Phil 1301: Introduction to Philosophy: Section 53402 – 3 credits, Spring 2020
El Centro College – Arts & Sciences Division

Instructor: Dr. Andy Amato; E-mail Address: lamato@dcccd.edu

Location and Time: Online, MTWRFSU

Course Description
An introduction to the 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.

Course Prerequisites
Prerequisite: Developmental Reading 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standard in Reading.

Students are required to have demonstrated college-level reading, writing, and/or math skills prior to enrolling in academic transfer core courses.

Specific Course Learning Outcomes:
Students will demonstrate an understanding of both the nuances and the gist of the philosophical positions presented in the texts. Students will exhibit analytical skill in uncovering and assessing implicit assumptions behind views and evaluating arguments presented for them. Students will acquire the ability to articulate and defend a philosophical position.

Evaluating this outcome:
The final grade will be determined by two tests and two in-class essays. The tests will be short answer and they will be used to evaluate your grasp of the readings and classroom conversations. Your in-class essays will demonstrate how much time you’ve spent reflecting on the issues and arguments that have arisen from the readings and our classroom discussions.

Course objectives:
Students will demonstrate an understanding of both the nuances and the gist of the philosophical positions presented in the texts. Students will exhibit analytical skill in uncovering and assessing implicit assumptions behind views and evaluating arguments presented for them. Students will acquire the ability to articulate and defend a philosophical position.

The course will investigate a variety of influential philosophical perspectives, from Thales to the present day, on topics of perennial interest in epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of mind.

We will ponder the following questions, among others: What weight should be given to the roles of sense perception and abstract conceptual activity in our attempts to acquire knowledge of the world? Is certainty possible? Can we attain genuine knowledge of anything beyond Nature? Are there any valid proofs of the existence of God? What is the most reasonable attitude to take towards matters of faith? What, exactly, does it mean to have a mind? What sort of relation obtains between mental states or events and the physical dimension of our being? What sort of inquiry is philosophy?
Course Outline:
El Centro wants this course to improve your intellectual competencies. So, in this course, you will read Sophie’s World and the Reader to expose yourself to the primary texts. We will learn important philosophical important concepts, such as: metaphysics, free will, predestination, reality, sureality, God, cause and effect, nature, cosmos, and even space, and critically examine the implications of such ideas. The main objective of this course is to introduce you to the history and of evolution of such ideas from Pre-Socrates to our current era, and how these ideas have influenced and shape our culture, politics, and our way of thinking. We will learn to think not only as being part of the world, but also as being other than the world. The observer of the world.

Plagiarism Warning:
Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in course failure.

If I make any changes to the syllabus, I will make an announcement in class or post an announcement on ecampus.

Books:

ISBN: 978-0393314670

ISBN: 978-0631226543

ISBN: 045152251

Evaluation Procedures
You will be evaluated on your ability a) to think critically, b) to articulate your interpretations and arguments, and c) respectfully and actively engage the ideas of others. You will demonstrate these abilities by your class participation on the discussion boards and the three writing assignments.

Grading Scale
Grade 1: Discussion Board Activity 40% or 400 pts. (25 pts. Each)
Grade 2: Short Essay 20% or 200 pts.
Grade 3: Long Essay 40% or 400 pts.

—SEE “MORE DETAILS ABOUT GRADING” BELOW—

Exams & Assignments
1) You will have 8 Discussion Board Questions throughout the semester. You will need to reply to each one twice. Each reply is worth up to 25 points (50 for both), for a total of 400 points.

2) You will write one short essay during the semester. The prompt for the essay will be release three days before the essay is due. The essay is worth 200 points.

3) You will write one long essay. The prompt for the long essay will be released near the end of the semester and you will have one week to work on it. The long essay is worth 400 points.

—SEE “MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS” BELOW—

Attendance Policy
Class attendance is required. Attendance is determined by your participation on the Discussion Board Threads.
ADA Statement
If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the college Disability Services Office.

