

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number/Section/Credits
Course Title

PHI 205-601 3 Credits
Introduction to Philosophy

Term Spring 2017
Distance Education

Professor Contact Information

Professor
Email Address
Office Hours

Dr. Joe Cole
jwcole3@ncsu.edu
Online Chat and Video Conferencing by appointment

Office Location TBA
Home Phone 919-967-7257

Required Textbook

Introducing Philosophy, by Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, 11th Edition, published by Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-020945-2. Price: \$89.95 new/\$67.50 used at campus bookstore. Text available on Reserve at D.H. Hill Library.

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Enrollment Restrictions: None

Course Description

Introduction to selected problems of enduring philosophical importance, including such topics as the nature of morality, knowledge, reality, and justice. Content varies with different sections. In this course, we will examine classic philosophical questions about what it means to be a human being. After a brief introduction to philosophy and arguments, we will ask questions such as: Can we really know anything? What is justice? What is the best form of government? What is reality? Is there a good life for human beings? What is the basis for my identity? In examining these philosophical questions, we will study a variety of responses from different traditions and explore potential resolutions to long-standing debates. The outcome of this course should be an introduction to philosophical questioning, a sharpening of critical thinking and argument skills, and an expanded sense of wonder about the world and human life. Fulfills GEP Humanities requirement.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will have acquired the ability to:

- Analyze the core questions of philosophy and understand, within their historical context, the various philosophical responses to these core questions.
- Define key philosophical terms relevant to the course.
- Identify major philosophers and explain their contributions to philosophical discourse.
- Distinguish different areas of philosophy and philosophical methodology.
- Evaluate good and bad arguments.
- Write an argumentative essay explaining and analyzing a complex philosophical idea.

Website: Moodle course page access is required for this course. It is your responsibility to gain and maintain access to the course site via Moodle. Inability to secure access to the website will not be accepted as an excuse for not completing work, except in cases of campus server shutdown. Check <http://sysnews.ncsu.edu> for system-wide problems and contact help@ncsu.edu with a cc to me for any technical problems. Access via <https://wolfware.ncsu.edu>

Course Requirements

Participation:

Participation is vitally important. Philosophy requires that students read, write, and engage in discussion to fully understand the issues. Students should complete all readings prior to assignments and discussion forums. Some of the reading assignments contain arguments that are complex and often difficult to follow. Expect to read the material twice for adequate comprehension. I strongly suggest that students take notes while they are reading, outlining the major terms and concepts of the assigned material.

Academic Integrity:

As defined in the university catalog, academic dishonesty includes cheating, assisting another student in acts of academic dishonesty, committing plagiarism (presenting another person's words or ideas as your own), and the unauthorized possession of examination or assessment materials. Academic dishonesty constitutes a willful circumventing of the learning process and skills acquisition designed within higher education. Any suspected case of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will be turned over to the Office of Student Conduct for investigation. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, check the Code of Student Conduct policy (NCSU POL11.35.1) and Pack Pledge. For our online course, a student's submission of any test or assignment indicates agreement to abide by the Pack Pledge.

DISABILITY-RELATED STUDENT NEEDS

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at Suite 2221, Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653.

<https://dso.dasa.ncsu.edu/> For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.01)** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-01>

LEARNING MODULES

There are 7 Learning Modules, each covering a specific topic in Philosophy. Each Module will present philosophical questions and explore a variety of answers to the questions. Answers to philosophical questions are connected to specific philosophers as well as philosophical movements, traditions, and schools of thought. In each Module, we will study:

- A specific topic in Philosophy
- A set of questions related to the topic
- A variety of answers to the questions
- An overview of Philosophers who have attempted to answer the questions
- How philosophers have challenged and critiqued one another
- A set of philosophical vocabulary and key terms

Each Module will be covered in 1-3 weeks of course time. For each Module, there will be from 1-2 Discussion Forums. There are a total of five Quizzes covering six Modules; the last Module does not have a quiz. Exams will cover 3 or 4 Modules.

Work must be completed by all Due Dates, unless there is a University-excused absence.

