

PHIL 101 – Introduction to Philosophy

Course Instructor

Course Description

Study of selected great philosophers or basic problems involving imaginative and critical interpretations of experience and reality. 3 credits.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this class, students will be able to:

- Analyze several issues within the history of philosophy.
- Demonstrate proficiency in logic and argumentation.
- Evaluate important issues that pertain to the self, reality, society, and morality.

Class Format

This is a lecture-discussion course, meaning that I will provide lecture and lead class discussions during each session. All students should participate in class discussions.

Assignments and Grading

Students are required to keep a research journal (not a blog - a physical product made from trees, bamboo, recycled materials, etc.). Each week, you should write an (200-300 word) entry in your journal that shows that you are thinking about the topics covered in class. Feel free to pursue inquiries that arise due to class discussions and readings. This assignment counts for 25% of your total grade. I will periodically collect the journals for review. If your journal lacks content, I will make note of it and deduct points. You must complete a group project, worth 25% of your total grade. Details will come. There are two exams, each counting for 25% of your final grade. The exams will include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and an essay question. There is a paper due (2000 words) on the last day of regular instruction. We will discuss this paper after the first exam.

Required Readings

I will email you reading assignments and or links to them.

Technology and Attendance

Laptops and mobile devices are not allowed in class. If you use a mobile device or computer in class, sleep, leave class early, or arrive excessively late, you are considered absent. If you miss five class sessions, your total grade drops by one full letter. If you miss six classes, your total grade drops by two full letters. If you miss six classes, your grade drops by three full letters. If you miss eight or more sessions, you fail the course. Absences are only excused if they are in accord with University policy.

Expectations

You are expected to have read the material before coming to class. Arrive on time. Be prepared to engage in conversation about the text. Please respect your classmates and be courteous at all times.

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information: <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>
<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Any other class specific information—(e.g., absences, make-up exams, status reporting, extra credit policies, plagiarism/cheating consequences, policy on electronic devices, specialized department or college tutoring programs, bringing children to class, policy on recording classroom lectures, etc.)

Library statement: Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discover, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu>.

Class Agendas and Reading Assignments Week One

M: Soygal Rinpoche, "The Nature of Mind," in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*
W: Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave"

During this week, we will get to know each other and begin to question the fundamental nature of reality and our knowledge of it.

Week Two

M: Labor Day, no class
W: Rene Descartes, *Meditations* (1 & 2)

We will compare Descartes' to Plato, thinking about why the Meditations count as "modern" philosophy.

Week Three

M: Rene Descartes, *Meditations* (6) W: Daniel Dennett,
"Where Am I?"

During this week, we will finish with Descartes and examine some of the difficulties that arise when thinking about mind and body.

Week Four

M: Baron d'Holbach, "A Defense of Determinism"
William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism" and Daniel Dennett "Consciousness and Free Will" [video] W:
Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat?" and David Chalmers "On Consciousness" [video]
W: Take-home Exam. It is due on Monday of Week Five.

This week, we will examine free will, consciousness, and discuss what we can know about them. There is an exam.

Week Five

M: W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chapter One) W: Gloria
E. Anzaldua, "The New Mestiza"

These readings draw attention to racial and sexual dimensions of consciousness in the social world.

Week Six

M: Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
W: Edmund L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"

Kant dares us to think for ourselves, but what do we know about knowledge? Is it the same thing as "justified true belief?" This week, we will explore these ideas.

Week Seven

M : Arguments and Informal Fallacies (handout) W: Group
Demonstrations : Logic and the Media

On Monday, we will cover the basics of arguments and fallacies. Before Wednesday, groups will look at popular media for fallacies (memes, TV, etc.). On Wednesday, groups will present their findings to the class.

This week, we examine the social contract.

Week Nine

M: Mina Kimes, "At Sears, Eddie Lampert's Warring Divisions Model Adds to the Troubles" W: John Stuart Mills, *Utilitarianism* (Chapter 2)

This week, we will examine ethical egoism and utilitarianism.

Week Ten

M: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*
W: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* We will examine and

discuss moral duties.

Week Eleven

M: Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*, (selections) W: Aristotle,
Nicomachean Ethics (1-4)

This week, we will "gobackintime," looking at ancient wisdom.

Week Twelve

M: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (5-10)
W: Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (selections)

After virtue ethics, we turn our attention toward feminist ethics of care.

Week Thirteen

M: Antonio Caso, "The Human Person and the Totalitarian State" W: Samuel
Ramos, "Towards a New Humanism"

Caso and Ramos reveal the existential dimension of ethical theory, calling the person into question as she/he deals with other people and the community.

Week Fourteen

M: Kwasi Wiredu, "The Moral Foundations of an African Culture" W: Movie,
"Happiness"

*Wiredu's perspective of community relations is similar but significantly different from Caso and Ramos. To understand the nuances of his position, along with a panorama of social living, we will watch the documentary, *Happy*.*

Week Fifteen

M: Jorge Lois Borges, "The Zahir"

W: Review

Now that you understand why philosophy is the love of wisdom, Borges shows us how it can change your life.

Week Sixteen

Final exam: see University's academic calendar for time and place.

