

Introduction to Philosophy

Course Prefix, Number, Section and CRN: PHIL 141, section 1, CRN 30258	Credit Hours: 3 (3 hours in class & 6 hours out of class per week)
Semester: Spring 2018	Course Location: Noble 135
Course Meeting Days & Times: MWF 9:05-10:00	Course Format: lecture

Instructor Name: Dr. Justin P. McBrayer

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Course Description: An introduction to the philosophical enterprise through discussion and analysis of representative readings from the history of philosophy. Issues considered include the nature of reality, the relation of mind and body, the possibility of proving that God exists, the nature and origin of morality and beauty, and the relation of knowledge to experience.

Course goals for the Philosophy Program:

- Familiarity with the Western philosophical tradition: basic understanding of a wide range of views regarding our conceptions of the self, the world, God, freedom, knowledge, ethics, etc.
- Ability to extract an argument from a text and to evaluate its soundness.
- Skill in discerning and articulating one's own reasons for one's beliefs and development of a critical and self-reflective attitude toward them.
- Improved capacity to express one's ideas and reasons clearly and succinctly in written and oral form.

Course goals for the Liberal Arts Core:

- Improved understanding of ways of thinking, including logic, ethics, and the different questions dealt with by leading philosophers and their positions on those questions.
- Improved competency in critical thinking, including the ability to examine issues and ideas and to identify good and bad reasoning in a variety of fields with differing assumptions, contents and methods.
- Improved competency in writing clearly and concisely.
- Improved competency in reading critically and thoughtfully.

Assessment: The grade for this course is determined by how well a student meets the course goals in a timely fashion. When it comes to learning how to do philosophy, this is largely a measurement of a student's understanding of the concepts presented and his ability to articulate arguments regarding various philosophical positions. Grades are tracked on Canvas. Plus/minus grading will be used. Grades will not be curved. The grading scale is the standard scale (90's A-range, 80's B-range...59 and lower is an F). Final grades will be determined by the following weighted averages:

Exams- there are three exams. Each is worth 15%.

Quizzes- there will be approximately a dozen short quizzes on the day's reading assignment over the course of the semester. The average quiz grade for the semester is worth 25%.

Writing Assignments- short assignments will be due in class every Friday and will be graded at random. The average writing assignment grade for the semester is worth 30%.

Extra Credit- I will assign one percentage point to the final average for every Philosophy Club event that you attend in its entirety. The schedule is available here:
<http://www.fortlewis.edu/philosophy/PhilosophyClub.aspx>

Course Resources:

Philosophy: The Quest for Truth, 10e, Pojman & Vaughn (Oxford University Press 2017)

Other readings available on Canvas: <https://courses.fortlewis.edu/> [Sidebar 'Files', 'Readings']

Course Expectations:

Academic Dishonesty- All work submitted for credit should be the student's own. Failure to follow this policy will result in a failing grade for the course. It is the student's responsibility to know both the standards for academic honesty and what counts as plagiarism. The full policy is available here: <http://www.fortlewis.edu/portals/12/docs/PART-III-Academic-Dishonesty.pdf>

Attendance- There is not an official attendance policy, though, as always, there will be a strong (and positive!) correlation between strong performance in the course and regular attendance. Also, since quizzes cannot be made up, attendance is a necessary condition for graded components of the course. Regular attendance and participation can improve a student's final grade for the course.

Classroom Expectations-

- Civility is required. At a minimum, this includes routinely entering class late or departing early; repeatedly talking without being recognized; talking while others are speaking, etc.
- No phones. Period. As it turns out, even having a turned-off phone in sight lowers cognitive performance. Seriously. So, put your phone out of sight while in class. (for example, see here: "[Smartphones Hijack Cognitive Capacity](#)," (MedScape))
- No laptops without a certified disability. As it turns out, you learn more, get better grades, and cooperate more with classmates without computers in front of them. (for example, see "[Using Laptops in Classrooms Lowers Grades](#)," (Huffington Post))

Miscellaneous-

- Missed exams may be made up with a verified medical excuse (or its equivalent) or with the prior consent of the instructor.
- Writing assignments are not accepted late.
- The quizzes are open note.
- Quizzes cannot be made up for any reason (including being sick or late to class). Please do not email to ask if this is possible. In the interest of fairness, I will drop two of your lowest quiz scores from the overall average at the end of the semester.
- I will not accept your quiz if you leave class early.

Disability Services: Fort Lewis College is committed to providing all students a liberal arts education through a personalized learning environment. If you think you have or you do have a documented disability which will need reasonable academic accommodations, please contact the Director of Disability Services for an appointment as soon as possible (280 Noble Hall, 970.247.7459).