Exams:

There will be two online examinations, each worth 40 points and covering multiple chapters/learning modules. These examinations may consist of a combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Exams are open-book, open-note, but you must work alone. Exams are timed (usually 120 minutes) and you must complete the exam in one sitting. Typically you will have an 18-hour window to begin and complete the exam—from 6:00am to Midnight on the designated day. Make-ups are not allowed unless arranged in advance of the exam time or unless written documentation of the absence in accordance with university policies is provided. If you have a technical problem during an exam, it is your responsibility to contact me before the deadline for completion.

Quizzes:

There will be five quizzes given during the course. Each quiz is worth fifteen points. These quizzes will be given online and are designed to provide feedback on your progress prior to the exams. Quiz dates are listed in the Course Schedule. Quizzes incorporate material from the readings and the module PowerPoint/lecture notes, so make sure you have read all assigned materials before completing the quiz. Quiz questions are drawn from a random test bank, so it is unlikely any two students will encounter the same set of questions. You are free to use any written materials you wish to aid you during the quiz, however, quizzes are timed so you have only 30 minutes to finish and submit the quizzes. Typically you will have a 48-hour window to begin and complete the quiz. Quizzes are designed to evaluate your understanding of the assigned material and are individual efforts. Collaboration or discussion of quiz questions prior to a deadline completion constitutes cheating and is subject to university action. If you have a technical problem during a quiz, it is your responsibility to contact me before the deadline for completion. All students have computer access through the university labs, and it is your responsibility to access the course website and take the quizzes.

Discussion Forum Posts:

There will be 9 Discussion Forums during the semester. Students are expected to participate in any 4 Forums of your choice, not including the Forum where your Group is acting as Discussion Leader (see below). For each Forum, participation includes posting a thoughtful, detailed, multi-paragraph response analyzing the Discussion Leader's argument and responding to their Questions. (There may be multiple Groups acting as Discussion Leaders per Forum—you need only respond to one of the Discussion Leaders.) In addition to posting your own response, you will reply to at least two other students' posts. Each Discussion Forum is worth a total of six points towards your final grade. Only the first four Forums that you complete will count towards your grade, but it is good to keep participating to further your learning.

Reading Response Papers:

Reading Response Papers are assigned to offer students opportunities to think more deeply about possible resolutions to philosophical questions. Each reading response assignment is graded on a 40-point scale. Students are required to turn in **two** Reading Response Papers through the course website. **All Reading Response Papers are to be double-spaced, typed compositions, from one to three pages in length, and should be checked for spelling, grammar, and punctuation prior to submission.** Reading Response Papers must be submitted by Midnight on the assigned due date.

Using Quotations in Homework and Papers:

Often writing and discussion forum assignments will ask you to summarize an author's position and show that you have adequately understood it. Using quotations properly is an important part of summarizing and discussing an author's views. For the purposes of this class, you are not required to use footnotes (though you may use footnotes if you prefer). Instead, each time you use a quotation, include the source and page number in parentheses directly following the quotation. For example:

According to Jacqueline Trimier, Yoruba philosophy holds that "people choose their destinies, but it is a choice that is fraught with dangers and possibilities." (*Introducing Philosophy*, 440)

GROUP WORK

Students will work in Groups of approximately five people to lead Discussion Forums one time during the semester. As a group, you will develop a summary and response to a topic question, then post your response to the Discussion Forum and address any questions that arise. You will be placed in groups around the fourth week of the semester. Group Tasks: Imagine that you are part of a Philosophical Consulting Firm. Your company advises businesses, non-profit groups, communities, and religious organizations to help them address challenging questions and dilemmas. To prepare for your group work this semester, each group will choose a name and develop policies and ground rules for working together.

