



Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 101; Fall 2018



Meeting time: Mondays, Wednesdays: 11:00-12:15; Room: B111

Instructor: Dr. Andrei G. Zavaliy, *Associate Professor of Philosophy*

Office: B 403; 224-8399, ext. 3604

Office Hours: I am usually in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 8:00 till 9:30. At all other times an appointment needs to be arranged.

E-MAIL: azavaliy@auk.edu.kw (*emailing is the most convenient way to contact me*)

SYLLABUS

REQUIRED TEXTS - Please follow this procedure for obtaining your textbooks:

- 1. Go to “Kwik Kopy” Office (C011, next to the entrance to Science building)**
- 2. Tell the person in charge that you need copies of both textbooks (Book #1 (*N. Rauhut*, “Ultimate Questions”), and Book #2 (“Readings on the Ultimate Questions”) for Prof. Zavaliy’s “Introduction to Philosophy” class.**
- 3. Pay the fee for the copies, once they are ready (about 7kd).**
 - *Assorted Handouts.* Handouts with additional readings will be distributed in class. You can also access many (but NOT ALL) of the handouts, assignments and course documents (e.g. syllabus) on the shared “Cloud” drive from any computer (under “AA.Humanities” folder find a folder with my name)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is critical that you attend class regularly to be a full partner in the enhanced learning environment. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. However, **4** absences for MW pattern and **6** absences for UTR pattern for the semester will be allowed. Every additional

absence will result in deducting 4% from your overall score. For instance, if you had 6 absences and received a score of 85% (B) for the course, it would be lowered to 81% (B-); etc. Simple math will tell you that skipping more than 13 classes will earn you an **F** for the course *even if you have a 100% average on all your tests.*

Important: I **do not** distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences: an absence is an absence. Therefore, I do not accept doctor’s notes or hospital notes (medical emergencies **MAY** be excused only at my discretion). No changes can be made past the two weeks of the skipped class. It is YOUR responsibility to sign the attendance sheet at each session.

THE 8-MINUTE RULE: You will not be able to sign the attendance sheet if you are more than 8 minutes late, and you’ll have to take the absence. Leaving the class early will amount to an absence from the class as well even if you sign the attendance sheet.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The American University of Kuwait regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values and standards of intellectual honesty. The guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that a student's submitted work, examinations, and projects must be that of the student's own work. The University is committed to enforcing its Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the University’s Academic Integrity Procedures. It is strongly suggested that you educate yourself about what constitutes plagiarism by visiting www.plagiarism.org.

- **Falsifying your attendance record or signing for another student not present in class is a case of academic dishonesty.**

Disability Accommodation:

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, kindly arrange for an appointment with Dr. Huda Shaaban (hshaaban@auk.edu.kw) at the Counseling Center located in front of Gate 2 at the earliest with the understanding that all disability-related accommodations require registration with the Counseling Center and are not applied retroactively.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in class will be based on the instructor’s assessment of your contribution to class discussion, being prepared for class (i.e., doing the reading, preparing for assignments), being on time, not continually leaving early, and giving thoughtful feedback to others. The instructor reserves the right to lower your grade by as much as one grade (i.e., A to B, B to C) for repeated poor participation. **AT VERY MINIMUM, participation implies that a student brings the textbook and takes notes in class.**

COURSE ETIQUETTE

All cell phones and ipads are to be turned off as soon as the student enters the classroom. Absolutely NO FOOD allowed in the classroom except for water bottles. Students using the cell-phones for messaging will be asked to leave the classroom.



GRADING CRITERIA

- Quizzes (4 in total) - 25%
- Midterm Exam – 25%
- Final Exam – 25%
- Paper - 25%

(There is no extra credit work for this class.)

QUIZZES

There will be 4 quizzes during the semester. All quizzes will be announced in advance. The quizzes will cover the reading assignments as well as the class discussions. If you miss a quiz – IT CANNOT BE MADE UP. However, at the end of the semester I will only average the 3 best quizzes. The lowest 4th grade for the quiz will be dropped. Thus, if you miss one quiz you lose the privilege of having the lowest grade dropped.

