Metropolitan Community College Penn Valley Campus PHIL 100 - 10390 Introduction to Philosophy Spring 2022

Basic Information

Instructor: Lulu Cao

Email: <u>Lulu.Cao@mcckc.edu</u>
Course Website: <u>Blackboard</u>
Course Location: Zoom; HU 205

Course Dates & Times: 1/18 - 5/16, T/R 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm **Office Hours:** Tuesday, 2 pm - 4 pm (appointments by Starfish)

Office Location: Zoom; HU 201F

Course Overview

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the fundamental questions of human existence including the foundation of knowledge, the nature of ethical, religious, and social values and meaning, conceptions of being, and human freedom. Consideration will be given to the application of philosophical methods to contemporary society and problems. Beyond introducing you to philosophy, this class aims to trigger wonder in your life, and trains you to have an alerted perspective that helps you succeed in your career. Your efforts will be rewarded by strengthened reading, writing, reasoning, critical thinking, and creative thinking skills, not to mention openmindedness, intellectual humility, attentiveness, reflectiveness, and other intellectual virtues.

Course Objectives

- 1. Identify and explain basic philosophical definitions and concepts
- 2. Identify, explain, and analyze classical theories of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics
- 3. Demonstrate logical and critical thinking abilities by constructing sound arguments and evaluating traditional and contemporary philosophical arguments
- 4. Apply philosophical methods to contemporary problems and questions and evaluate the arguments and theories given in response

Required Course Materials

- *The World of Philosophy: An Introductory Reader* (2nd edition), edited by Steven M. Cahn (2018). Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780190691905 (Available at MCC bookstore)
- All videos and audios listed on the course schedule are free to access.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments

Your grade for the course will be determined by the following assignments. Please see the course schedule at the end of this syllabus for more specific grade distribution.

In-class Quizzes	27 pts in total
Class Discussions	45 pts in total
Essays	15 pts in total
Reflections	6 pts in total
Final Exam	7 pts in total

• In-Class Quizzes

The in-class quizzes (1 point each) are intended to examine if you have completed assigned course materials and get prepared for in-class discussions. There aren't tricky questions that intend to get you to make mistakes. All questions should be straightforward if you have read the textbook carefully. They only cover the original readings from our textbook. Videos and audios usually won't get tested.

• Class Discussions

There will be 30 class sessions/discussions (1.5 points each) this semester. You are expected to have read all the required materials before class and be prepared to have a fruitful conversation in class. You should actively contribute to the discussion, helping your peers and yourself organize thoughts and justify ideas. You will be graded based on your in-class contributions. However, arriving at the class late or leaving the class early may result in a grade penalty.

If you have to miss a class, the points can be made up by writing a 200-word summary of the text (which is equivalent to the in-class quiz) and a 200-word reflection/response to the text (which is equivalent to the in-class discussion). They must be emailed to me **before class** unless you are taking leave for an emergency. In the case of an emergency, they must be emailed to me **within 1 week** after the class. Your writings will be graded based on their quality.

Essays

There will be three essays (5 points each) throughout the semester. They are expected to be carefully written after thorough reflections. In general, each essay will ask you to compare two or three articles we read in each of three major areas of philosophy – epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. You will need to demonstrate your understanding of the authors' arguments and justify your own position regarding the topics you choose to discuss. Specific guidelines will be given in class.

You will receive feedback on each of your essays. Please read them carefully and utilize them to help you write your next essay. Please do not repeat the mistakes that I have already pointed out in previous feedback. Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about your

feedback. A grade penalty may apply if you have repetitively made a mistake and did not read this feedback.

Reflections

Reflection assignments are completed in the essay format. While regular essay assignments examine your understanding and reflection of course material, reflection assignments focus on connecting philosophy with you and your personal life. They are also expected to be carefully written after thorough reflections. But they allow more freedom for you to choose what aspects of philosophy that interest you.

• Final Exam

The final exam (7 points) involves both reading materials in our textbook and in-class instructions that supplement the textbook, e.g. universals and particulars in metaphysics, the rationalist and empiricist traditions in epistemology, application of moral theories to contemporary ethical problems. Please take notes at weekly classes to help you review for the final exam.

Grading

Grades will be assigned roughly according to the percentages below.

A	90-100	Excellent
В	80-89	Proficient
C	70-79	Competent
D	60-69	Developing
Е	0-59	Did Not Meet Assignment Criteria

Late Work Policy

If you have to miss an assignment, you have to email me at least 2 days before the deadline so that we can discuss an extended deadline. In the case of an emergency, you may email me within 1 week after the deadline so that we can discuss an extended deadline. Without formally written requests in these two cases, no late work will be accepted.