- Develop policies, guidelines, and values for working together (10pts)
 - Group Name
 - Ground Rules for Meetings
 - Guidelines for Giving and Receiving Feedback
 - Primary Decision Rule (Majority Vote, Supermajority Vote, Consensus/Unanimity, Executive/Leadership)
 - Exit Protocol
- Lead Discussion in one Discussion Forum (15pts)
 - Choose one Topic/Discussion Forum to Lead
 - Post Summary/Response to the DF Topic by the due date
 - Address a variety of questions posted in reply to your position (engage in dialogue with student replies). All group members should participate to facilitate discussion on the Forum.
- Group Evaluations (5pts)

FILMS AND FILM FORUMS

Throughout the semester, we will watch films to help us explore philosophical themes and questions. The films are listed on the Course Schedule. Required Films will be available as DVD Library Reserves, or via a web link to Youtube. Watch the Required Films in advance and respond to the questions in the Discussion Forum for that film. There will also be Optional films for extra credit points. Students are not required to participate in the Optional Film Discussion Forums, but you may find them interesting and useful as ways of enhancing your understanding of philosophical readings and topics. (*Note: Instructor videos and short content videos are required materials.*)

Course Grading:		Grading Scale:	300-293	A+
Quizzes	75pts	300pts	292-281	A
Reading Response Papers	80pts		280-269	A-
Discussion Forum Posts	24pts		268-263	B+
Group Work	30pts		262-251	B
Exam 1/Midterm	40pts		250-239	B-
Exam 2/Final	40pts		238-233	C+
Required Films	9pts			
Self Evaluation	5pts		232-221	C
TOTAL	303pts		220-209	C-
			208-203	D+
Optional Films	9pts		202-191	D
GRAND TOTAL	312pts		190-179	D-
			Below 179	F

Note on Course Grading Scale:

Students are graded on a 300-point scale. At the end of the semester, I will divide total points by 300 to calculate the final grade. See the Grading Scale (above, right) to determine how point totals translate into letter grades. Also, note that there are already extra credit points built into the system, and there will be no further additional extra credit opportunities. **WARNING:** please be aware that Moodle will calculate a Percentage Grade for you continually throughout the semester. You will see this percentage in your gradebook. However, this Percentage Grade is rough at best, and in some cases it is downright misleading. Why? Because Moodle will calculate your percentage grade based on scores relative to assignments completed, but will not calculate using uncompleted assignments unless I have entered a zero for them. For example, if a student has only completed one 5-point assignment for the whole semester, and they scored a “5”, then Moodle might show their grade as “100%”. Will this student receive an A+ for the course? No! So keep this in mind and don’t rely on the overall Percentage Grade to determine how you are doing in the course. Focus on your point totals, and your percentages within each assignment area (quizzes, papers, exams, etc.).

STANDARD WEEKLY SCHEDULE (may vary due to holidays, exams, weather, etc.)

Monday/Tuesday	Presentations, Updates, Notes, and/or Videos Posted by Instructor
Tuesday	Discussion Forum: Group Posts Due by Midnight
Wednesday	Quizzes Open at Midnight
Friday	Discussion Forum: Individual Posts Due by Midnight
	Quizzes Close at Midnight

Late Work, Attendance and Excused Absences

Work must be completed by all Due Dates, unless there is a University-excused absence.

Our class is online and does not meet in the classroom. However, university policies on attendance and excused absences still apply to making up work for university-excused absences. See: **REG 02.20.03 - Attendance Regulations** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03> - - which gives students up to a week after an absence to arrange make-ups (Section 3.2).

Documentation for all excused absences will be required. Late work and make-up exams are not allowed unless there is a documented, university-excused absence. *Excuses for unanticipated absences must be reported to the instructor no more than one week after resuming class work.*

