

Course Information

Course Number: PHIL 1301
Course Name: Introduction to Philosophy
Section: 11 & 12
Semester: Fall 2025
Time: Asynchronous
Location: Asynchronous
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Information

Instructor: Professor Hill, M.A.
Email: HillJu@UHD.edu
Office Hours: F, 2p-3p, via Zoom

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 Masumi. 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 (4)
 - Unit 1: Intuitionism
 - Units 2/3: Ancient / Modern Philosophy
 - Unit 4: American Pragmatism
 - Unit 5: Continental Philosophy (Final)
- Primary Sources Preparation
 - Watch video lectures explaining and working through the assigned PDF readings.
 - Annotate digital PDFs with notes from video lectures **for use during exams**. Frame your thinking with the guiding questions, while reading primary sources and watching videos.
- Weekly Video-Recorded Oral Discussion Board Exercises
 - Weekly activities/exercises, such as answering guiding questions to study for exams; these will be answered via brief oral responses, recorded and shared with classmates.
 - Responding to classmates' video responses is ungraded, to maintain organic discussion. However, I encourage you still to engage with one another, as I will do throughout.
- Extra Credit
 - Annotations Check: If 2/3 of annotations are completed per unit, then +10% on the exam.
 - Set Sweep: If all annotation bonuses are earned across the semester, +6% in the course.

Webcam-recorded timed essay exams (45 minutes), with access to your digital Perusall annotations, will 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. Only one tech make-up may be excused.

Watch the weekly lecture videos, study the assigned primary sources, record oral responses to the guiding questions, consider optionally typing some responses to your classmates, 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."
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*.

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 (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.). No misunderstandings. Clearly above and beyond expectations. <i>Excellent presentation of key ideas.</i>
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 presentational complications. <i>No misunderstandings of key ideas.</i>
C (70-79)	Basic understanding, <i>marked by one or more significant errors or mis-readings.</i> 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 (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 efforts will receive a minimum grade of 50.

Grading Weight Distribution

This class follows a 1000-point structure. However, note that there are 1100 points total available in the class, meaning that there is an additional 10% worth of extra credit (annotating readings) in this course.

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

{1100 points possible w/ extra credit}		1100 points / 1000 points
Webcam-Recorded Timed Essay Exams:		400 points / 1000 points
Unit 1: Intuitionism	100 points	
Unit 2/3: Ancient / Modern Philosophy	100 points	
Unit 4: American Pragmatism	100 points	
Unit 5: Continental Philosophy (Final)	100 points	
Primary Sources Preparation:		300 points / 1000 points
Assigned Readings and Video Lectures	300 points	
Weekly Video Discussion Board Exercises		300 points / 1000 points
Oral Responses to Guiding Questions	300 points	
Extra Credit:		100 points / {null} points
Digital Annotations (+10% per exam)	40 points	
Annotations Set Sweep (if earned all four)	60 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 via Canvas within three weeks after the exam date, with specific itemized 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.

Oral responses submitted as weekly video discussion board exercises cannot be turned in late *except in cases of excused absences*, due to community respect for other students and for the flow of class.

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: Introduction <i>0.5-1 weeks</i>			
W1 08.18-24		Meet Your Professor (MYP). Syllabus Review. Icebreakers and Meet Your Classmates (MYC).	
		Ibid., cont. Finish MYP, Syllabus, and MYC.	
Unit 1: Intuitionism <i>2 weeks</i>			
W2 08.25-31		Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics,” in <i>The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics</i> .	
		Ibid., cont.	
W3 09.01-07		Ibid., cont.	
		Unit 1 Exam, Intuitionism. Opens Monday; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 1 Exam, 45min, due End of Week.
Unit 2: Ancient Philosophy <i>2 weeks</i>			
W4 09.08-14		Plato, <i>Apology</i> .	
		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 09.15-21		Ibid., Book VI, 506d-511e [Analogies of the Sun and the Divided Line]; and Book VII, [Allegory of the Cave].	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
		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].	See W8 below for the combined Ancient and Modern essay exam.

Unit 3:
Modern
Philosophy
3 weeks

W6 09.22-28		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 09.29-10.05		Massumi, <i>Politics of Affect</i> , Preface, pp. vii-xii, Ch. 1 excerpt, pp. 1-12 [Spinozan process monism and historical, zonal affect theory].	
		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].	
W8 10.06-12		Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , in <i>The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill</i> , Ch. 1-2, pp. 95-115 [Consequentialism].	
		Unit 2/3 Exam, Ancient / Modern Philosophy. Opens Monday; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 2/3 Exam, 45min, due End of Week.

Unit 4:
American
Pragmatism
4 weeks

W9 10.13-19		James, "What Pragmatism Means."	
		Dewey, <i>Art as Experience</i> , "The Live Creature," pp. 1-19 [Pragmatist Aesthetics; Process Monism Complexified along Continuums].	
W10 10.20-26		Ibid., cont.	
		Ibid., "The Live Creature and 'Etherial Things,'" pp. 20-35.	All Missing Essay Exams Due for -30%.
W11 10.27-11.02		Ibid., cont.	
		Ibid., "Having an Experience," pp. 36-59.	

Date	Topics	Essential Readings	Assignments Due
W12 11.03-09		Ibid., cont.	
		Unit 4 Exam, American Pragmatism. Opens Monday; closes Sunday, EOD.	Unit 4 Exam, 45min, due End of Week.

Unit 5/Final:
Continental
Philosophy
3 weeks

W13 11.10-16		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.	
W14 11.17-23		Ibid., “III. Outline of a Phenomenological Theory” and “Conclusion,” pp. 34-64.	
		Ibid., cont.	All Missing Essay Exams Due for -50%.
W15 11.24-25		Deleuze, “Immanence: A Life,” in <i>Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life</i> , pp. 25-32. Ibid., “Zones of Immanence,” in <i>Two Regimes of Madness</i> , pp. 266-69. Last day of class.	
		Thanksgiving Break. No class.	

Final Exams
0.5-1 weeks

W16 12.01	Reading Day	No class due to Reading Day. Office Hours by appointment via Zoom (please utilize!).	
12.02-08		Unit 5 Exam, Continental Philosophy (Final). Opens Tuesday, 2025.12.02, at midnight; closes Monday, 12.08, EOD (11:59pm).	Unit 5 Exam, 45min, due End of Term.

Important Dates

- **Holidays and No-Class Days**
 - September 1: Labor Day. No classes.
 - December 1: Reading Day. No classes.
- **Grade-related Dates (Essay Exams)**
 - September 1-7: Intuitionism Essay Exam
 - October 6-12: Ancient / Modern Philosophy Essay Exam
 - November 3-9: American Pragmatism Essay Exam
 - December 2-8: Continental Philosophy Essay Exam (Final)

- **Grade-related Dates (Make-Ups)**
 - *October 26: All Missing Essay Exams Due for -30%*
 - *November 23: All Missing Essay Exams Due for -50%*
 - **Finals Week and Commencement**
 - *November 25: Last Day of Class*
 - *December 1: Reading Day*
 - *December 2-8: Final Exam*
 - *After Week 16: Commencement Weekend*
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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.

Texas Apartment Association: Resources for Renters; Know Your Housing Rights

The website for the Texas Apartment Association at TAA.org offers lots of resources. Know your rights!

University Policies

{per institution}
