

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES



PHIL 101

CLASS OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR

Taylor R. Genovese

(he/him/his)

Email: taylor.genovese@marist.edu

Web: taylorgenovese.com

Office: Fontaine 304

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Fridays 10:00am–11:00am (and by appointment).

Note on communication: I will make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours (although usually it is within an hour or two, unless I am teaching, in meetings, or driving). However, please note that I only check and respond to email between 8am and 8pm, Monday through Friday.

DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

PHIL 101L 134 – Philosophical Perspectives

CRN #: 11708

3 credit hours / Face-to-Face

Instructional Hours: 2.5 per week

Minimum Expected Hours Out-of-Class: 5 per week

MEETING INFORMATION

Fall 2022

Tuesdays & Fridays, 12:30pm–1:45pm

Marist College

Donnelly 236

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to philosophy—with the key word being *an*. In this course, you will get an overview of various philosophical perspectives, but, as those who are interested in philosophy will notice, much of the “philosophical canon” is missing. This is a deliberate choice—but not one made out of spite, malice, or hubris. Rather, the curation of topics for this course is meant to expose you to a wide *variety* of philosophical traditions and/or modes of thinking, from ancient to contemporary.

This class may be challenging. Some topics may require long stints of difficult reading and some topics may challenge your conceptions of how the world works (or should work). This is all done in service to the paramount goal of this course—and, consequently, one of the most difficult tasks that human beings can undertake—to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of several philosophical arguments.
2. Compare and contrast several philosophical positions.
3. Read challenging texts closely and critically.
4. Draw connections between philosophy and your own life.
5. Construct a paper with a clear, strong, and logical argument.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required textbooks for this class. PDFs of all readings will be provided by the instructor and can be accessed on iLearn. That said, there are two assigned films for this course. You may have to rent them if you're unable to find them in the library or on a streaming service you may subscribe to.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Exams (30%) There will be a total of two exams: a midterm and a final. Exams are taken on iLearn. Each exam is worth 15% of your grade and will mainly cover the material presented in each half of the semester, although students will be expected to remember some philosophical concepts and terms from all parts of the course for the final. If you miss an exam without it being an excused absence, you will receive a 0 for that exam.
2. Paper (20%) You will write a formal argument paper after choosing a prompt from a series of options provided by the instructor. The paper will have components turned in incrementally throughout the semester and the specific requirements for the paper will be explained in greater detail during class. It will be turned in at the end of the semester and must be between 1200–1500 words.
3. Journal (20%) You will write a journal entry at the end of each of the 8 units in the course (except for the Philosophy on Film unit, where you will submit two film responses). They are due on Sunday at 5:00pm after the unit ends. The journal is an opportunity to explore your own ideas about the topics—criticisms, questions, and other reflections—and may include creative works. It should be *at least* one substantial paragraph (~300 words) and **should not summarize readings or in-class discussion**. This is an opportunity for you to draw connections between philosophical concepts learned in class and the lived experiences of your own life. Your grade will be based on the depth of your discussion and the effort apparent in the journal entry.
4. Attendance and Participation (30%) All students are expected to arrive on time having read assigned readings ahead of our meeting and attend the entirety of class sessions. That said, participation is a hard thing to assess because if you're not a particularly outspoken person, it might not seem like you're participating. Each class (except for exam days), we'll do some kind of assignment to see where you're at. This might come in the form of group activities, a pop quiz, or something else. These in-class assignments cannot be made up (except in the case of an excused absence). In-class assignments are given a point value of 10, 8, or 5 out of 10 depending on the quality of the answer.

COURSE POLICIES

GRADING POLICY

As a general rule, late assignments are not accepted. However, if an extenuating, documentable circumstance has prevented you from turning in an assignment on-time, you may lose up to a letter grade every 24 hours that the assignment is late.

Grading Scheme

Grade	Percentage	Rubric
A	(95–100)	Work exceeds expectations and exhibits exceptional clarity, insight, or brilliance.
A-	(90–94)	Work shows only the most minor errors or omissions.
B+	(87–89)	Work has a few but major flaws, such as a misinterpretation, failure to address an important issue, triviality, glossing over difficulties, weak argument(s), lack of clarity or coherence. Plus/minus grading will be used accordingly.
B	(83–86)	
B-	(80–82)	
C+	(77–79)	
C	(73–76)	Work has a number of major flaws but still displays a broadly correct understanding of the material. Plus/minus grading will be used accordingly.
C-	(70–72)	
D+	(67–69)	Work shows that the student has not understood a significant portion of the material (or is not able to convey such understanding), but is still more right than wrong. Plus grading will be used accordingly.
D	(60–66)	
F	(0–59)	Work exhibits poor structure, an entire lack of theme or focus, a wholly inadequate understanding of the material, or is plagiarized.

