

Course Information

Course Number: PHIL 1301
Course Name: Introduction to Philosophy
Section: TBD
Semester: TBD
Time: TBD
Location: TBD
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Information

Instructor: Justin Andrew Hill, M.A.
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Office Hours: TBD

Date Created: June 18, 2025

Communication Expectations

Email or Canvas are preferred. Canvas messages will send me extra notifications, so they may be faster. I will try to respond within 24 hours, but please allow up to 2 business days for a response (i.e., 48 hours, not including weekends; e.g., I will respond to an email received at 1pm on Friday by 1pm on Tuesday).

Course Description

This course provides an overview of philosophers across the periods and traditions of Ancient philosophy (6th-century BCE to 3rd-century CE), Modern philosophy (17th- to 18th-century CE), American pragmatism (19th- to 20th-century CE), and contemporary Continental philosophy (19th- to 21st-century CE), including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Mill, Bergson, James, Dewey, Sartre, Deleuze, and Nancy. Themes include eidetic intuition, metaphysics, normative ethics, meta-ethics, virtue, deontology, utilitarianism, the good life, rationalism, empiricism, idealism, materialism, dualism, monism, pluralism, skepticism, Enlightenment, affect, pragmatism, aesthetics, existentialism, transcendence, and immanence.

Student Resources and Basic Needs

Students are humans first. To learn effectively you must have basic security: a roof over your head, a safe place to sleep, enough food to eat, and other necessary external goods. If you or another student you know are having trouble with any of those things, please talk with me or use the campus resources available.

Course Requirements

- Written Exams (4)
(*In-Person, using printed readings and annotations*)
 - Intuitionism
 - Ancient/Modern Philosophy
 - American Pragmatism
 - Continental Philosophy/Final
- Attendance, Participation, and Preparation
 - Present.
 - No laptops allowed.
 - Bring printed readings to class to annotate with notes from class discussion for exams.
 - Watch video lectures explaining and working through readings before the assigned class.
- Extra Credit
 - Annotations Check: If 2/3 of annotations are completed per unit, then +10% on the exam.

Reading List

- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, excerpts from Books I, II, and VIII.
- Bergson, Henri. *Introduction to Metaphysics*.
- Deleuze, Gilles. "Immanence: A Life."
- Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, First and Second Meditations.
- Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*, Ch. 1-3.
- James, William. "What Pragmatism Means."
- Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: *What is Enlightenment?*"
- ———. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, excerpts from Preface and First Section.
- Massumi, Brian. *Politics of Affect*.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*.
- ———. "Of Divine Places."
- Plato. *Apology*.
- ———. *Euthyphro*.
- ———. *Republic*, excerpts from Books I, II, IV, VI, and VII.
- Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics*, excerpt from Part III.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*.

All excerpted readings are posted as PDFs to Canvas → Files → Readings and should be **printed ahead** and brought to class for your Attendance, Participation, and Preparation grade. Readings are required for attendance credit. Check the course schedule for weekly reading assignments. Expect 25-40 pp. per week.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be given the opportunity to:

- 1) (*Knowledge Outcomes*)

- a) become familiar with fundamental philosophical concepts;
- b) become familiar with major philosophical traditions;
- c) develop the ability to critically interpret difficult philosophical texts;
- 2) (*Skill Outcomes*)
 - a) develop the ability to reason and write critically about difficult philosophical texts and issues;
 - b) develop the ability to teach themselves from source texts without background knowledge;
- 3) (*Value Outcomes*)
 - a) reflect critically about ethical, political, aesthetic, and metaphysical (meta-ethical) issues;
 - b) reflect critically about the value of knowledge and truth;
- 4) (*Citizenship and Professionalism Outcomes*)
 - a) develop professionalism regarding punctuality, communication, and deliverables;
 - b) develop commonly agreed upon citizenship virtues and characteristics; and
 - c) develop the ability to understand contradictory perspectives and harmonize stakeholders.

Grading Policy

Please refer to the current University Catalog for additional information regarding grades and course withdrawal policies. For this course, written essay exams will be graded according to the following scale (adapted from Dr. Robin James):

A (90-100)	Thorough and critical understanding of the issues – subtly summarizes the major issues while also offering insightful interpretation. Outstanding argumentation, organization, and writing (grammar, vocabulary, etc.). Only minor mistakes. Clearly above and beyond expectations.
B (80-89)	Above average understanding, not as creative or exegetical as an A level product, nor does it capture all the ‘complexities’ of the issues. A thorough recapitulation of the text and/or discussion. Adequate argumentation, organization, and writing, with few mistakes.
C (70-79)	Basic understanding, marked by one or more significant errors or mis-readings. Confused, disorganized writing that may address lots of information, but does not thematize or interpret it.
D (60-69)	Very basic grasp of the material, presented in a highly confused manner.
F (50-59)	No comprehension of the material, and/or an utterly incomprehensible paper.
M/INC (0)	Missing/Incomplete. All earnest attempts will receive a minimum grade of 50.