Disclaimer

Apart from official MCC policies, all matters regarding course policies, readings and class schedule, and grading requirements and procedures are subject to change. However, I will be sure to notify you regarding any alterations made. Students are still expected to adhere to all course policies/procedures in this syllabus, in addition to all MCC's policies/procedures, despite whether or not they have read these expectations. Please contact me should you have any questions or need clarification.

In-Person Class Policy

1. Modern technological advances in communication have compromised student engagement in the classroom. The classroom can become a series of distractions when students receive calls and/or text messages and are lulled into another time and place. Any use of cell phones during classes is strictly prohibited.

- 2. The classroom provides a learning environment to introduce and share new and different ideas. To maintain a sound environment, you are expected to raise your hand and acquire my permission before sharing your ideas. Reading papers, eating breakfast or lunch, private discussions, putting on make-up and unrelated side conversations are inappropriate during class time.
- 3. Many students are parents and occasionally need child care. Although as a Division, faculty are sensitive to this issue, the policy of the Penn Valley campus is children are not allowed in the classroom and cannot be left unsupervised on the campus, including in the hallways.
- 4. Every student has the right to share his or her opinions, experiences, ideas, and positions without fear of being personally attacked by other students. Classroom comments should not become personalized and comments should be directed to the instructor who can facilitate a constructive exchange of ideas. Personal attacks disrupt classroom dialog and the sharing of ideas.
- 5. The classroom setting has been designed to maximize space and comfort during instruction. Most seating is open. However, there may be tables designated for specific students. If you are asked to move from one of the designated places, please do so. Upon leaving the classroom, arrange the furniture the way it was initially found.
- Students are not to walk around or leave the classroom during class instruction. If a student is ill or needs to leave class early, please inform the instructor prior to the beginning of class.
- 7. If a student has a misunderstanding or concern with the instructor regarding a class assignment, grade, or discussion topic, discuss this matter with the instructor after class. If the matter can not be resolved after meeting with the instructor, schedule a meeting with the Division Chair.

Zoom Class Policy

- 1. The online learning environment makes a lot of in-person class policies not applicable. For example, you are allowed to, and you surely need to, access laptops or cell phones in order to access our Zoom classes.
- 2. Please mute yourself unless you are actively contributing to the class discussions. If you would like to present your ideas or ask a question, you are encouraged to raise your hands first. But if, after several minutes, the instructor has not called upon you to speak, you can assume that they are not able to see it at the moment. You can unmute yourself to speak directly.
- 3. Videos are required to be on during Zoom sessions. If you need special accommodations due to, for example, broken cameras, religious reasons, internet connections, etc., please email the instructor to request an exemption.
- 4. In the case of technology failure, e.g., Zoom sessions suddenly ended, the instructor screen has been frozen for more than 5 minutes, please wait for a few minutes to give the instructor

some time to fix the technical issue. If the instructor has not been able to fix it shortly, an announcement will be emailed to you about alternatives/temporary solutions. If you have not heard back in 10 minutes, please feel free to email the instructor.

5. In-person class policies 4, 6, 7 still apply to Zoom classes.

MCC Resources & Policies

Student Handbook

As a student at MCC, you are part of a larger community. To ensure the success of all its students, MCC requires its students to be responsible citizens. The **Student Handbook** provides guidance to students on a variety of issues, ranging from our attendance policy to copyright and e-mail policies, to children on campus. Please read through each of the links on the Student Handbook page to gain a thorough understanding of what is expected of you as a student.

Student Support

If a student needs technical support for Blackboard, MCC student e-mail, tutoring services, library services, advising, or counseling services, please click on the "Student Resources" tab on top of the page after you have logged into Blackboard or under the "Resources" tab in the course.

Grievances

Questions or concerns about any aspect of this course should be directed to the *instructor first*, so the student and the instructor can work together to resolve any problems that may exist. In the unlikely event that the problem cannot be resolved, then the next step is for the student to speak with the Division Chair: Dr. Victorie Edwards (Victorie Edwards @mcckc.edu).

Academic Calendar: Students are encouraged to review important add, drop or withdraw dates: Academic Calendar https://mcckc.edu/calendar/#academic

Academic Honesty: All forms of academic dishonesty, including:

- 1. Plagiarism the intentional use of the ideas or words of another as one's own in a paper or other academic assignment.
- 2. Cheating during examinations, whether by copying from a fellow student or by using the information in the form of unauthorized aids brought to the examination.
- 3. The submission of work for any assignment that has been prepared by another student.
- 4. Submission of a single paper to fulfill requirements in two courses without prior approval of the instructors of both courses.
- 5. Using a false name or signing the name of another individual without proper authorization in connection with any course work.