Once exams and assignments are graded, you should promptly go over them to catch possible errors—in addition to incorrect point calculations or disputable evaluation of answers. **It is your responsibility to detect such errors and bring them to my attention within one week after they are graded.** Do not wait until the end of the term to address potential errors in grading as it may be too late to adjust the grade. Grades will be updated regularly on iLearn.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In this class, academic integrity especially pertains to cheating on exams and plagiarism.

Do not cheat on the exams; all of the answers must be your own and not copied, shared, or acquired from someone or somewhere else.

Plagiarism is a serious issue and can lead to serious consequences. **If you use four or more words in a row that are not your own, clearly cite from which source they came from. Basically: when in doubt, CITE.**

You also may not turn in work from another class for this class. You should absolutely make connections between your general knowledge, your life experience, and knowledge from other courses with the material we are discussing in this class. However, copying and pasting large portions or entire papers from a class you are taking or have previously taken for assignments in this class is not acceptable. If you have any questions or concerns, just come talk to me! You should never get to the point where you feel desperate enough to resort to dishonesty. I am readily available and more than happy to help if you are having difficulty grasping any of the material.

With that said, I reserve the right to utilize electronic means to help prevent plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course their papers are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Papers submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Additional information about this system can be found at www.turnitin.com.

Any work found to be plagiarized in the ways mentioned above may result in an automatic failing grade for the assignment, quiz, and/or exam. I also reserve the right to give anyone caught plagiarizing or cheating a failing grade in the course, regardless of the grades received for other course assignments or activities.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance and participation is required for this class. Students are responsible for managing the usual range of events that life throws at all of us. That said, I understand that some events are out of our control—especially in our era of multiple concurrent pandemics—so you are allowed to miss three class periods, no questions asked (although you will still lose your attendance points for those days). However, it is your responsibility to ask your classmates what you missed and receive notes from them, if they are willing to help. If you know you have to miss a class period, please let me know as far ahead of time as possible. After three absences (unless they are excused or religious holidays), you risk losing significant points.

IN-CLASS POLICIES

Please refrain from comments and side conversations during class time—even whispering in the back of the room can bother both myself and your fellow students. If you have a question or a comment, please direct it to me and we can either open a discussion or return to it at a later time.

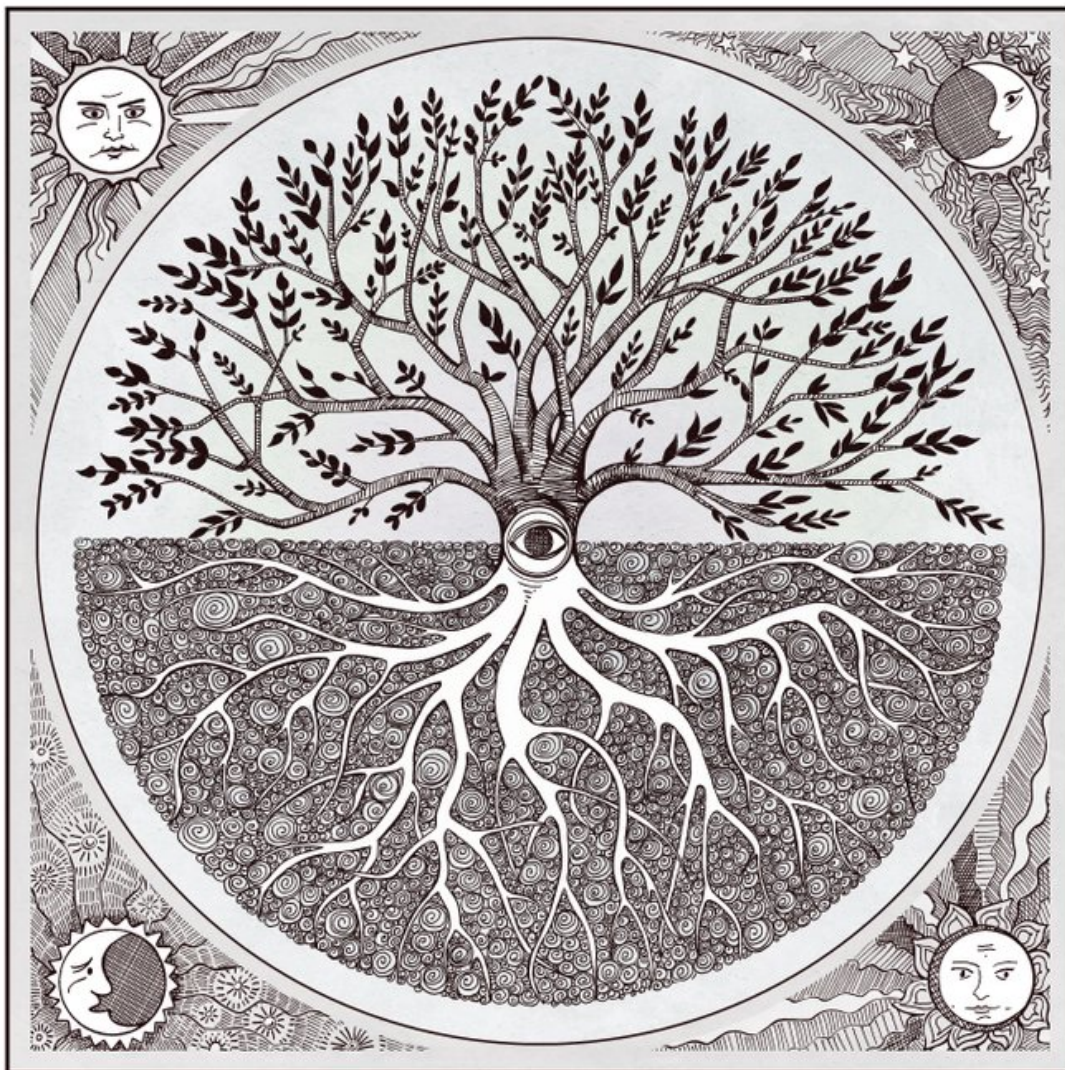
Please silence all electronic devices while you are in class. I do allow computers **for note-taking purposes only**. If you begin using your computer/device for anything other than note-taking or in-class activities, you will be asked to put it away. Repeated violations may result in you being required to leave class and you will lose attendance/participation points for the day.