This class follows a 1000-point total structure, but I round up such that 895+ points is an A, 795-894.9 points is a B, 695-794.9 points is a C, etc. The rounding is a hard cutoff. Note also there are 1200 points possible in the class, out of 1000, meaning there is 20% worth of extra credit in this course. The following point breakdown will be used to calculate your numerical grade:

{1080 points possible w/ extra credit}	1080 points / 1000 points
Written Exams:	700 points / 1000 points
Intuitionism	100 points

Ancient and Modern Philosophy	200 points	
American Pragmatism (Take-Home)	200 points	
Continental Philosophy (Final)	200 points	
Attendance, Participation, and Preparation:		300 points / 1000 points
Attendance (physical text; no laptops)	100 points	
Participation (writing activities in-class)	100 points	
Preparation (video lectures beforehand)	100 points	
Extra Credit:		80 points / {null} points
Reading Annotations	80 points	

I reserve the right to curve exams, but I am more likely to create a debrief assignment targeting specifics.

Grading Feedback Expectations

I will return grades via Canvas within four weeks after the exam date. I will return your bluebooks to you during a class session shortly after I have recorded and released grades, with written or itemized feedback.

Graded Participation and Preparation

Class participation is expected but graded flatly, untracked. For the most part students earn participation and attendance credit (they are tracked the same way) for showing up to class in the first place. You do not necessarily need to speak up, and students who do are not rewarded more than others, except insofar as doing so aids their learning by allowing them to ask questions. However, the following are mandatory:

- Participation
 - **No laptops in use.**
 - Clearly **listening** to fellow students.
 - Taking **notes on printed readings for exam.**
 - **Annotating**, underlining, and highlighting printed readings (**two-thirds** of the unit's readings must be marked up substantively to earn the +10% extra credit on the exam).
 - If **called on**, some degree of awareness of the present conversation. That is, if the student repeatedly has no idea what is happening in the discussion or in the text and is not asking questions, they may lose participation credit. However, they are welcome to stay in class.
- Preparation
 - **Printed readings must be present.**
 - Guiding questions and responses studied beforehand.

Active listening entails turning towards the one speaking and not speaking over one another. Generally we'll rely on raising hands but can try discussing freely as we get to know each other. Having taught in a middle school with disrespect, I reserve the right per university-policy to ask disruptive students to leave.

Graded Attendance

Amongst other things, I track attendance data to hold students accountable for behavioral patterns related to educational outcomes. Attendance will be recorded at the start of class. I will call you by your name for the first few weeks so that I can learn all 150 of them. When I call your name, raise your printed reading

in the air and say here. Absences will not be excused without some kind of formal documentation of the situation (e.g., doctor's note, wedding invitation, funeral pamphlet, tow-truck receipt, etc.). I am flexible to a variety of situations but need documentation. There are no maximum absences, but it's worth 15% in the course, meaning that you cannot earn an A in the course without attending. Plus, the material is tough.

Late Work and Make-Up Work Policy

If something comes up that will interfere with your attending class, **especially** for any of our five exam dates, please let me know sooner rather than later. However, if there is a present emergency, please deal with that first and contact me later — you need not, for example, email me from the emergency room.

Missing exams may be taken late, until May 2, but will be graded three letter grades down (-30%). Exams taken late but before April 6 will only be graded two letter grades down (-20%), to encourage catching up early. Exams submitted as make-up work for an excused absence are exempted from the late work policy.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI use is not permitted in this course. AI use will result in an “M/INC” grade designation of 0 points, as this course is intended to teach you to think for yourself and to communicate your thinking without aid. As a class, we will cover Kant on the topic of Enlightenment regarding trusting one's own reasoning.

A note about higher education in Texas

Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction, or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion. *Nota Bene: Per Popper's paradox of tolerance, intolerance will not be tolerated.*

(Source: The Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors, 1/10/23)

Course Schedule (sample Spring 2025 dates)

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
Introduction			
W0 01.16-17		Meet Your Professor. Syllabus.	
W1 01.20-24		No class Jan. 20. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.	
		Ibid., cont. Icebreakers.	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
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On Method:
Intuitionism

W2 01.27-31		Ibid., cont. (Icebreakers).	
		Bergson, "Introduction to Metaphysics," in <i>The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics</i> .	
		Ibid., cont.	

