Instructor: XX
Classroom: XX
Meeting time: XX
Office: XX
Office hours: XX
E-mail: XX

Course description. This course provides an interactive approach to the study of philosophy. Not only will students learn about important philosophical figures, movements, and methodology, but they will be encouraged to identify their own philosophical positions and consider how these positions relate to those of the philosophers we’ve studied. Students are also encouraged to consider how particular philosophical issues have been important in their own lives and to discuss philosophical problems with friends and family outside of class.

Representative topics covered in this course include epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Discussion of these topics will give rise to such questions as ‘what do I really know?’ ‘am I free?’ ‘am I morally responsible for what I do?’ ‘is there an afterlife?’ ‘How should I treat others?’ and ‘what should I do with my life?’

At the end of the course, students will be able to explain key philosophical concepts and the positions of major figures and will demonstrate skill in philosophical argumentation. Finally, students will have awareness of their own philosophical positions and the evaluative skills needed for building and improving upon their overall worldview in the future. This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirement in Language, Philosophy & Culture.

Learning outcomes. Students who attend all classes and study properly will: (1) understand the nature of reasoning and argumentation; (2) understand many of the ways in which historical philosophers have attempted to address philosophical problems; (3) be able to identify various philosophical themes and influences and specify their relation to the contemporary world; (4) demonstrate competency in oral and written communication; and (5) work effectively in a collaborative environment.

Core curriculum objectives.

- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication;
- Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility,
and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities; and

- Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Signature assignments. The following assignments (among others) will be used to assess the student’s level of achievement of the Core Curriculum Objectives:

1. Each student will analyze an argumentative passage to determine which proposition functions as the conclusion of the argument and which propositions function as the premises. (Critical Thinking Skills)

2. Each student will participate in a group project in which the objective is (a) to take a position on a matter of personal or social responsibility (such as voting or recycling) and support that position with reasons; and (b) write a collaborative essay setting forth the argument. (Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility)

[The remainder of the syllabus will be filled in by the instructor.]