During class, please do not engage in any of the following (or similarly distracting) activities: sleeping, text messaging, tweeting, working on assignments for another class, putting on make-up, combing hair, making TikToks, or any other activities unrelated to the matter at hand in our classroom. If you

must engage in any of these activities, please leave the classroom. However, if leaving the classroom becomes a disruptive pattern, you may lose your attendance points for the day.

SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

I anticipate that we will follow the course outline as presented at the end of this syllabus, but I may make adjustments based on your interests and the interests of your fellow classmates. Be sure to check with a classmate after an absence to see if assignments have changed. I may also change the basis for the course grade; if I do so, I will inform you in-person and through iLearn. Remaining in the course after reading this syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes as well as the responsibility for making yourself aware of them.



STUDENT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

WRITING CENTER

The Marist Writing Center helps undergraduate and graduate students in all disciplines become more effective, more confident writers and believes that all writers benefit from sharing work in progress with knowledgeable, attentive readers. Writing Center tutors are available to work with you at any stage of the writing process—from figuring out a topic or planning out a long-term project, to making major revisions in an early draft, to polishing grammar and style. The Writing Center offers both in-person and online tutoring. You can make an appointment at marist.mywconline.com. To learn more, visit their iLearn site (Writing_Center) or email Writing.Center@marist.edu.

DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

I am committed to providing access to a quality education for all students, including those with documented disabilities. If you need special accommodations for the course, you need to contact the Accommodations & Accessibility office located in Donnelly Hall, Room 226 (845.575.3247 / accommodations@marist.edu / <https://www.marist.edu/academics/academic-resources/accommodations-accessibility>). You are encouraged to initiate contact with Accommodations & Accessibility early in the semester so that reasonable accommodation can be implemented in a timely manner.

TITLE IX / SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT / COUNSELING SERVICES

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex or gender from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and Marist policy make it clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex and/or gender can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from Marist. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex/gender or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at: <https://www.marist.edu/title-ix>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of gender-based or sexual misconduct, including sexual violence and dating violence. For more information, you can contact Kelly Yough, Director of Equity and Title IX Coordinator (Student Center 1202 / 845.575.2210 / TitleIX@Marist.edu).

You can also find information about free, confidential individual counseling for academic, personal, or career matters at: <https://www.marist.edu/student-life/services/counseling>.

COURSE OUTLINE

(Note: this outline may change as the semester progresses. I will announce all changes in class and on iLearn.)

