Sample Syllabus: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor
Name: David Mokriski
Email: dmokriski@gmail.com
Office: South Hall 2432W
Hours: Thursdays, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (outside at the Coral Tree Café)

I am also available by appointment. Please give me at least 24 hours' notice.

Course Description
This course is a short introduction to philosophy—both its subject matter and its methodology. The philosophical issues we will cover include whether God or free will exists, whether we can really know anything, whether abortion or eating meat is immoral, whether it's rational to fear death, and more. In thinking carefully about these issues, we will learn the basic aspects of philosophical methodology, including how to construct and evaluate arguments, how to formulate and challenge general principles, and how to devise and utilize thought experiments. The subject matter of philosophy—existence, freedom, knowledge, morality, personhood, etc.— includes things that we all think about in our daily lives whether we study philosophy or not. The purpose of this course is to help you develop the tools to do it more rigorously.

Required Text
Our textbook, *Learning From Arguments: An Introduction to Philosophy* by Daniel Z. Korman, is available as a pdf (for free) on Gauchospace, thanks to the generosity of our own Professor Korman!

I will also post supplementary readings to Gauchospace, including an essay of mine on introductory level metaphilosophy.

Course Requirements
Here is the grading breakdown with tentative due dates:

      Lecture participation – 5% – Register and use your iClicker
      Section participation – 5% – See your TA for details
      Weekly homework – 20% (2% each) – Due Tuesdays
      Paper 1 (800-1000 words) – 20% – Due Tuesday (2/4) of Week 5
      Paper 2 (900-1200 words) – 25% – Due Tuesday (2/25) of Week 8
      Paper 3 (1000-1400 words) – 25% – Due Tuesday (3/17) of Finals Week

Paper Assignments
Each paper will consist of a defense or a critique of an argument or theory we covered in class. You will need to (a) explain and motivate the argument/theory, (b) advance an objection, and (c) consider and address some responses. Your thesis should concern whether the argument/theory is ultimately successful or unsuccessful in light of the objection. Late papers will lose 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

Weekly Homework
Each week, you will write up a short analysis of an argument/theory covered that week. This will consist of a brief summary of the argument/theory as well one objection to it. This should be no more than half a page, and it will receive either full credit (for completion), half credit, or zero credit.

Schedule
We will try, as far as possible, to keep to the following tentative schedule:

Week	Readings	Topics	Paper Assignments
1	Intro-Ch. 1	Introduction	
2	Ch. 1-2	God	
3	Ch. 3	Free Will	Paper 1 Assigned
4	Appendix A & B	Logic & Writing	
5	Ch. 4	Knowledge	**Paper 1 Due Tuesday 2/4**
6	Ch. 5	Personal Identity	Paper 2 Assigned
7	Ch. 6-7	Death & Taxation	
8	Ch. 8-9	Abortion & Animals	**Paper 2 Due Tuesday 2/25**
9	Ch. 10	Moral Theory	Paper 3 Assigned
10	Supplement	Metaphilosophy	
			Paper 3 Due Tuesday 3/17
			(During Finals Week)

Disability Policy
If you need accommodations, please speak to me in advance and make arrangements with Disabled Students Services (DSP) at http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu.

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarizing, will be severely punished. For more info on what constitutes academic dishonesty, see judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx.

Final Note
Please feel free to bring any concerns about the course to my attention. This syllabus is liable to change, and you are responsible for any changes given adequate notice. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.