Ancient
Philosophy

W3 02.03-07		Ibid., cont. (Bergson).	
		Intuitionism Exam Feb. 5, beginning of class. Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> . Ibid., <i>Apology</i> .	Intuitionism Exam, 02.05, 50min.
W4 02.10-14		Ibid., <i>Republic</i> , Book I, 327a-327c (Context; Setting; Listening); Book II, 357a-361e (Ring of Gyges); and Book IV, 427a-445a (The Just City and the Tripartite Soul).	
		Ibid., Book VI, 506d-511e (Analogies of the Sun and the Divided Line); and Book VII, (Allegory of the Cave).	
W5 02.17-21		Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I Ch. 6-8 (The Good Life); Book II (Virtue Ethics); and Book VIII, Ch. 3 (Three Types of Friendship).	
		Ancient Philosophy Exam Feb. 19.	Ancient Exam, 02.19, 50min.

Modern
Philosophy

W6 02.24-28		Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , First (Doubt) and Second (Cogito) Meditations.	
		Ibid., Third Meditation (Clear and Distinct; Cartesian Circle; Proof for God's Existence).	
W7 03.03-07		Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , Part III. "Concerning the Origin and Nature of the Emotions," Preface, Definitions, Postulates, and Propositions 1-3, in <i>The Complete Works</i> , pp. 277-82.	
		Kant, "An Answer to the Question: <i>What is Enlightenment?</i> ," pp. 1-5.	
		Ibid., <i>Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , Preface, 1 st Section, pp. 1-17. (Deontology)	
W8 03.10-14		Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> in <i>The Classical Utilitarians</i> , Ch. 1-2, pp. 95-115. (Consequentialism and Utilitarianism)	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
		Modern Philosophy Exam Mar. 12.	Modern Exam, 03.12, 50min.

Spring Break

W9 03.17-21		No class Mar. 17-21. Spring Break.	
		Ibid., cont.	

American
Pragmatism

W10 03.24-28		James, "What Pragmatism Means."	
		No class Mar. 26. Research travel for conference presentations.	
W11 03.31-04.04		Dewey, <i>Art as Experience</i> , "Having an Experience," pp. 35-57.	
		Ibid., cont.	
W12 04.07-11		Ibid., cont.	
		Ibid., cont.	
W13 04.14-18		Ibid., cont.	
		American Pragmatism Exam Apr. 16.	Pragmatism Exam, 04.16, 50min.
		No class Apr. 18.	

Continental
Philosophy

W14 04.21-25		No class Apr. 21-22.	
		Sartre, <i>Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions</i> , "Introduction: Psychology, phenomenology and phenomenological psychology," pp. 1-14.	
W15 04.28-05.02		Ibid., "I. The Classic Theories" and "II. The Psychoanalytic Theory," pp. 15-33.	
		Ibid., "III. Outline of a Phenomenological Theory" and "Conclusion," pp. 34-64.	Criticism Essay, Extra Credit, 05.04, EOD.
W16 05.05-06		Ibid., cont. Deleuze, <i>Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life</i> , "Immanence: A Life," pp. 25-32. [Time Permitting] Nancy, <i>Being Singular Plural</i> , Preface, "We Are Meaning," "People Are Strange," and "Gaining Access to the Origin," pp. xv-21.	
05.07	Reading Day	No class May 7. Reading Day. Office Hours.	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
Final Exams			
W17 05.08-14		Continental Philosophy Exam (Final Exam) May 12, 10:30a-12:30p.	Continental Exam, 05.12, 10:30a-12:30p, 120min.