If objective evidence exists indicating that a student has practiced academic dishonesty, the following may occur:

1. If objective evidence for academic dishonesty exists, the instructor may require the paper, assignment or examination to be repeated; lower the grade for this work; assign a grade of F to this work, or assign a grade of F for the course.

- 2. The instructor will notify the student of a meeting to discuss the alleged academic dishonesty, the proposed penalty and that failure to respond to this notification will make the instructor's decision final.
- 3. If a grade of F is assigned for the course, the instructor will notify the dean responsible for instructional services and the division chair, in writing, within two (2) business days after the scheduled meeting with the student.
- 4. If, in the opinion of the instructor, the alleged academic dishonesty supports disciplinary options, other than a grade of F, the instructor will report the incident to the dean responsible for instructional services within five (5) business days after the meeting with the student. The dean of instruction will ensure that the dean of students is notified of the instructor's concerns.

More information can be found through this link: <u>Student Code of Conduct https://mcckc.edu/our-students/docs/student_code_conduct.pdf</u>

Attendance Policy: Students are responsible for attending classes as required by their instructors and are responsible for officially withdrawing from classes. MCC regulations state that an instructor may withdraw a student from class after a consecutive absence equating to 15% of the total class time, or after total absences equating to 33% of the total class time. An instructor may choose to enforce a stricter attendance policy. If so, you will be notified of this policy by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. An instructor may grant an exception to this policy after holding a conference with a student.

Attendance and Participation. The knowledge and skills you will gain in this course highly depend on your participation in-class learning activities. Because we are in the middle of a pandemic, this course has a flexible attendance policy. This is because I would like students who are feeling ill to be comfortable staying home to protect others. Instead, I will assess your participation by asking you to submit a brief reflection on your take-aways from the assignment (see the Assignments and Grading section). Students who are unable to attend class in person will be provided the same materials and guidance (e.g., recorded mini-lecture) and should plan to participate in the online discussion forum/assignment for that day. I plan to track class attendance for alternative assignments using tools in Blackboard, in order to help me be aware of how and when students are engaging in the course.

Campus Safety: Inclement weather, mass notification, and emergency response guide: <u>MCC Campus Safety https://www.mcckc.edu/campus-safety/</u>

Campus Police Contact Numbers: Non-Emergency (816) 604-1111 | Emergency (816) 604-1200

Disability Support Services (DSS): Metropolitan Community College (MCC) is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability which may impact your ability to access or participate in any aspect of my class, please contact the campus Disability Support Services (DSS) Coordinator at your campus. The DSS Coordinator will work with you to determine what disability documentation/information is needed in order to provide accommodations. Accommodations are determined on an individualized basis and may take some time to put in place, so early notification to DSS is helpful. More information is available at http://www.mcckc.edu/disability.

Final Exam: Final exams are given in all MCC classes and students have a responsibility to take them. Final exams should be given at the posted time for the exam. Students have a responsibility to contact their instructor if they miss the final exam. A student who has done satisfactory course work but who misses the final exam may be allowed to make it up if the instructor believes the reason for missing the exam was reasonable. However, if a student misses the exam and has no reasonable explanation for missing it, the instructor may give the student an "F."

Two hours are allowed for each final exam. Exams for classes with laboratories are scheduled by lecture hours. Students who have a conflict in exam times or have three or more final exams scheduled on the same day may arrange to reschedule one of them with the permission of the instructor. **Final Exam Schedule** https://mcckc.edu/finals

Grade Appeal Policy: A grade change request may be made, in writing, for a final grade, not including withdrawals or incompletes, to the instructor up to 120 working days following the posting of the grade. Procedures for Students: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please see your instructor first so that we can work together to resolve any problems that may exist. In the unlikely event that we cannot resolve the problem, then the next step is for you to make an appointment with the Division Chair. Reference: 7.30060 DP <u>Student Complaints https://web.mcckc.edu/asp/infoex/PRP/Files/730060DP.pdf</u>

Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment: MCC, in keeping with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, national origin, or disability. The district actively follows a policy of nondiscrimination in the aforementioned areas in regard to all employment and retention of students.

