

# Introduction to Philosophy PHIL1000-001 Fall 2020

**Primary Instructor: Spencer Ivy**

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**Office Hours: Via Zoom by appointment**

**Office Location: Somewhere amidst the buzzing vastness of Amazon's server farm**

**Preferred Method of Contact: Via email**

**Secondary Instructor: Joonho Lee**

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## COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of this course and successful completion of all course requirements, the student will be able to do all of the following:

- Be conversant in conversations concerning "*The big questions*"
- Become the wisest person in Athens
- Be able to write an philosophical argument independently

## COURSE MATERIALS

**Reading:** All readings will be online in Canvas. THERE IS NO TEXTBOOK FOR THIS CLASS.

**Canvas:** This is a hybrid course which means that you will need to keep up to date with all announcements, added material, and lecture content presented through Canvas.

## HYBRID COURSE?

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the University has put 70% of classes online. For introductory classes and new students, the University is apportioning some in person classes and we are lucky enough to be one of those! Our class size is greatly reduced (35 members) and we have a large enough lecture hall to ensure social distancing by skipping chairs between each student. For students who would like to stay at home, we will also be live streaming the class through Zoom. Details on how to connect will be available on Canvas. All students who come to class on TUESDAYS (we don't have an in-person session Thursday) are required to socially distance and wear masks for the duration of their time on campus. I will be policing this and helping ensure maximal safety for all of our colleagues and classmates.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

**Late Policy: Every Day an Assignment is late will incur a 1 point loss on the assignment. This means that late grades for smaller point assignments are more damaging. I do not accept late turn ins for online discussion posts.**

### *Attendance / Participation / Online Discussion*

(14% of final grade)

Learning will come much more easily and enjoyably if you're actively participating in your education! Accordingly, I emphasize student participation and discussion in the classroom. I expect you all to bring questions, ideas, and insights to class and to be prepared to share them. Of course, if you're not attending class, then you're not participating well either; so, attendance is *strongly encouraged*. While it is not required that you show up to class, being in class will affect your grade positively. Not showing up means that you won't get that extra help. Please keep in mind that as a *hybrid* class, showing up could mean logging in to the live stream!!

Your actual numeric grade for participation is acquired by participating in online discussions. You must post on the discussion board *14 times over the course of the semester*. These posts should critically engage with the work we are reading. This means asking questions about the reading, explaining why you are asking the questions, raising a problem/objection to an argument, or applying the arguments to some other applicable area. Try to write a minimum of 100 words, but don't feel constrained with an upper or lower word limit as long as you are critically engaging. While you are required to write one discussion post per week, **I will only critically grade 2 posts of your choosing at the end of the semester. So this means that you have two grade components for discussion posts. One grade is for completing the weekly assignments, and the second grade is for the quality of the discussion (in the two posts that you choose).**

### *Tests*

(36% of final grade)

There will be a midterm and a final in this course. The way my tests work is that one week before the test you will receive a list of 4 prompts. Each of these prompts will contain about a paragraph's worth of questions concerning a topic of the philosophy that we've read and discussed in class (this is another reason you should show up to class – some of the test questions will bear on what happens in our discussions!). On the day of the test, 3 of the 4 prompts will be given to you. You will be asked to choose 2 of the given prompts and answer them for the duration of the test period.

## *Paper*

(45% of final grade)

Philosophy is about sharing your own ideas. It is an interpretive attitude that we take towards the world in order to understand it and justify our place in it. I believe that the philosophy classroom is a workshop in which we are given the opportunity to practice our interpretive skills so that, when we are faced with problems in the real world, we can responsibly work our way through them. For this reason, I am having you all write a paper on a topic of your own choosing. You are to interpret in your own way the arguments and problems that we will deal with over the semester. The assignment is meant to give you the opportunity to practice a series of skills that are essential to working your way through a life in the real world (not just being philosophical!). This can seem a daunting task, I know – in order to promote your own success, I've scaffolded the paper so that it will be broken down into parts. Some details on this below:

*Thesis:* Write me a thesis statement. We will discuss in class what this should look like. In short, a thesis is an entire paper's argument in a single sentence. It is a statement of what you intend to argue for throughout the body of the paper.

*Outline:* Write me a skeleton of the paper that you intend to write on the basis of your thesis. The outline should contain a list of arguments, a general narrative direction, or describe how you will write your paper. Everyone outlines differently – the assignment is for you to construct a plan, or lay out a map, that will be helpful for your own writing.

*Rough Draft:* Write me the whole paper. I will return comments for revision.

*Final Draft:* After all that work, you will have written me a polished thesis! Full points for this portion of the assignment should be responding to comments, showing improvement, and having produced a well written and well argued for thesis.