Room A110; 214.860.2411; 5ds@dcccd.edu

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 if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student notified the instructor of each class scheduled on the date that the student would be absent for a religious holy day. A “religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under section 11.20, Tax Code. The notice shall be in writing and shall be delivered by the student personally to the instructor, with receipt acknowledged and dated by the instructor or by certify mail, return requested, addressed to the instructor. A student who is excused under this section may not be penalized for the absence, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination.

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/catalog/ss/code.cfm.

Withdrawal Policy (with drop date)
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.

Last Day to Withdraw is April 16 (R)

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 information, you may access: 
https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

**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/oep/third_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.

**CLASS POLICIES**
Everyone will be expected to respect each other during in-class discussions. Adult language is permitted, but will be monitored if deemed excessive. Additionally, no overt personal attacks about one’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, appearance or manner of speaking will be permitted. In a nutshell, you will be expected to act as responsible, empathetic adults who respect the lives and views of their fellow humans.

**E-connect**
E-connect is the web interface that provides online student services which allow students to search, register, and pay for credit classes, view final grades and financial aid status. Go to https://econnect.dcccd.edu/eConnect

You must have an e-mail address on file with the college to access e-Connect. You may use a DCCCD e-mail address, which is free if you are eligible, or you may use a commercial e-mail address. If you have a question contact eConnect@DCCCD.Edu

**Computer use Policy:**
This class will require you to utilize campus computers. Please see the computer use policy for the district under the student code of conduct at https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0809/ss/computer.cfm?loc=5

**Student Handbook:**
The student handbook with additional information for students is available at https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0809/ss/computer.cfm?loc=5

or http://www.elcentrocollege.edu/studentservices/spar/

**MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS:**

1) **Discussion Board Activity:** Each student must participate by replying **twice** on each Discussion Board question. The **first reply** will be each student’s own answer to the question. The **second reply** will be a response to other students’ answers, engaging 2-3 different answers by other students. Students are required to respond thoughtfully and engage with each other respectively. **Both replies must be at least 250 words each.**
In addition to the required first and second replies, students are encouraged to use the Discussion Boards as often as they would like to explore each topic and see where the conversation goes. There are no word minimums or maximums for replies after the first two. But, again, each student must reply at least twice to each question (an answer and a response to other answers), and each reply must contain more than 250 words.

There will be approximately 8 Discussion Board questions, which is about one every two weeks. Each question will be taken from the readings. First replies must engage the required readings, while second replies must engage 2-3 answers by other students. Each Discussion Board Thread will be frozen before the Discussion Board is updated with the next question.

Each reply will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Does it demonstrate an adequate understanding of both the reading and the question?
- Does it demonstrate critical thinking and thoughtful reflection?
- Does it demonstrate serious consideration for what other responses have stated?
- Does it demonstrate respect for other views?

PLEASE NOTE: The Instructor may engage students’ replies and require them to clarify or defend what they have written, so students must also be prepared for the possibility that they may need to reply more than twice to each question (the 250 word minimum will not be enforced in such instances).

2) Short Essay: Each student will write one short essay (750-1,000 words) during the semester. The instructor will update eCampus with the essay’s Prompt (it may be a Topic or a Question) on Friday, Feb 28, and essays must be submitted by 12 pm - noon - on Monday, Mar 2. This gives each student approximately 3 days or 72 hours to complete his or her short essay.

3) Long Essay: Each student will write one long essay (1,500-2,000 words) near the end of the semester. The Prompt for the long essay will be given on Friday, May 8, and must be submitted by 12 pm - noon - on Thursday, May 14. This essentially gives students the last week of class to work on their Long Essay.

PLEASE NOTE:
- Essays (the 1 Short Essays and the 1 Long Essay) should consult and use either MLA or Chicago style (choose one or the other) for citations, bibliographies, notes, etc.
- Essays must be submitted as Word documents.
- Essays will only be accepted through e-Campus.
- Paper should be typed, double-spaced, in 12 font Times New Roman.

All essays will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Does it demonstrate an adequate understanding of both the reading and the question?
- Does it demonstrate critical thinking and thoughtful reflection?
- Does it demonstrate the ability to offer and unpack a reasonable interpretation?
- Does it demonstrate the ability to construct and articulate a defensible argument?