Federal and State Law, as well as MCC's Board of Trustee policy, prohibit sexual harassment. If you feel you, as a student, have been subjected to sexual harassment or to any of the above-mentioned forms of discrimination, contact the Dean of Student Development at your campus for further information. For more information, visit link: https://mcckc.edu/our-students/student-handbook/compliance.aspx

Satisfactory Academic Progress: In order to retain eligibility for financial aid, recipients must make satisfactory academic progress toward their academic program each semester. Academic exemption, amnesty, or forgiveness is not allowed. The following will be reviewed at the end of each semester.

- 1. Recipients must earn and maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average. Grade point averages will be calculated according to college policy.
- 2. Recipients must also maintain a cumulative successful (with an A, B, C, D grade) completion rate of a minimum of sixty-seven percent (67.00%) of courses attempted.
- 3. Recipients must complete their academic program within a timeframe of no more than one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the number of credit hours required to finish their program without the repetition of any course. (Ex. 64 credits for AA, can only take a total of 96 credit hours towards that degree)

- Recipients' entire academic history will be evaluated when determining the credit hours that apply toward the maximum timeframe eligible for financial aid.
- Courses attempted and/or completed toward the student's current program are included when determining the maximum timeframe. A student is allowed to change their academic program and reset their maximum timeframe one time with approval.
- The maximum timeframe eligible for financial aid will be adjusted for approved academic program changes and for remedial/developmental coursework.
- Rejected transfer hours are excluded from this calculation.

Students who fail to meet the above are subject to losing financial aid eligibility. If you feel you are in danger of not meeting these standards or are considering withdrawing from a class, please seek academic assistance and meet with an advisor as soon as possible. Details about this policy can be found at http://www.mcckc.edu/sap

Retaking a Course: The best way to improve your GPA is to retake a class for which you received a "D" or an "F". The grade remains on your transcript, but the last one you earn is the one counted in your GPA. You may also retake a class that was transferred from another institution, as long as the course is evaluated as an exact match. Other colleges may have different policies. There may be limits on the number of times you may repeat the same class.

Withdrawal: Students are responsible for officially withdrawing from classes they do not plan to complete. A student who stops attending a class but remains on the class roster may receive an "F" in the class. If the student receives federal or state financial aid, the student may be required to repay those benefits. Given this financial impact that can be a barrier to a student's success, faculty are also encouraged to drop students who have stopped attending, but it is not required. Students may drop a class through their myMCCKC student center or by visiting with an advisor. Dropping a class after the 100% refund period will result in a grade of "W" on the transcript. During the last 40% of a class, students will receive a grade for their academic progress. Students who stop attending class during this time period could fall below satisfactory academic standards and therefore receive a failing grade.

Instructors are not required to withdraw students or to change a grade of "F" if the student fails to assume this responsibility. Withdrawal forms are available through an academic advisor or from the Enrollment Center.

Course Schedule		
Week 1: Introduction	Tuesday: Peers; Syllabus; Course Website Thursday: "What Is Philosophy?" by Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley (pp. 2-9); "What Is Philosophy?" on Philosophy Bites (25 min, free); "MM McCabe on Socratic Method" on Philosophy Bites (13 min, free)	Duration: Jan 18 – Jan 23 Reflection 1 (3 pts) Due: How Have I Done Philosophy? 11:59 pm, Jan 23
Week 2: Logic	Tuesday: "What Is Reason?" by Steven M. Cahn, Patricia Kitcher, and George Sher (pp. 48-54); "How to Argue: Philosophical Reasoning" on Crash Course Philosophy (9 min); "How to Argue: Induction & Abduction" on Crash Course Philosophy (10 min) Thursday: "Scientific Inquiry" by Carl G. Hempel (pp. 54-58)	Duration: Jan 24 – Jan 30
Week 3: Epistemology	Tuesday: Excerpts from Meditations on First Philosophy by René Descartes (pp. 62-65); "Colin McGinn on Descartes on Innate Knowledge" on Philosophy Bites (15 min) Thursday: Excerpts from Meditations on First Philosophy by René Descartes (pp. 100-105)	Duration: Jan 31 – Feb 6