## **GRADING POLICY**

### **Participation – 14 points**

**Online Discussion Completion: 12**  
**Online Discussion Critical Grade: 7 (3.5 x2)**

### **Paper – 46 points**

**Thesis: 5**  
**Outline: 6**  
**Rough Draft: 10**  
**Final Draft: 20**

### **Tests – 40 Points**

**Midterm: 20**  
**Final: 20**

**TOTAL: 100 points.**

**Points translate to  
grades as follows:**

**93 and above = A**

**90-92 = A-**

**88-89 = B+**

**83-87 = B**

**80-82 = B-**

**78-79 = C+**

**73-77 = C**

**70-72 = C-**

**etc.**

**Below 60 = E**

# Course Schedule

## Week 1: Why Study Philosophy?

Aug 25 – Syllabus, Introduction, Russell

Aug 27 – **Read Apology .. LAB**

## Week 2: What is the Philosophical Life?

Sep 1 – Plato’s Apology

Sep 3 – **Read Meditation 1&2 .. LAB**

## Week 3: What Is All This?

Sep 6 – Meditations

Sep 10 – **Read Locke/Williams .. LAB**

## Week 4: What Am I?

Sep 15 – Personal Identity

Sep 17 – **Read Parfit/Hume .. LAB**

## Week 5: Who Am I?

Sep 22 – Concern and No-Self

Sep 24 – **Read Mengzi/Xunzi .. LAB**

Midterm Prompts Assigned/Distributed

## Week 6: Is Human Nature Good or Bad? (J)

Sep 29 – Mengzi/Xunzi on Human Nature

Thesis Due

Oct 1 – Zoom Review Session

## Week 7: TEST WEEK

Oct 6 - Midterm Exam

Oct 8 – Midterm Exam Ends **READ SIDER**

## Week 8: Am I Free?

Oct 13 – Sider’s Free Will and Determinism

Oct 15 – **Read Anscombe .. LAB**

Paper Outline Due

## Week 9: How Should I Act?

Oct 20 – Utilitarianism and Deontology

Oct 22 – **Read Aristotle .. LAB**

## Week 10: Who Should I Be? (J)

Oct 27 – Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics

Oct 29 - **Read Rowe .. LAB**

## Week 11: What is God?

Nov 3 – Proofs of and Rowe’s Denial of God

Nov 5 – **Read Evil/Air/Silence .. LAB**

## Week 12: Is there a God?

Nov 10 – Inwagen’s Theodicy

Nov 12 – **Holton Weakness of Will .. LAB**

Paper First Draft Due

## Week 13: Can I be Honest with Myself? (J)

Nov 17 – Weakness of The Will

Nov 19 – **Read Csiksentmihaly .. LAB**

Final Exam Prompts Assigned/Distributed

## Week 14: What is Happiness?

Nov 24 – Flow States

Nov 26 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

## Week 15: TEST WEEK

Dec 1 - Zoom Review Session

Critical Discussion Posts Choice Deadline

Dec 3 - Final Exam

(Dec 7 – Final Exam Ends)

December 10<sup>th</sup>: **FINAL PAPERS DUE**

\* Assignment due dates are marked **RED** under their corresponding deadlines.

\*\* Weeks highlighted in **YELLOW** are proctored completely online

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. **The Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

2. **Addressing Sexual Misconduct.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

3. **Drop/Withdrawal.** Last day to Add/Drop this class: Friday Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>. Last day to withdraw from this class: Oct 21<sup>st</sup>

#### 4. **University Policies and Procedures:**

400. Student Code: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

401. Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

402. **General Education Statement:** This course contributes to the University of Utah's Quantitative Reasoning requirement. For such courses, academic units must identify three essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that are relevant to university general education objectives. The ELOs for this course are: Inquiry and Analysis, Quantitative Literacy and Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning.

5. **Academic Misconduct:** "Academic misconduct" includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct." – **DON'T CHEAT.**

## COURSE POLICIES

Attendance & Punctuality: According to University policy, “**Instructors must communicate any particular attendance requirements of the course to students in writing on or before the first class meeting**” (PPM, Policy 6-100III-O)]. While attendance is not strictly mandatory, not showing up to class will negatively affect your grade.

Participation: A component of your grade will be based on participation. Participation includes contributions to in-class discussion, regular visits to the class Canvas site and contribution to discussions on the class site and discussion with the instructor in office hours.

Food & Drink: If you bring drinks to class, please tidy up and be respectful of your classmates. Eating is not allowed in class.

Electronic Devices in Class: You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes on the lecture in class. Otherwise, no electronic devices may be used in class. If you use your laptop or tablet to check Facebook etc., play games or engage in other non-class activities you will be asked to turn those applications off. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave class.

Canvas: All information about this class will be posted on Canvas. Please consult the class Canvas page regularly. Your Canvas activity for each class is logged automatically. The system detects every time you log on and records how long you visited for. Your participation through Canvas is measured this way.

Covid: **ALL students present in class MUST be wearing masks for the duration of the class period. If students refuse to wear masks, class will be cancelled. If the University deems it a necessity for safety’s sake that classes must transition online, our in person sessions will be cancelled. Class is subject to be cancelled for any reason at any time and be moved completely online. These are uncertain times, so the best way to approach this class is with openness and adaptable expectations.**

*Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements and in the Calendar.*