

Mark A. Menaldo

David Ferguson

Class location and time: Ferguson SS 141. MWF 1:00-1:50

Menaldo email: mark.menaldo@tamiu.edu

Ferguson email:

Menaldo Office: Gee Library, Educational Technology Suite, 178

Office Hours: Menaldo T R 2-4, or by appointment; Ferguson, by appointment.

LIBS 497 –Faith and Reason

Learning Objectives

This course will provide experiences for students to work on (1) enhancing reading skills by carefully considering primary text materials, (2) engage in intensive writing by writing weekly seminar questions, mid-term and final (3) participate in high-level discussion through explication of text, critical questions, and peer discussion.

Course Description: In this course, we examine the perennial question of political and religious life: How should I live my life? We employ two main, and alternative, perspectives of the Western Judeo-Christian tradition: the philosopher and believer. Throughout the semester, we will examine the question of how to live life by reading philosophical and religious texts that cover core themes, such as Socratic wisdom, the life, and teachings of Jesus, love, friendship, and death.

Required Texts:

ESV STUDENT STUDY BIBLE

Plato's Phaedo

All other readings will be available as a PDF or url link on D2

Grading: Weekly Attendance/Participation/Weekly Seminar Questions 40%, Take home-midterm: 25% in-class final 35%.

Mid-term due date: March 16; 11:59 pm, submit through D2

Final Exam: Friday May 10; 10:30 am-12:30 pm

Class Attendance and Participation: Participation includes coming prepared to each class by having done the reading assigned for each week, participating in class, and listening attentively to your classmates. Absences and lateness will lower your final grade. Legitimate excuses only include **emergencies** of a medical nature and circumstances that we deem appropriate. Absence policy: three unexcused absences drop in letter grade; five unexcused absences, leads to second drop in letter grade. If a student reaches seven unexcused absences, then, we will remove you from the course. You must come to class on time. After a two minute grace period, you are officially late. Three late class arrivals equal one absence.

Each week you must write 2 critical questions that address key problems in the readings, one due Monday and one on Wednesday. The content of the questions must always be ahead of the content of our class discussions. Questions should show an effort to explore an important or puzzling question about the meaning of the assigned text, be comprehensive, yet, precise. These assignments are a core component of your participation grade; however, **we will not grade your seminar questions**. Instead, we will offer you substantive comments, which will serve to help you improve your reading and writing. The weekly seminar questions will be collated and serve as a portfolio for an assessment of your grade at the end of the semester.

Reading Schedule: Unlike most of your courses, this is a co-taught class that asks you to read from core texts and interdisciplinary perspectives. As such, we, the instructors, have decided not use a fixed reading schedule. Instead we are going to move organically, taking the proper care to address the themes at hand. Some themes will require more time than others, and we will move on to the next theme once the class as a whole has reached an adequate level of understanding.

Below is a template of the themes we are going to address and some of text and readings for those themes, with the caveat, each week we may tinker with the reading schedule. We never seek to overburden you, but as the course progresses we desire that the themes from the philosophical and theological perspectives coalesce into a greater whole.

Provisional Schedule Arranged by Themes and Readings

Champion of Reason and Faith: Socrates and Jesus

January 14-February 22

Plato's Apology

Proverbs 1:1-7; Fides et Ratio ch. 1-4

Person of Jesus – John 1:1-18

Teachings of Jesus – Matthew 5-7

Parables of Jesus – Mathew 13

Love, Friendship, and Death

February 25-May 3

Love

Plato's Symposium

Corinthians 13; Augustine's *Confessions* Book 1-2

Friendship:

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: Books 8&9

Friendship – C. S. Lewis on Friendship from *The Four Loves*

Death:

Plato's Phaedo

Ecclesiastes; John 11; Book 4 of Augustine's *Confessions* 4.4-13

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.