COURSE SCHEDULE**

****This schedule is subject to change, with appropriate notification to students.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Topics/Activities/Due Dates</u>
WEEK 1: Intro/Module 1		
Tue 1/10/17	pp. 1-23	INTRO: WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY Introduction; Socrates as Model Philosopher Watch Videos (Links on Moodle): Monty Python, Boogie Down Productions, Judith Butler, Cornel West
Fri 1/13		Intro Forum: Post Personal Intros by Midnight **Online Chat: 12:00pm-1:00pm Friday**
WEEK 2: Module 1		
Tue 1/17	pp. 23-39	WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY Approaches to Philosophy, Reasoning Watch film: "Groundhog Day"
Fri 1/20		Required Film Forum: Domains of Philosophy **Online Chat: 12:00pm-1:00pm Friday**
WEEK 3: Module 1		
Tue 1/24	Pendlebury PDF 1-36	LOGIC AND REASONING Logic and Reasoning
Wed 1/25		Quiz 1 (covers Module 1) Open at Midnight
Fri 1/27		**Online Chat: 12:00pm-1:00pm Friday** Quiz 1 Closed at Midnight
WEEK 4: Module 2		
Tue 1/31	Clifford, PDF Stanford EP, PDF Amesbury, PDF	ETHICS OF BELIEF and Group Work Ethics of Belief; Duty of Inquiry Meet Group Members; Begin Group Tasks
Fri 2/3		Discussion Forum1: Post by Midnight Complete Group Tasks by Midnight
WEEK 5: Module 2		
Tue 2/7	pp. 191-248	KNOWLEDGE Rationalism, Empiricism, Skepticism
Wed 2/8		Quiz 2 (covers Module 2) Open at Midnight
Fri 2/10		**Online Chat: 12:00pm-1:00pm Friday** Discussion Forum2: Post by Midnight Quiz 2 Closed at Midnight

WEEK 6: Module 3

Tue 2/14

pp. 593-620

JUSTICE

Politics, Community, Social Contract

Watch Film: "Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk"

Fri 2/17

Required Film Forum: Post by MidnightReading Response **Paper #1** Due by Midnight**WEEK 7: Module 3**

Tue 2/21

pp. 621-654

JUSTICE

Fairness, Rights, Care, Civil Disobedience

Optional Film: "The House I Live In"

Optional Film Forum

Wed 2/22

Quiz 3 (covers Module 3) Open at Midnight

Fri 2/24

****Online Chat: 12:00pm-1:00pm Friday******Discussion Forum3:** Post by Midnight**Quiz 3** Closed at Midnight**WEEK 8: MIDTERM**

Wed 3/1

EXAM 1/MIDTERM**Exam 1 posted at 6:00am/due by midnight**

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: Module 4

Tue 3/14

pp. 253-287;
311-316**TRUTH AND RELATIVISM**

Correspondence, Coherence, Pragmatism

Fri 3/17

Discussion Forum4: Post by Midnight**WEEK 10: Module 5**

Tue 3/21

pp. 497-535

ETHICS

Egoism, Altruism, Virtue

Watch Film: "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"

Fri 3/24

Required Film Forum: Post by Midnight**WEEK 11: Module 5**

Tue 3/28

pp. 535-568

ETHICS

Sentiment, Duty, Consequences

Watch Film: "The Examined Life," Peter Singer: Ch. 3

Fri 3/31

Discussion Forum5: Post by Midnight

WEEK 12: Module 5

Tue 4/4 pp. 568-590 **ETHICS** Care, Existentialism, Feminism

Wed 4/5 **Quiz 4** (covers Modules 4-5) Open at Midnight

Fri 4/7 **Discussion Forum6:** Post by Midnight
Quiz 4 Closed at Midnight

WEEK 13: Module 6

Tue 4/11 pp. 43-79 **REALITY** Ancient Metaphysics
Optional Film: "The Matrix"/Optional Film Forum

Fri 4/14 **Discussion Forum7:** Post by Midnight
Reading Response **Paper #2** Due by Midnight

WEEK 14: Module 6

Tue 4/18 pp. 79-112 **REALITY** From Aristotle to Modern Metaphysics
Watch Film: "The Examined Life," Cornel West:
Chapters 1, 6, and 10

Wed 4/19 **Quiz 5** (covers Module 6) Open at Midnight

Fri 4/21 **Discussion Forum8:** Post by Midnight
Quiz 5 Closed at Midnight

**** Class Evaluations for full semester courses will be available: 8am April 17th, 2017 through 8am May 1st, 2017. Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations.**

WEEK 15: Module 7

Tue 4/25 pp. 377-427 **SELF** Consciousness, Identity, Community
Optional Film, "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"
Optional Film Forum

Fri 4/28 **Discussion Forum9:** Post by Midnight

FINALS WEEK

Mon 5/1 Course Evaluation Due (8:00am)
Self-Evaluation Due
Group Evaluation Due

Fri 5/5 **FINAL/EXAM 2** (Modules 4-7) **OPEN AT 6AM**
CLOSED AT MIDNIGHT

NOTE: The Instructor can change the Syllabus with appropriate notice to students.