Week 4: Epistemology	Tuesday: Excerpts from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding by John Locke (pp. 65-71); "Locke, Berkeley, & Empiricism" on Crash Course Philosophy (9 min) Thursday: Excerpts from An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding by David Hume (pp. 78-84)	Duration: Feb 7 – Feb 13
Week 5: Epistemology	Tuesday: Excerpts from <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> by Immanuel Kant (pp. 85-90) Thursday: "Examination of the Senses" by Nāgārjuna (pp. 96-98)	Duration: Feb 14 – Feb 20 Essay 1 (5 pts) Due : 11:59 pm, Feb 20
Week 6: Metaphysics	Tuesday: "The Ghost in the Machine" by Gilbert Ryle (pp. 105-109) Thursday: "The Mind-Body Problem" by Paul M. Churchland (pp. 109-119)	Duration: Feb 21 – Feb 27
Week 7: Metaphysics	Tuesday: "Freedom or Determinism?" by Steven M. Cahn (pp. 178-186); "Determinism vs. Free Will" on Crash Course Philosophy (10 min) Thursday: "The Freedom of the Will" by Kitarō Nishida (pp. 187-190); "Randolph Clarke and Stephen Kearns on the Problem of Free Will" on Philosophy TV (66 min)	Duration: Feb 28 – Mar 6
Week 8: Metaphysics	Tuesday: "The Five Ways" by Thomas Aquinas (pp. 195-197); "The Kalam Cosmological Argument" by William L. Rowe (pp. 197-199); "Intelligent Design" on Crash Course Philosophy (9 min) Thursday: "Does God Exist?" by Ernest Nagel (pp. 203-208); "Agnosticism about God's Existence" by Sylwia Wilczewska (3 pgs)	Duration: Mar 7 – Mar 13 Essay 2 (5 pts) Due : 11:59 pm, Mar 13

Week 9	Spring Break	Duration: Mar 14 – Mar 20
Week 10: Ethics	Tuesday: "The Categorical Imperative" by Immanuel Kant (pp. 328-335) Thursday: "Egoism and Moral Skepticism" by James Rachels (pp. 320-327); "Tim Williamson on the Appeal of Relativism" on <i>Philosophy Bites</i> (13 min)	Duration: Mar 21 – Mar 27
Week 11: Ethics	Tuesday: Excerpts from <i>Utilitarianism</i> by John Stuart Mill (pp. 335-341); "Roger Crisp on Mill's Utilitarianism" on <i>Philosophy Bites</i> (13 min) Thursday: "The Nature of Virtue" by Aristotle (pp. 342-345); "Roger Crisp on Aristotle on Virtue" on <i>Philosophy Bites</i> (14 min)	Duration: Mar 28 – Apr 3
Week 12: Ethics	Tuesday: Excerpts from <i>The Ethics of Care</i> by Virginia Held (pp. 349-353) Thursday: "Confucian Morality" by Henry Rosemont, Jr. (pp. 377-382); "2,000 Years of Chinese History! The Mandate of Heaven and Confucius" on Crash Course World History (12 min)	Duration: Apr 4 – Apr 10
Week 13: Ethics	Tuesday: Excerpts from Beyond Good and Evil by Friedrich Nietzsche (pp. 353-361); "Christopher Janaway on Nietzsche on Morality" on Philosophy Bites (14 min) Thursday: Excerpts from Existentialism Is a Humanism by Jean-Paul Sartre (pp. 362-369); "Mary Warnock on Sartre's Existentialism" on Philosophy Bites (11 min)	Duration: Apr 11 – Apr 17 Essay 3 (5 pts) Due : 11:59 pm, Apr 17
Week 14: Social & Political Philosophy	Tuesday: "Developing Democratic Citizenship in Multicultural Societies" by Jorge M. Valadez (pp. 480-483); "Multiculturalism Debated in the U.S. and Abroad" on National Public Radio (30 min); "Why Social Media Is Terrible for Multiethnic Democracies," Jonathan Haidt interviewed by Sean Illing (6 pgs)	Duration: Apr 18 – Apr 24 Last Date to Withdraw without Grade: Apr 18

	Thursday: "Non-contractual Society: A Feminist View" by Virginia Held (pp. 490-496)	
Week 15: Social & Political Philosophy	Tuesday: "Five Faces of Oppression" by Iris Marion Young (pp. 496-506) Thursday: "Globalizing Human Rights" by Kwame Anthony Appiah (pp. 507-512); "John Tasioulas on Human Rights," on <i>Philosophy Bites</i> (21min)	Duration: Apr 25 – May 1
Week 16: Conclusion	Tuesday: Reflection of "My Favorite Article This Semester" Thursday: Reflection of "Philosophy and Me"	Duration: May 2 – May 8 Reflection 2 (3 pts) Due: Philosophical Life, 11:59 pm, May 8
Week 17	Final Exam	Final Exam (7 pts) Due: 12:20pm – 2:20pm, May 12 Final Grades Available: May 17