Key Concepts

Intuitionism

- Analysis vs. Intuition (Bergson)
- Concrete Duration (Bergson)
- Listening (Bergson; Plato; Nancy)
- Unity vs. Multiplicity (Bergson; Plato; Aristotle; Dewey; Sartre; Deleuze; Nancy)

Ancient Philosophy

- The Socratic Method (Socrates; Plato)
- The Euthyphro Problem (Socrates; Plato)
- The Philosophical Life / the Good Life (Socrates; Plato; Aristotle)
- Natural Virtue and Human Virtue (Plato; Aristotle)
- Ring of Gyges (Plato)
- The Tripartite Soul (Plato)
- Theory of Forms (Plato)
- Analogy of the Sun (Plato)
- Analogy of the Divided Line (Plato)
- Allegory of the Cave (Plato)
- Henosis (Plato; Descartes)
- Idealism (Plato)
- Materialism (Aristotle)
- Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)
- The Mean (Aristotle)
- Habituation of Virtue (Aristotle)
- Three Types of Friendship (Aristotle)

Modern Philosophy

- Cartesian Skepticism (Descartes)
- Evil Deceiver (Descartes)
- Cogito ergo sum (Descartes)
- Clarity and distinctness; the natural light (Descartes)
- Objective and Formal Reality (Descartes)
- The Cartesian Circle (Descartes)
- Rationalism vs. Empiricism (Descartes; Spinoza, Kant; Bergson; Deleuze; Plato; Aristotle; Sartre; etc.)
- Affect (Spinoza)
- Historicity and Affective History (Spinoza)
- Deontology (Kant)
- Good Will (Kant)

- Duty (Kant)
- Respect (Kant)
- Categorical Imperative (Kant)
- A Priori vs. A Posteriori (Kant)
- Consequentialism (Mill)
- Hedonism (Aristotle; Mill)
- Utilitarianism (Mill)
- Intrinsic Goods versus Instrumental Goods (Mill)
- Means and Ends (Aristotle; Kant; Mill)
- Enlightenment (Kant; Horkheimer and Adorno)
- Transcendentalism (Kant)
- Transcendence (Kant; Deleuze)

American Pragmatism

- Pragmatism (James; Dewey)
- Genetic Theory of Truth (James)
- Functionalist Account of Meaning (James)
- American Pragmatism (Dewey)
- Embodied Cognition (Dewey)
- Esthetic Experience (Dewey)
- Recognition vs. Perception (Dewey)
- Experience as Emotion (Dewey)
- Reason as Impulsive Grace (Dewey)
- Embodied Monism (Dewey)
- Primacy of Sense to Language (Dewey)
- Primacy of the Arts to Science (Dewey)
- Meaning as Causation (Dewey)
- *An* Experience (Dewey)
- Qualitative Languages (Dewey)

Continental Philosophy

- Phenomenology (Sartre)
- Existentialism (Sartre)
- Psychoanalysis (Sartre)
- Eidetic Intuition (Bergson; Plato; Descartes; Sartre)
- Emotion as Transformation (Sartre)
- A Life (Deleuze)
- Transcendental Field (Deleuze)
- Immanence (Deleuze)
- Transcendental Empiricism (Bergson; Deleuze; Nancy)
- Transcendent (Deleuze)
- Singularity (Deleuze)
- Being-With (Nancy)
- The Origin of Being-With (Nancy)
- Meaning as Circulation (Nancy)
- Co-Originary Spacing (Nancy)
- Primacy of Difference (Nancy)

Normative Ethics

- Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)
- Deontology (Kant)
- Utilitarianism (Mill)

Important Dates

- **Holidays and No-Class Days**
 - TBD
 - TBD: Finals Reading Day
- **Grade-related Dates**
 - TBD: Intuitionism Written Exam (Beginning of Class)
 - TBD: Ancient Philosophy Written Exam
 - TBD: Modern Philosophy Written Exam
 - TBD: American Pragmatism Written Exam
 - TBD: Aesthetic Criticism Essay Due (Extra Credit)
 - TBD: All Missing Written Exams Due
 - TBD: Continental Philosophy Written Exam (Final Exam)
- **Finals and Commencement**
 - TBD: Last Day of Class
 - TBD: Reading Day
 - TBD: Final Exam
 - TBD: Commencement Weekend

Learning Resources

{per institution}

My Office Hours are listed above; you are always welcome to ask me questions; I encourage discourse. You are welcome to stop by to ask about assigned readings, continue class discussions, get feedback on essays and term papers in advance, get clarity with the assigned reading, or meet my German Shepherd.

[The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(SEP\)](#) is better than AI (*use Ctrl+F to find keywords instead of AI*). This is a great secondary source if you are struggling with the primary sources assigned in class. You can also use the SEP to help identify promising secondary sources, topics for term papers, and the broader discourse, context, and interpretation around assigned primary sources, both for reading and for writing.

Disclaimer

I reserve the right to alter this syllabus and modify the information given above at any time during the semester. All changes will be announced via Canvas, which should hopefully forward to your email.

Course Syllabus
Hill, Justin A.

University Policies

{per institution}

PHIL 1301
Introduction to Philosophy