CLASS EVALUATIONS Schedule: Online class evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last 2 weeks of the semester for full semester courses and the last week of shorter sessions. Evaluations for full semester courses will be available: 8am April 17th, 2017 through 8am May 1st, 2017. Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential; instructors will not know how any one student responded to any question, and students will not know the ratings for any instructors. Student help desk: classeval@ncsu.edu
Evaluation website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/cesurvey>

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT WEBSITE: <http://philrel.chass.ncsu.edu/>

Religious Observance

I will do my best not to schedule exams that interfere with religious observance, but if such a conflict arises please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for you to make up the relevant assignment.

N.C. State Policies, Regulations, and Rules (PRR)

Students are responsible for reviewing the NC State University PRR's which pertains to their course rights and responsibilities:

- **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy Statement**
<https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-05> with additional references at <https://oied.ncsu.edu/equity/policies/>
- **Code of Student Conduct** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>
- **Grades and Grade Point Average** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-50-03>
- **Credit-Only Courses** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-15>
- **Audits** <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-04>

POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION

NC State University provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Accordingly, NC State affirms its commitment to maintain a work environment for all employees and an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. NC State's policies and regulations covering discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may be accessed at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/campus_environ or http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op. Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 515-3148.

PRIVACY POLICY

Students may be required to disclose personally identifiable information to other students in the course, via electronic tools like email or web-postings, where relevant to the course. Examples include online discussions of class topics, and posting of student coursework. All students are expected to respect the privacy of each other by not sharing or using such information outside the course.

Required Expenses: In addition to the textbook, students are required to watch films for this course. Some of the films are available on Reserve at the NCSU Library; others will be viewable through web links. Make sure you check the schedule in advance to ensure you have timely access to the films. Students are not required to purchase the films; they are only encouraged to watch the films in some capacity.

MOVIE LIST

Note: some of the following films include mature themes and images. Contact the instructor if you are uncomfortable watching a certain film, and we will find a movie that can act as a substitute.

REQUIRED FILMS

Groundhog Day

Eyes on the Prize: No Easy Walk

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Examined Life (selected chapters, links to YouTube)

OPTIONAL FILMS

The House I Live in

The Matrix

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

GEP REQUIREMENTS FULFILLED: Humanities GEP requirement; College of Humanities and Social Sciences philosophy requirement.

GEP HUMANITIES OBJECTIVES:

1. Engage the human experience through the interpretation of human culture
2. Become aware of the act of interpretation itself as a critical form of knowing in the humanities
3. Make academic arguments about the human experience using reasons and evidence for supporting those reasons that are appropriate to the humanities.

Student Learning Outcome for Objective 1: Students will develop an understanding of the tradition, theories, and practices of philosophy around the world through reading and interpreting historical and contemporary philosophical texts.

Assessment: Quiz and Exam questions and Reading Response Papers will assess student comprehension and application of philosophical ideas

Student Learning Outcome for Objective 2: Students will study a variety of responses to core philosophical questions, and will learn to compare and evaluate different perspectives in philosophical debates.

Assessment: Reading Response Papers and Discussion Forum responses will demonstrate critical engagement with philosophical questions and critical evaluation of philosophical positions.

Student Learning Outcome for Objective 3: Students will learn to recognize argument forms, including the premises and conclusions of arguments made in key philosophy texts. Students will practice evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and develop their own personal positions in response to philosophical questions.

Assessment: Reading Response Papers and Discussion Forum Responses will require students to analyze arguments and present their own positions on philosophical issues.