

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3 CREDITS)
PHIL 101 – FALL 2020, AUG 31 – DEC 23, 2020

SECTIONS: PHIL 101–555 (1363) ONLINE
PHIL 101–556 (2223) ONLINE

Instructor: John Shook, Ph.D.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The primary objective of this course is to introduce the student to epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics through a multicultural survey of the history of Western philosophy.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: This is an introductory level course in both philosophy and critical reasoning, and ENGL 101 is the necessary prerequisite. Students should be able to read with good comprehension, to write intelligibly, to listen attentively, and to think creatively as well as critically.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Compare the ethical and political theories of Plato, Kant, Mill, and Appiah.
2. Apply ethical theory by assessing debates on contemporary moral problems and issues of social justice.
3. Identify the distinguishing features of the epistemology and metaphysics of Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Mill.
4. Critically analyze a variety of approaches to the relationship between epistemology (how and what ones knows), metaphysics (what there is), ethics (how one should behave and live), and the socio-political world (how we live together).
5. Listen, attentively focus, and critically reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes in order to develop their own philosophical orientation to their lives and worlds.

How the objectives will be demonstrated and measured:

Students will demonstrate the attainment of these competencies by: scoring an overall average of 'C' or above on discussion assignments, written essays, and written exams, as measured by the rubrics for assignments in the sections below, that test for

1. proficiency with basic concepts in three broad areas of philosophy: Ethics, Epistemology, and Metaphysics;
2. fulfillment of each particular learning objective above.

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCIES

- i. Written and Oral Communications
 - a. Analyze and discuss critical issues and recurring themes in the discipline; b. Make interpretations and present those ideas in writing; c. Employ appropriate word choices and diction in oral and written communication; d. Conduct research and evaluate information using the appropriate methods of the discipline.
- ii. Scientific and quantitative reasoning
 - a. Analyze and understand the early modern foundations of scientific objectivism.
- iii. Critical Analysis and Reasoning
 - a. Systematically evaluate facts, opinions, assumptions and theories from the discipline; b. Apply skills in analysis, synthesis and problem solving; c. Apply logical reasoning in the examination and resolution of tasks.
- v. Information Literacy
 - a. Identification of key concepts and terms that describe the information needed; b. Selection of the most appropriate investigative methods for accessing needed information.

STUDENT OUTCOMES RELEVANT TO GENED CATEGORIES

1. Students will write periodic essays in order to demonstrate the ability to interpret, analyze and synthesize philosophical issues and key terms in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. [GENED i.a,b,c; iii. a,b; v. a]
2. Students will evaluate on objective and essay exams the claims of several metaphysical positions such as dualism, phenomenalism, empiricism, transcendentalism, physicalism, and dualism in order to demonstrate an understanding of basic problems in the natural and social sciences. [GENED i. a,d; ii. a; iii. a, b].
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of idealist, realist, and phenomenalist views of the theory of knowledge by solving a written exam problem using an ordinary perceptual experience. [GENED i. a, c; iii. a, b, c]

COURSE POLICIES:

Policies for this course conform to the rules and guidelines of Bowie State University and the History and Government department. Information about policies, and about degrees offered by the history and government department at Bowie State, can be found in the Department Student Handbook:

<http://www.bowiestate.edu/academics-research/departments/history-and-government/student-handbook/>

COURSE DELIVERY:

This course is delivered in the classroom. Access to all assignments, announcements, and some discussion participation happens online at the site for this class at <http://bsuonline.blackboard.com>

This Blackboard class is therefore always available online from any internet access point, and it does not depend on any Bowie State system, so "Bowie State's wifi (etc) was down" is not an acceptable excuse for failure to participate during a week or failure to complete assignments on time.

For technical questions or instructions, please call (301) 860-4357 or (301) 860-HELP and someone will help you. Do NOT contact me for technical advice about Blackboard. For additional information, check and click on the Tech/OIT Support via the Course Menu. Website: <http://www.bowiestate.edu/academics-research/provost-and-vice-president-for/academic-computing-and-online-/>

DISABILITY POLICY STATEMENT FOR ACCOMMODATIONS: Share an interest in disability accommodation assistance with the instructor of any course. Instructors do not provide official accommodations without the participation of Disability Support Services. Students with disabilities or who need special assistance or accommodation should contact Dr. Michael S. Hughes in the Office of Disability Support Services, which located in the Thurgood Marshall Library, Room 079. Dr. Hughes can be contacted via email mhughes@bowiestate.edu or by phone at (301) 860-4067. Go to the following website for more information: <https://www.bowiestate.edu/academics/support-services/disability-support-services/>

Bowie State University shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, age, ancestry or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, or veteran status.