PLEASE NOTE: Plagiarism or having someone else write your essays or discussion board replies will not be tolerated. If you do this it will result in you failing the course.
MORE DETAILS ABOUT GRADING:
Grade 1: Discussion Board Activity 40% or 400 possible points.

- Discussion Board Question 1: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 2: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 3: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 4: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 5: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 6: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 7: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)
- Discussion Board Question 8: Answer Reply: 25 pts. + Response Reply: 25 pts. (5% or 50 pts.)

Grade 2: Short Essay 20% or 200 possible points.

Grade 3: Long Essay 40% or 400 possible points.

Final Grade: Grades 1, 2, 3 will be combined for a possible 100% or 1,000 points.

Grade Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%-100%</td>
<td>900-1,000 pts.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%-89%</td>
<td>800-899 pts.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%-79%</td>
<td>700-799 pts.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%-69%</td>
<td>600-699 pts.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00%-59%</td>
<td>000-599 pts.</td>
<td>F</td>
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Amendments to the Syllabus: If I make any changes to the syllabus, I will e-mail you and/or let you know on e-Campus.

Spring Academic Semester, 2020

- January 2 (Thursday) College buildings and offices open
- January 13 (Monday) Faculty Reports
- January 20 (Monday) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Holiday
- January 21 (Tuesday) Classes Begin
- February 3 (Monday) 12th Class Day (Certification Date)
- February 27 - 28 (Thursday thru Friday) Professional Development Days -- Thursday and Friday day classes will not meet. Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday classes will meet.

- March 2 (Monday) Classes Resume
- March 16-20 (Monday thru Friday) Spring Break - College buildings and offices will be closed for the week.
- March 23 (Monday) Classes Resume
- April 10 (Friday) Holiday
- April 13 (Monday) Classes Resume
- April 16 (Thursday)* Last Day to Withdraw*
- May 11-14 (Monday thru Thursday) Final Exams
- May 14 (Thursday) Semester Ends
- May 18 (Monday) Last Day for faculty to submit grades electronically through eConnect to the Registrar’s Office.

May Graduation Ceremony dates may vary at the colleges depending on space available.
Class Schedule

Weeks 1 & 2 • Jan 21 – Feb 2
Assignments:
1) See Announcements in e-Campus for general introduction to the course.
2) Discussion Board Participation: Question 1 (Remember to reply twice to each question: your first reply should be an answer to the question, while the second reply should respond to 2-3 other students’ answers to the question).

Reading:
Greek Philosophy
Plato, Republic, Books I & II

Weeks 3 & 4 • Feb 3 – Feb 16
Assignments:
1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 2

Readings:
Greek Philosophy con’t
Plato, Republic, Books III & IV

Weeks 5 & 6 • Feb 17 – Mar 1
Assignments:
1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 3
2) Short Essay Prompt on Friday, Feb 28, DUE Monday, Mar 2 at 12pm - Noon

Readings:
Greek Philosophy con’t
Plato, Republic, Books V & VI

Weeks 7 & 8 • Mar 2 – Mar 15 (Spring Break Mar 16 – Mar 20)
Assignments:
1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 4

Readings:
Greek Philosophy con’t
Plato, Republic, Books VII & VIII

Weeks 9 & 10 • Mar 16 – Mar 29
Assignments:
1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 5

Readings:
Greek Philosophy con’t
Plato, Republic, Books IX & X
Weeks 11 & 12 • Mar 30 – Apr 12
Assignments:
   1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 6

Readings:
   Existentialism
   Nietzsche, *Homer’s Contest* and *The Greek State*

Weeks 13 & 14 • Apr 13 – Apr 26 (Apr 16, Thursday, Last Day to Drop)
Assignments:
   1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 7

Readings:
   Existentialism
   Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in an Non-moral Sense* and *The Gay Science*

Weeks 15 & 16 • Apr 27 – May 14
Assignments:
   1) Discussion Board Participation: Question 8
   2) Long Essay: Prompt on Friday, May 8, DUE Thursday, May 14, at 12pm - Noon