

## Course Syllabus



## Syllabus: PHI 101-3

### Course Information

Course Title: Introduction to Philosophy

Course Prefix/Number: PHI 101-3

Semester: Fall 2025

Class Days/Times: M/W 5:30-6:45

Credit Hours: 3

### Instructor Information

Name: Tes Hash Davison

Phone/Voice Mail: 404-457-3930

E-mail: thash-davison@tocc.edu

Office location: Online

Office hours: By Appointment

### Course Description

A survey of the practices of philosophical analysis using contemporary debates to illustrate core issues. Philosophical issues may include: explanation/proof, analysis/critique, ethics/morality, aesthetics/equilibrium, identity/otherness, society/governance, religion/science, epistemology/ontology, thought/language, and consciousness/habit.

In this course we will touch on questions concerning the nature of reality, the foundations of knowledge (epistemology), standards of value, and the philosophy of science. We will place special emphasis on epistemological questions such as: what is knowledge? Who decides what is/is not knowledge? How do we come to know things? What is the value of knowledge? And so on and so forth.

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## Course Syllabus

### Student Learning Outcomes

To have students become familiar with the activity of “doing” philosophy; understand philosophical concepts and influential strains of thought in academic philosophy.

To help students develop critical thinking skills; to think through ideas and practices deeply and analytically, and to learn how to provide answers for their own thoughts and beliefs.

To have students learn how to articulate their ideas, values and beliefs to others.

To have students develop a curiosity and understanding regarding their own cultural beliefs and values in relation to others’.

### Course Structure

Native American philosophy is grounded in oral traditions, community dialogue, and lived practice. We will explore core philosophical concepts—epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, ontology—through Indigenous frameworks. **This syllabus replaces traditional written assignments with oral reflections, talking circles, and one-on-one conferences. Students will be assessed on their ability to engage in live dialogue, demonstrate deep listening, and apply concepts to real-world issues.**

#### Meet:

We will meet via Zoom twice a week, M/W from 5:30-6:45pm for presentation and discussion of the weekly readings. I will usually begin class by clarifying key concepts that were covered in the text you will have read. The rest of the time will be spent answering your questions and discussing your thoughts on the reading material.

**Students will all be expected to engage in the discussion in class time and final participation grades will depend upon it.**

#### Weekly Readings:

There will be readings assigned for each week posted to Canvas. It is strongly recommended that you take notes on these readings, as you will be expected to discuss them together during class time. Participating will be vital to your success in the course. The reading assignments are challenging and you will never be expected to have *fully* understood everything about them; however you will be expected to engage thoughtfully with the readings and at the very least have questions that pertain to them.

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### **One-on-One Conferences:**

Throughout the semester, students will meet individually with the instructor three times for 15–20 minutes. These conversations are opportunities to explore course concepts in depth, connect them to personal experiences or contemporary issues, and respond to follow-up questions in real time. Students may bring brief notes but should not prepare a scripted response. Conferences are designed to assess clarity of thought, engagement with the material, and the ability to articulate ideas orally. With student consent, conferences may be recorded for grading and feedback purposes and deleted at the end of the term.

### **Capstone: Oral Story/Defense**

In lieu of a written final exam, students will deliver a 10–15 minute oral presentation that integrates major themes from the course. Students may choose between: (1) an oral story weaving together philosophical ideas from the semester and showing their application to real-world or lived experiences, or (2) a philosophical defense of a position on a course-related topic, grounded in readings, lectures, and discussions. Following the presentation, the instructor and classmates will ask questions in a short Q&A. Students may use brief notes but should not read from a script. This assignment assesses synthesis, clarity, and the ability to respond thoughtfully in real time.

## **Course Learning Materials and Textbook Information**

### ***American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays***

Editor: Anne Waters

NOTE: If you have not received your book, do not worry, I will make a digital copy available to everyone.

