

Course Information

Course Number: PHIL 1301
Course Name: Introduction to Philosophy
Time/Location: Online Asynchronous
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Information

Instructor: Prof. Hill [Justin Andrew Hill, M.A.]
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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 (48 hours, M-F) for a response.

Course Description

This course surveys writings across the historical traditions of Ancient philosophy, Modern philosophy, American pragmatism, and 20th-century Continental philosophy. Philosophers include Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Mill, Bergson, James, Dewey, Sartre, Deleuze, Nancy, and Massumi. Themes include eidetic intuition, metaphysics, normative meta-ethics, virtue, deontology, utilitarianism, the good life, rationalism, empiricism, idealism, materialism, dualism, monism, pluralism, Enlightenment, skepticism, pragmatism, aesthetics, existentialism, phenomenology, 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

- Webcam-Recorded Timed Essay Exams

- 100%; 1000 points**

- Restate the philosopher's argument in 900-1200 words in 60 minutes, using notes and a prompt. You only need to learn one argument from each unit in-depth, as well as one back-up to be safe.

- Unit 0: Syllabus/LockDown
Multiple choice quiz to clarify key misunderstandings and to familiarize with software.
 - Unit 1: Intuitionism
Given prompt structure before exam in extensive detail to scaffold rigor expectations.
 - Unit 2: Ancient Philosophy
Not given prompts before exam. Study Guiding Questions to form a comprehensive understanding of one primary text (+1-2 back-ups). Choose only one prompt on one text.
 - Unit 3: Modern Philosophy
Same parameters as Unit 2, to focus on the material. Choose only one prompt on one text.
 - Unit 4: American Pragmatism
Same parameters as Units 2-3, to focus on the material. Choose only one prompt/text.
 - Unit 5: Continental Philosophy
Same parameters as Units 2-4, to focus on the material. Choose only one prompt/text.
The final is not comprehensive and functions exactly the same as the other unit exams.

- Extra Credit

- 9%; 90 points**

- Units 1-5: Handwritten Annotations and Notes Scans

Webcam-recorded timed essay exams (60 minutes, 900 words), with access to your physical annotations and up to five pages of handwritten notes, open on Monday the week on which they are assigned and will close end of day Sunday, 11:59pm. Tech issues are expected to be tested and problem-solved beforehand.

Watch the weekly lecture videos, study the assigned primary sources, and study for webcam essays.

Reading List

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, excerpts from Books I, II, and VIII.

Bergson, Henri. *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

Deleuze, Gilles. "Immanence: A Life."

———. "Zones of Immanence."

———. "Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought," Seminar 15, March 1981, Part 1.

Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, First, Second, and Third 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*, Preface and First Section.

Massumi, Brian. *Politics of Affect*, Preface and excerpt from Ch. 1.

Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 1-2.

Plato. *Apology*.

———. *Republic*, excerpts from Books I, II, IV, VI, and VII.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*.

Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics*, excerpt from Part III.

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.
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Grading Policy

Please refer to the current University Catalog for additional information regarding grades and course withdrawal policies. For this course, (i) weekly video discussion board exercises, such as oral responses to the main idea or a choice of guiding questions, are graded on pass/fail for accuracy; and (ii) webcam-recorded timed essay exams are graded according to the following scale (adapted from Dr. Robin James):

A (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.). No misunderstandings. Clearly above and beyond expectations. <i>Excellent presentation of key ideas.</i>
B (85)	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 presentational complications. *No misunderstandings of key ideas.*

- C (75) 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. Does not respond directly to all components of prompt.
- D (65) Very basic grasp of the material, presented in a highly confused manner.
- F (50) No comprehension of the material, and/or an utterly incomprehensible paper.
- M/INC (0) Missing/Incomplete. All **earnest efforts** will receive a minimum grade of 50.

Grading Weight Distribution

This class follows a 1000-point structure. However, note that there are 1090 points total available in the class, meaning there is an additional 9% worth of extra credit (handwritten annotations) in this course.

Your grade will be categorized into buckets: A = 900+ points; B = 800-899 points; C = 700-799, etc.

The following point breakdown will be used to calculate your numerical grade:

{1090 points possible w/ extra credit}	1090 points / 1000 points
Webcam-Recorded Timed Essay Exams:	1000 points / 1000 points
Unit 0: Syllabus/LockDown	100 points
Unit 1: Intuitionism	150 points
Unit 2: Ancient Philosophy	150 points
Unit 3: Modern Philosophy	200 points
Unit 4: American Pragmatism	200 points
Unit 5: Continental Philosophy (Final)	200 points
Extra Credit:	90 points / 1000 points
Handwritten Annotations/Notes (Units 1-5)	90 points

I reserve the right to curve exams but am more likely to create an extra credit debrief targeting specifics.

Grading Feedback Expectations

I will return grades within three weeks after the exam date, with whole-group and individual feedback.

Late Work and Make-Up Work Policy

If something comes up that will interfere with your engaging class, **especially** for any of our four 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 the end of Week 14, but will be graded down by five letter grades (e.g., -50%). Missing exams taken late *until the end of Week 10* will be graded down by three letter grades (e.g., -30%), to encourage catching up early. Note the third exam can only be made-up at **-50%** and the final cannot be made-up. Exams missed for excused absences can of course be taken without deduction.

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. Did you know AI causes (often rural) water depletion at its industrial data centers? Your brains can utilize 16 ounces of water (the amount consumed per query/prompt) better than the AI data centers can do so.

Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
Unit 0: Syllabus / LockDown Browser <i>0.5-1 weeks</i>			
W1 mm.dd-dd		Meet Your Professor (MYP). Syllabus Review. Icebreakers and Meet Your Classmates (MYC).	
		Unit 0 Exam, Syllabus / LockDown Browser. Opens Monday, 9a; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 0 Exam, 60min, due End of Week.
Unit 1: Intuitionism <i>2 weeks</i>			
W2 mm.dd-dd		Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics,” in <i>The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics</i> .	
		Ibid., cont.	
W3 mm.dd-dd		Ibid., cont.	
		Unit 1 Exam, Intuitionism. Opens Monday, 9a; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 1 Exam, 60min, due End of Week.
Unit 2: Ancient Philosophy <i>2 weeks</i>			
W4 mm.dd-dd		Plato, <i>Apology</i> .	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
		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].	
W5 mm.dd-dd		Ibid., Book VI, 506d-511e [Analogies of the Sun and the Divided Line]; and Book VII, [Allegory of the Cave].	
		Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book I Ch. 6-8 [The Good and the Good Life]; Book II [Virtue Ethics]; and Book VIII, Ch. 3 [Three Types of Friendship]. Unit 2 Exam, Ancient Philosophy. Opens Monday, 9a; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 2 Exam, 60min, due End of Week.

Unit 3:
Modern
Philosophy
3 weeks

W6 mm.dd-dd		Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , First [Doubt] and Second [Cogito] Meditations.	
		Ibid., Third Meditation [Clear and Distinct Perceptions; Cartesian Circle; Henosis, or Dialectical Truth as Participation in God's Being; Proofs for God's Existence].	
W7 mm.dd-dd		Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> , excerpt from Part III [Affect Theory; Causation; Interpretation: History]. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in <i>Illuminations</i> , pp. 196-209.	
		Deleuze, "Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought," Seminar 15, March 1981, Part 1, pp. 1-10. Massumi, <i>Politics of Affect</i> , Preface, pp. vii-xii, Ch. 1 excerpt, pp. 1-12 [Spinozan process monism and historical, zonal affect theory]. Hill, "Absorption, Contemplation, and Affection: Benjamin, Adorno, and Spinoza on Critical Aesthetics."	
W8 mm.dd-dd		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; Good Will; Misology; Duty; Respect; Law; Universalizability; Categorical Imperative].	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
		Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , in <i>The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill</i> , Ch. 1-2, pp. 95-115 [Consequentialism]. Unit 3 Exam, Modern Philosophy. Opens Monday, 9a; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 3 Exam, 60min, due End of Week.

Unit 4:
American
Pragmatism
3 weeks

W9 mm.dd-dd		James, "What Pragmatism Means."	
		Dewey, <i>Art as Experience</i> , "The Live Creature," pp. 1-19 [Pragmatist Aesthetics; Process Monism Complexified along Continuums].	
W10 mm.dd-dd		Ibid., "The Live Creature and 'Etherial Things,'" pp. 20-35.	
		Ibid., cont.	All Missing Essay Exams Due for -30%.
W11 mm.dd-dd		Ibid., "Having an Experience," pp. 36-59.	
		Ibid., cont. Unit 4 Exam, American Pragmatism. Opens Monday, 9a; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 4 Exam, 60min, due End of Week.

Unit 5/Final:
Continental
Philosophy
4 weeks

W12 mm.dd-dd		Sartre, <i>Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions</i> , "Introduction: Psychology, phenomenology and phenomenological psychology," pp. 1-14.	
		Ibid., "I. The Classic Theories" and "II. The Psychoanalytic Theory," pp. 15-33.	
W13 mm.dd-dd		Ibid., "III. Outline of a Phenomenological Theory" and "Conclusion," pp. 34-64.	
		Ibid., cont.	
W14 mm.dd-dd		Julia Kristeva, "The Novel as Polylogue," in <i>Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art</i> , pp. 159-209.	
		Ibid., cont.	All Missing Essay Exams Due for -50%.
W15 mm.dd-dd		Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," in <i>Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life</i> , pp. 25-32.	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
		Ibid., "Zones of Immanence," in <i>Two Regimes of Madness</i> , pp. 266-69.	
		Thanksgiving Break / Flex Day. No class.	

Final Exams
0.5-1 weeks

W16 mm.dd-dd	Reading Day	No class due to Reading Day. Office Hours by appointment via Zoom (please utilize!).	
		Unit 5 Exam, Continental Philosophy (Final). See University Finals Schedule for dates.	Unit 5 Exam, 60min, due End of Term.

Important Dates

- **Holidays and No-Class Days**
 - {per semester and institution}
 - Beginning of Week 16: Reading Day
- **Grade-related Dates (Essay Exams)**
 - End of Week 3: Intuitionism Essay Exam
 - End of Week 5: Ancient Philosophy Essay Exam
 - End of Week 8: Modern Philosophy Essay Exam
 - End of Week 11: American Pragmatism Essay Exam
 - End of Week 16: Continental Philosophy Essay Exam (Final)
- **Grade-related Dates (Make-Ups)**
 - End of Week 10: All Missing Essay Exams Due for -30%
 - End of Week 14: All Missing Essay Exams Due for -50%
- **Finals Week and Commencement**
 - End of Week 15: Last Day of Class
 - Beginning of Week 16: Reading Day
 - End of Week 16: Final Exam
 - After Week 16: Commencement Weekend

Learning Resources

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 (either digitally or outside on-campus, if feasible).

[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.

{per institution; tutoring and/or writing centers}

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 the LMS, which should hopefully forward to your email. In transparency, I will never modify the syllabus in such a way as to *increase* the workload or expectations.

University Policies

{per institution}