The numerical grading system for the assignments graded on a 100-point scale:

A	=	94 - 100%	(GPA: 4)	C-	=	70-73%	(GPA: 1.7)
A-	=	90 – 93%	(GPA: 3.7)	D+	=	67-69%	(GPA: 1.3)
B+	=	87 - 89%	(GPA: 3.3)	D	=	64 - 66%	(GPA: 1.0)
B	=	84 – 86%	(GPA: 3.0)	D-	=	60-63%	(GPA: 0.7)
B-	=	80 – 83%	(GPA: 2.7)	F	=	<60%	(GPA: 0.0)
C+	=	77 - 79%	(GPA: 2.3)	I	=	Incomplete	
C	=	74 – 76%	(GPA: 2.0)	WF	=	Withdrawal with Failure	

The numerical grading system for the assignments graded on a 30-point scale (Quizzes):

A	=	29-30	C	=	17-18
A-	=	27-28	C-	=	16
B+	=	25-26	D+	=	15
B	=	23-24	D	=	14
B-	=	21-22	D-	=	13
C+	=	19-20	F	=	less than 13 points

- In addition to the regular quizzes I reserve the right to announce several “**Reading Quizzes**” – based solely on the reading material assigned for a given class.

PAPER

The topic for the paper will be announced later in the semester. All papers are expected to be typed, double-spaced, font Times New Roman (or a similar font) size 12, 1 inch (2.5cm) margins all around. Proper documentation of all the sources used in the paper is required. Your paper will be due at the end of the semester, before the Final exam (the exact date will be announced later) – BOTH as a hard copy and as an email attachment. The very final chance to hand in your paper will be on the day of the Final Exam. The papers will be graded on a 100 point scale. Absolutely NO papers will be accepted 2 weeks after the due date. Students should be aware that their papers will be tested for plagiarism via www.turnitin.com resources.

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this course is to introduce a student to the major issues in contemporary philosophy, enhance the ability to read carefully and analyze the complicated textual material, and be able to relate the philosophical problems discussed in class to one’s

personal experience. We will take a more topic-oriented rather than historical approach to philosophy, which will require the introduction of some technical terminology and a number of new conceptual schemes. Strong participation in the classroom as well as an honest try to understand and absorb the material on your own is crucial for completing the course successfully.

In addition to the philosophy-specific introductory goal, the successful completion of the course will enhance the student's performance in these four general areas of learning:

1. **General Problem Solving.** The study of philosophy enhances, in a way no other activity does, one's problem-solving capacities. It helps one to analyze concepts, definitions, arguments and problems. It contributes to one's capacity to organize ideas and issues, to deal with questions of value, and to extract what is essential from masses of information.
2. **Communication Skills.** Philosophy also contributes uniquely to the development of expressive and communicative powers. It provides some of the basic tools of self-expression—for instance, skills in presenting ideas through well-constructed, systematic arguments—that other fields either do not use, or use less extensively. It helps one to express what is distinctive of one's view; enhances one's ability to explain difficult material; and helps one to eliminate ambiguities and vagueness from one's writing and speech.
3. **Persuasive Powers.** Philosophy provides training in the construction of clear formulations, good arguments, and apt examples. It thereby helps one develop the ability to be convincing. One learns to build and defend one's own views, to appreciate competing positions, and to indicate forcefully why one considers one's own views preferable to alternatives.
4. **Writing Skills.** Philosophy teaches interpretive writing through its examination of challenging texts, comparative writing through emphasis on fairness to alternative positions, argumentative writing through developing students' ability to establish their own views, and descriptive writing through detailed portrayal of concrete examples. Originality is also encouraged, and students are urged to use their imagination in developing their own ideas.

Student learning outcomes

The student will be able to:

1. Summarize the main problems of philosophy as they have been developed in the Western world.
2. Add evidence from personal experience/observation to both support and challenge the solutions to various philosophical problems
3. Analyze information that corroborates and refutes claims contained within a work of philosophy.
4. Compare similarities and differences between various theories in philosophy, analyze the impact of these theories to the development of science and culture in general.
5. Express one's own understanding of philosophical puzzle in a formal paper and oral presentation.

