates will be subject to point reductions. Additionally, I will not accept any work 72 hours past the due date. Work submitted after this time will receive no credit.

Students should participate in Discussion Boards from the time they open until they close. Because the Discussion Board is a place for all of us to interact, it is crucial that everyone participates from the beginning to the end; otherwise, there is nothing for others to respond to and discuss. So students who wait until the end or near the end to participate in Discussion Boards will not receive full credit, even if they answer all the required threads.
You will be also assigned a variety of readings with various online links to assist you in finding the readings.

**Academic Dishonesty**
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. Please be aware that ANY academic honesty violation will be punished with a MINIMUM of an F on the assignment. Punishment could also include an F in the course, suspension, or expulsion.

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

**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 the official 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 - 6 Drop Rule**
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

**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 for Distance Learning Classes**

If you are receiving Financial Aid grants or loans and are enrolled in a Distance Learning class, you must show participation in this class prior to the certification date by either e-mailing or contacting the instructor or logging on to eCampus. Do not drop or stop attending any class without consulting the Financial Aid Office. Changes in your enrollment level and failing grades may require that you repay financial aid funds. 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.

**ADA (American Disabilities Act) Statement**

If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires ADA accommodations, please contact Richland College Disability Services Office, T-120 at (972) 238-6180.

**Religious Holidays**

As this online course is designed without any particular days or times that a student must be online, then religious holidays should not be a factor. It should be understood, however, that college policy is that 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. Students who will be absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must notify the instructor in advance.

**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 professor.

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. Students 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