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings	What's Due?
^T August 30	<u>Introduction to the Course</u> No Reading	
^F September 2	<u>Why Study Philosophy?</u> ➤ Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy" from <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> ➤ "Some Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers" from <i>The Norton Introduction to Philosophy</i>	
Unit 1 – What is philosophy?		
^T September 6	<u>Philosophy and Society</u> ➤ Plato, <i>The Apology of Socrates</i>	
^F September 9	<u>The Contemporary State of Philosophy</u> ➤ Kristie Dotson, "Concrete Flowers: Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy"	Journal #1 due 9/11 @ 5:00pm
Unit 2 – What is reality?		
^T September 13	<u>Multiple Realities</u> ➤ Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" from <i>Republic</i>	
^F September 16	<u>Metaphysics of Time Travel</u> ➤ David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel"	Journal #2 due 9/18 @ 5:00pm
Unit 3 – Can we possess knowledge of the world?		
^T September 20	<u>The Evil Demon</u> ➤ René Descartes, "Meditation I & II" from <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i>	
^F September 23	<u>The Revenge of Buffered Selves</u> ➤ Susan Bordo, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought"	
^T September 27	<u>Identity and the Self</u> ➤ John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity" from <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i>	
^F September 30	<u>Enlightenment</u> ➤ Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" ➤ Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" from <i>The Foucault Reader</i>	

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings	What's Due?
T October 4	<u>Bullshit</u> ➤Harry Frankfurt, <i>On Bullshit</i> ➤David Graeber, "What is a Bullshit Job?" from <i>Bullshit Jobs: A Theory</i>	
F October 7	<u>Midterm Review</u> Catch up on readings	Journal #3 due 10/9 @ 5:00pm
T October 11	Midterm Exam	
F October 14	NO CLASS – Fall Recess	
Unit 4 – Does God exist?		
T October 18	<u>A Demonstrable God and Divine Darkness</u> ➤St. Thomas Aquinas, "The Existence of God" from <i>Summa Theologica</i> ➤Dionysius The Areopagite, <i>The Mystical Theology</i>	
F October 21	<u>God is Dead</u> ➤Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Madman" from <i>The Gay Science</i> ➤William L. Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism"	Journal #4 due 10/23 @ 5:00pm
Unit 5 – Can philosophy be turned into action?		
T October 25	<u>Fourier and American Utopias</u> ➤Charles Fourier, "Selections Describing the Phalanstery" from <i>The Utopia Reader</i> ➤Albert Brisbane, "Association; Or, A Concise Exposition of the Practical Part of Fourier's Social Science" from <i>The Utopia Reader</i>	
F October 28	<u>Friends and Enemies</u> ➤Carl Schmitt, excerpt from <i>The Concept of the Political</i> (sections 2–4)	Paper thesis due 10/30 @ 5:00pm
T November 1	<u>Silicon Valley and the Californian Ideology</u> ➤Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, "The Californian Ideology"	
F November 4	<u>Cosmism and Transhumanism</u> ➤Boris Groys, "Russian Cosmism and the Technology of Immortality" from <i>Russian Cosmism</i>	Journal #5 due 11/6 @ 5:00pm
Unit 6 – Philosophy on Film		
T November 8	NO CLASS – Taylor is in Seattle for a conference [Alternative: Watch <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i> (2004)]	Film Response #1 due 11/13 @ 5:00pm

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings	What's Due?
F November 11	NO CLASS – Taylor is in Seattle for a conference [Alternative: Watch <i>Gattaca</i> (1997)]	Film Response #2 due 11/13 @ 5:00pm
Unit 7 – What about philosophy outside of the West?		
T November 15	<u>Indigenous Epistemology</u> ► V.F. Cordova, "Approaches to Native American Philosophy" from <i>American Indian Thought</i> ► Brian Yazzie Burkhart, "What Coyote and Thales Can Teach Us: An Outline of American Indian Epistemology" from <i>American Indian Thought</i>	
F November 18	<u>Non-Western Time</u> ► Rangi Matamua, "Matariki and the decolonisation of time" from <i>Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies</i>	Annotated Bibliography due 11/20 @ 5:00pm
T November 22	<u>Flex Day</u> This day will be used to talk about whatever you, the students, want to discuss further or it can be used in order to shift things around throughout the semester.	Journal #6 due 11/27 @ 5:00pm
F November 25	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving	
Unit 8 – Are we haunted by philosophy? Is philosophy haunting us?		
T November 29	<u>Ecological Hauntings</u> ► Elaine Gan, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson and Nils Bubandt, "Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene" from <i>Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet</i>	
F December 2	<u>Political Hauntings</u> ► Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>	
T December 6	<u>Cultural Hauntings</u> ► Mark Fisher, "The Slow Cancellation of the Future" from <i>Ghosts of My Life</i>	
F December 9	<u>Final Exam Review</u> Catch up on readings	Journal #7 due 12/11 @ 5:00pm
T December 13	Final Exam Exam can be taken any day of the week on iLearn, but you must take it in a single two-hour session. The exam will go live on Monday at noon and the portal will close at 5:00pm on Friday.	
F December 16		Paper due 12/16 @ 5:00pm

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