## **Policies and Expectations (organized around SCAC's ARROW framework – accountability, respect, resilience, openness, and wisdom)**

**Accountability: (defines grade expectations and accountability for coursework; emphasizes students' responsibility for original work and proper citation; stresses punctuality, participation, and consequences of absences)**

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**Evaluations and Grading & Assignments:**

90 and above is an A

80 - 89 is a B

70 - 79 is a C

60 - 69 is a D

Under 60 is Failing

**Your grade will be determined by the following:**

Attendance & Talking Circle Participation — 30%

One-on-One Conferences (x3) — 40%

Capstone Oral Story/Defense — 30%

Grading rubrics for the assignments can be found on Canvas.

**Courses Outline and Important Dates****Week 1**

- What is Philosophy and Why is it Important?
- Philosophical Topics Underpin/Relate to Everything
- Talking Circle introduction

**Week 2**

- "Word Warriors" — Indigenous Intellectual Culture
- Talking Circle discussion on Indigenous intellectual traditions

**Week 3**

- "We Keep Moving: Indigenous Feminist Spaces and Colonial Place" by Kim Anderson
- Talking Circle discussion

**Week 4**

- Recap of Key Concepts
- First One-on-One Conference held this week

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### Week 5

- Knowledge And Experience — Entering Into Epistemology
- Deloria, Jr. Continued
- Brian Yazzie Burkhart introduction
- Talking Circle discussion

### Week 6

- Epistemology — Brian Yazzie Burkhart, Continued
- Talking Circle discussion on Burkhart's teachings

### Week 7

- No Classes / Fall Break

### Week 8

- Second One-on-One Conferences held

### Week 9

- Ethics And Values — How Do Our Values Influence What We 'Know'?
- Applied Epistemologies and Values
- Talking Circle discussion

### Week 10

- Ethics and Values
- Choctaw Conceptions of The Excellence of The Self With Implications for Education
- Talking Circle discussion

### Week 11

- Philosophy Of Science — Philosophy Of Native Science, Gregory Cajete
- Q&A Discussion on Cajete and Native Science

### Week 12

- Ontology and Metaphysics — Language Matters: Nondiscrete Nonbinary Dualism
- Anne Waters lecture 'Where We Belong: Life - Land - Spirit'
- Crippling The Spirit, Wounding The Soul
- Talking Circle discussion

### Week 13

- Third One-on-One Conferences held

### Weeks 14–16

- Wrapping Up — The Great Pretenders, Wendy Rose
- Final Talking Circle discussion on course themes
- Capstone Oral Story/Defense presentations in Week 16

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### ***Attendance Policy***

You are expected to arrive to class on time and be prepared to participate in each class period. Four unexcused absences may result in withdrawal and a "W" or "Y" will be recorded. You may request to be excused from class for religious observances and practices, for illness, for school or work-related travel or for personal or family emergency. If you will be absent, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

### ***Course Policies:***

- 1) Students are expected to attend each class., arriving on time, except in the case of an excused emergency.
- 2) Students are expected to contact the instructor prior to absences, coming late to class or leaving early.
- 3) Unexcused late arrivals or early departures will count against attendance record.
- 4) Class participation and preparation are essential to student success. Students must read textual material, prepare for projects, complete required research as stated on the course schedule.
- 5) Students are expected to come to class prepared for class and having done any preliminary work required as per the course schedule.
- 6) Failure to submit a project results in a grade of zero (0). An F is a better grade!

### ***Academic Integrity:***

Violations of scholastic ethics are considered serious offenses by San Carlos Apache College. Students may consult the SCAC Student Handbook sections on student code of conduct, on scholastic ethics and on the grade appeal procedure.

All work done for this class must be your own, or the original work of your group. While you may discuss assignments with other class members, the final written project must clearly be original. You may use work from books and other materials if it is properly cited.

### ***Instructor Withdrawals***

Students who have missed four consecutive classes (or the equivalent), or have not submitted any assignments nor taken any quizzes by the 45th day census report, due on [date of 45th day found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website], are assumed NOT to be participating in the class and may be withdrawn at the faculty member's discretion.

### ***Student Withdrawals***

Students may withdraw from class at any time during the first 2/3 of the semester without instructor permission and without incurring any grade penalty. Please be sure to withdraw yourself by [withdrawal deadline date found in Academic Calendar on SCAC website] if you do not expect to complete the class; otherwise, you may receive an "F" grade.