AUK MISSION STATEMENT

The American University of Kuwait is a liberal arts institution dedicated to teaching, learning, and scholarship. The university offers programs that provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning and professional success. AUK enriches society by fostering an environment encouraging critical thinking, effective communication, personal growth, service, and leadership.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

We will try to cover the following topics:

(The Reading Assignments must be completed **BEFORE** the class discussion)

WEEKS 1-2 – **Introduction to the Subject; the Value of Philosophy:**

- The Nature of Philosophy; Branches of Philosophy
- Basic Logical Concepts

READING:

- “Ultimate Questions” (Book 1, Chapter 1 & 2)
- I. Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (Book 2, pp. 3-8)
- A. Mele, “Philosophy, a Bus Ride, and Dumb Luck,” (Book 2, pp. 15-17)
- B. Russell, “The Value of Philosophy,” (Book 2, pp. 33-38)

WEEKS 3-5 – **Epistemology – the Study of Knowledge:**

- The Challenge and Value of Skepticism: Global vs. Local Skepticism
- Epistemic Justification and the Ethics of Belief
- The Nature and Definition of Knowledge.

READING:

- “Ultimate Questions,” (Book 1, Chapter 3)
- Rene Descartes, “Meditations 1 and 2” (Book 2, pp. 43-54)
- Al-Ghazali, Selection from *Deliverance from Error* (HANDOUT)
- B. Russell, “On the Value of Skepticism.” (Book 2, pp. 62-70)
- G. E. Moore, “Proof of the External World,” (Book 2, pp. 75-91)
- W. K. Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief.” (Book 2, pp. 471-477)
- William James, “The Will to Believe.” (Book 2, pp. 478-487)
- Jack Meiland, “What Ought We Believe?” (HANDOUT)

WEEKS 6-7 - **Freedom of the Will and Determinism:**

- Hard Determinism, Libertarianism and Compatibilism
- The Problem of Moral Responsibility

READING:

- “Ultimate Questions,” (Book 1, Chapter 4)
- A. Schopenhauer, “Essay on the Freedom of the Will.” (Book 2, pp. 115-118)
- R. Blatchford. “The Delusion of Free Will” (HANDOUT)
- W. T. Stace, “Compatibilism.” (Book 2, pp. 119-126)
- R. Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self.” (Book 2, pp. 168-178)

Midterm Exam

WEEKS 8-10 – **The Mind-Body Problem and Personal Identity:**

- Dualistic Theories of the Mind vs. Monistic views
- Behaviorism and Functionalism
- The Problem of Personal Identity

READING:

- “Ultimate Questions.” (Book 1, Chapters 5 & 6)
- P. Churchland, “A Critique of Dualism.” (Book 2, pp. 263-278)
- J. Foster, “A Defense of Dualism.” (Book 2, pp. 279-283)

- D. Armstrong, “The Nature of Mind.” (Book 2, pp. 298-310)
- J. Heil, “Philosophical Behaviorism.” (Book 2, pp. 284-297)
- R. Swinburne, “Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory.” (Book 2, pp. 198-221)
- J. Perry, “A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality.” (Book 2, pp. 181-192)
- D. Dennett, “Where Am I?” (Book 2, pp. 230-242)

WEEKS 11-14 - **Philosophy of Religion:**

- The Possibility of Rational Justification of God’s Existence
- Miracles and Life after Death
- The Problem of Evil

READING:

- “Ultimate Questions,” (Book 1, Chapter 7)
- C. D. Broad, “Appeal to Religious Experience.” (Book 2, pp. 369-379)
- David Hume, “Of Miracles.” (HANDOUT)
- Thomas Aquinas, “The Five Ways.” (Book 2, pp. 380-382)
- F. Coplestone & B. Russell, “A Debate on the Cosmological Argument.” (Book 2, pp. 393-404)
- J. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence.” (Book 2, pp. 446-458)
- R. Swinburne, “Why God Allows Evil?” (Book 2, pp. 459-470)

Final Exam

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES.

(Very) IMPORTANT POINTS

- **No make-ups for Quizzes**
- **The 8-Minutes Rule - come 8 minutes late or leave early – take an absence.**
- **Severe penalties are mercilessly applied if the allowed number of absences exceeded.**
- **NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**
- **No Extra-Credit work available for this class (don’t ask for exceptions)**
- **Zero tolerance for Plagiarism – immediate ‘F’ for the course**
- **Zero tolerance for other forms of Academic Dishonesty (e.g., falsifying your attendance records)**
- **Zero tolerance for cheating during tests – immediate ‘F’ for the test.**
- **THE GOLDEN RULE: Students don’t get what they “need”, or “really-really-really want”, or feel like they “deserve” – students get exactly what their score shows at the end.**