Plagiarism Detection Software: Plagiarism occurs when someone presents the ideas or work of another person as their own, without giving proper credit. VeriCite is a software used to detect and prevent plagiarism. Written assignments in this course will be required to undergo assessment of their originality by VeriCite. VeriCite will also be used to reinforce best practices when using and citing the work of others. By taking this course, students acknowledge and give their consent that every single writing assignment will be submitted to VeriCite and that those papers will be included in a secure repository, used for comparison to papers submitted by others in the future. All VeriCite submissions will take place within Canvas. Reports generated by VeriCite will be available to students. If asked to generate VeriCite reports for rough drafts of submissions, the student is responsible for making all necessary changes to ensure a lack of plagiarism in the final drafts. Please visit vericite.com for copies of policies, including proprietary rights, privacy, security, and FERPA compliance.

Course Schedule:

M, Jan. 8 (Day 1): What is Philosophy? (2-5; stop reading at 'Thinking Philosophically')

What is Truth and How Do We Find it?

W, Jan. 10 (Day 2): J. McBrayer, "True for you, but not for me" (Canvas)
F, Jan. 12 (Day 3): Thinking Philosophically (5-14; stop reading at 'Fallacious Reasoning')
M, Jan. 15 (Day 4): A. Weston, "Fruitful Dialogue" (Canvas)

Should I go to church?

W, Jan. 17 (Day 5): Introduction [no reading assignment]
F, Jan. 19 (Day 6): W. Craig, "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument" (64-78; stop at 'Philosophical Argument' on top of second column on 78)
M, Jan. 22 (Day 7): R. Collins, "A Scientific Argument for God" (Canvas)
T, Jan. 23: Census Day-- Deadline to Drop Course without a Grade
W, Jan. 24 (Day 8): B.C. Johnson, "Why Doesn't God Intervene to Prevent Evil?" (122-127)
F, Jan. 26 (Day 9): B. Pascal, "Yes, Faith is a Logical Bet" (142-145)
M, Jan. 29 (Day 10): L. Pojman, "Faith, Hope, and Doubt" (Canvas)

Are my beliefs about the world accurate?

W, Jan. 31 (Day 11): Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave" (39-42)
F, Feb. 2 (Day 12): Descartes, "Cartesian Doubt & Foundational Knowledge" (194-200)
M, Feb. 5 (Day 13): W. Salmon, "The Problem of Induction" (277-285)
W, Feb. 7 (Day 14): J. Hospers, "An Argument Against Skepticism" (Canvas)
F, Feb. 9 (Day 15): First Exam

Is it OK to have sex with whomever I want?

M, Feb. 12 (Day 16): R. Benedict, "Morality is Relative" (440-445)

W, Feb. 14 (Day 17): J. Rachels, "Morality is Not Relative" (445-454)
 F, Feb. 16 (Day 18): MacKinnon, "Sexual Morality" (Canvas)
 M, Feb. 19 (Day 19): J. Corvino, "A Defense of Homosexuality" (Canvas)
 W, Feb. 21 (Day 20): I. Primoratz, "Sexual Morality: Is Consent Enough?" (Canvas)

What can I do with my life?

F, Feb. 23 (Day 21): B. Holbach, "We are Completely Determined" (395-400)
 M, Feb. 26 (Day 22): R. Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self" (411-419)
W, Feb. 28 (Day 23): W.T. Stace, "Compatibilism" (Canvas) [Deadline to Withdraw from Course]

Should I get married and have children?

F, March 2 (Day 24): M. Gallagher, "What Marriage is For," (747-752)
M-F, March 5-9 Spring Break!
 M, March 12 (Day 25): J. McBrayer, "The Morality of Getting Divorced" (Canvas)
 W, March 14 (Day 26): H. LaFollette, "Licensing Parents" (Canvas)
F, March 16 (Day 27): Second Exam

What should I eat?

M, March 19 (Day 28): *Food, Inc.*, first half [film in class]
 W, March 21 (Day 29): *Food, Inc.*, second half [film in class]
 F, March 23 (Day 30): P. Singer, "The Case for Animal Liberation" (Canvas)
 M, March 26: T. Warfield, "Eating Dead Animals: Meat Eating, Meat Purchasing, and Proving Too Much," (Canvas)

How should I vote?

W, March 28 (Day 31): R. Nozick, "The Entitlement Theory" (608-618)
 F, March 30 (Day 32): J. Rawls, "The Contemporary Liberal Answer" (598-607)
 M, April 2 (Day 33): Rawls on property [no new reading]
 W, April 4 (Day 34): B. Waller, "Should Drugs be Legalized?" (Canvas)
 F, April 6 (Day 35): Debate Day [no new reading]

What am I?

M, April 9 (Day 36): J.P. Moreland, "A Contemporary Defense of Dualism," (305-312; stop reading at 'The Origin of Mind')
 W, April 11 (Day 37): E. Olson, "Objections to Immaterialism & Animalism" (Canvas)
 F, April 13 (Day 38): T. Sider, "Personal Identity" (Canvas)
 M, April 16 (Day 39): P. Edwards, "An Argument Against Survival," (381-390)

What would make my life a good one?

W, April 18 (Day 40): A. Camus, "Life is Absurd" (646-651)
 F, April 20 (Day 41): R. Nozick, "The Experience Machine" (Canvas)
T, April 24, 7:30-9:30 (Day 42): Final Exam