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## **RESPECT (Establishes a respectful learning environment free from discrimination; promotes a safe and inclusive campus).**

### ***Equal Access Statement/Disability Accommodations***

San Carlos Apache College seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. The College will comply with all applicable regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to ensure an equal educational opportunity. This process includes self-identifying as a student with a disability, providing supporting documentation of their disability, and being approved for services through the Disability Resources Office (DRO). It is the student's responsibility to make known to their instructor(s) the student's specific needs within the context of each class in order to receive appropriate accommodations. We will work together in order to develop an accommodation plan specifically designed to meet the individual student's requirements.

For more information or to request academic accommodations, please contact: Anthony Osborn, TOCC Disabilities Resource Coordinator, aosborn@tocc.edu, or 520-383-0033 for additional information and assistance.

### ***Title IX***

San Carlos Apache College encourages each student to have the knowledge and skills to be an active bystander who intervenes when anyone is observed or being harassed or endangered by sexual violence. Sexual discrimination and sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and quality of life on campus and beyond. We encourage students who have experienced or witnessed any form of sexual misconduct to talk about their experience and seek the support they need.

### ***Conduct: Bias, Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment***

San Carlos Apache College faculty and staff are dedicated to creating a safe and supportive campus environment as a core value. Harassment based on age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status will not be tolerated.

## **RESILIENCE (Supports students facing unavoidable circumstances and recognizes hardships, while setting academic expectations).**

### ***Incomplete Policy***

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Incomplete (I) grades are not awarded automatically. The student must request an "I" from the instructor who can choose to award an Incomplete only if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. The student must be in compliance with the attendance policy.
2. The student must have unavoidable circumstance that would prohibit the student from completing the course.
3. The student must have completed over 75% of the course requirements with at least a "C" grade.

Incompletes are not a substitute for incomplete work due to frequent absences or poor academic performance. Incomplete grades that are not made up by the end of the ninth week of the following semester will be automatically changed to an F if the agreed upon work, as stipulated on the written form signed by the instructor and the student when the I grade is awarded, is not completed.

### ***Special Withdrawals (Y) Grade***

The "Y" grade is an administrative withdrawal given at the instructor's option when no other grade is deemed appropriate. Your instructor must file a form stating the specific rationale, with documentation, for awarding this grade. "Y" grades are discouraged since they often affect students negatively. Your instructor will not award a "Y" grade without a strong reason.

## **OPENNESS (Encourages open discussions between students and faculty and provides transparency about expectations and learning methods)**

### ***Faculty/Student Communication***

A faculty member will respond to a student's communication within 24 hours of receiving the communication excluding weekends and college closures. If a course is online a faculty will login their Canvas classroom a minimum of three times per week spread evenly throughout the week and respond to any discussion posts and check on student progress in the course.

### ***Course Feedback:***

All assignments will be graded and returned to the students promptly, typically within a week after the assignment is closed for handing in. Email and phone messages will be returned within 24 hours. A student or the instructor may request a student conference at any time during the semester. Quarterly grade reports will be provided to each student, either in person, by email or via the electronic system of Canvas.

## **WISDOM (Encourages evaluation, reasoning and diverse perspectives; emphasizes organized and audience-aware expression, and promotes**

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## learning from elders and cultural teachings for personal and academic growth)

### SCAC General Education Learning Outcomes

#### ***Apache Wisdom***

Learning from the teachings carried on from Apache elders and other community leaders, students will appreciate their unique history, language, and culture as a source of strength for their personal, family, academic, and career aspirations.

#### ***Critical Thinking***

Approach critical issues, problems, or questions using creativity and deductive reasoning, evaluating evidence, acknowledging diverse perspectives and contexts, and synthesizing one's own viewpoint into ongoing conversations and debates.

#### ***Communication***

Effectively express ideas orally and in writing. Good communication includes understanding one's audience, organizing one's thoughts, acknowledging and integrating outside sources, using the most recent technology, and following the accepted writing and citation conventions of the particular discipline.

#### ***Environmental Literacy***

Students will understand their connection to social, cultural, physical, and global environments. Students will consider and evaluate strategies for cultural, community and global sustainability.

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