Additional Student Responsibilities

Bowie State University does not recognize academic dishonesty as a legitimate means for fulfilling the requirements of a course. Therefore, "cheating" in any aspect of the assigned course work is jeopardizing one's academic progress and success, and will result in having a grade of zero for that particular examination or in the course. Know that "plagiarism," which is cheating, is a serious form of academic dishonesty and should not be encouraged nor condoned. To avoid it, always make sure that one cites all the used sources appropriately. See: <http://bowiestate.libguides.com/plagiarism>

THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT IN THIS COURSE. NO GRADES ARE EVER DROPPED. DO NOT ASK THE INSTRUCTOR IF AN EXCEPTION WILL BE MADE. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. ONCE FINAL GRADES ARE SUBMITTED, THEY ARE FINAL AND NON-NEGOTIABLE. DO NOT EMAIL THE INSTRUCTOR TO ASK ABOUT OR CHALLENGE GRADES. IF YOU BELIEVE AN ERROR HAS BEEN MADE, YOU MAY SEE THE INSTRUCTOR AT THE START OF THE NEXT SEMESTER TO EXPLAIN WHY YOU BELIEVE AN ERROR OCCURRED, OR YOU MAY APPEAL THE GRADE, WHICH IS A SIX-WEEK PROCESS.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED TEXTS: Plato. 1991. *The Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom. Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0465069347
Plato. 2001. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Hackett. ISBN-13: 978-0872205543
René Descartes. 1993. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Hackett. ISBN-13: 978-0872201927
Immanuel Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (selected sections)
John Stuart Mill. *Utilitarianism* (selected sections)

Required texts are provided free and accessible in Course Materials on Blackboard

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Modifications to course: The instructor reserves the right to modify the organization and grading of this course to adjust for any unforeseen circumstances.

Assignment	Percent of Total Grade	Possible Points
Class Participation	20%	200
1 short paper, worth 100 points	10%	100
1 long paper, worth 200 points	20%	200
Midterm Exam	20%	200
Final Exam	30%	300
TOTAL		1000 POINTS

Grades: Your final grade for the course will be calculated using the following table:

Grade	Points
A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	0-599

Assignment Descriptions

1. Discussion Participation

This course is designed for students seeking education and learning. This class is a safe place for all, where learning to think critically and constructively is valued. To encourage student learning and intelligent discussion, abide by the following rules:

- Listen in a spirit of humility and open-mindedness so learning can come from others students in the class.
- Students often discover that some of their preconceptions and perspectives are challenged in this type of course. Be as honest as possible when considering opinions (for example, avoid agreeing with someone just to be nice).
- It is OK to offer and accept respectful feedback
- Recognize that learning and growth may cause discomfort as views are examined and possibly reconsidered.
- Strive to seek clarification of possible misunderstandings as soon as possible. The instructor will be a resource for challenging situations as needed.

Your class participation in Discussion modules will allow you accumulate participation points. Participation is calculated at the end of the semester. Contribute at least 5 postings in reply to other students, during each week.

Active Reading and Learning

Active learning is attentive, questioning, reflective, and reflexive. Attentive reading takes note of the author's intentions and goals, so that you can understand the problem faced or the issue raised, and the author's perspective on that concern. Reading involves questioning: questioning why the author regards this matter is important, looking into the approach the author takes, and wondering how the author takes persuasive steps to presenting information and arguments. Reading involves reflection, upon how persuasive and logical the author's views turn out to be, how many assumptions have to be accepted along the way, whether the author can handle objections raised against the position taken, and whether alternative stances might come to different conclusions about the matter. The best reading culminates in a reflexive moment, judging the impact of this writing on oneself and one's own position. How do these new ideas influence how you have thought about matters? Can you apply this author's way of thinking to enrich your own perspectives and activities? Are there things about yourself and your place in the world that feels challenged or even threatened by this writing? Does this reading inspire you to want to learn more?

2. Papers

You will have the opportunity to accumulate points toward a grade by completing paper assignments. There are two paper assignments, and the deadlines for each of the papers is provided in the course schedule, at the end of this syllabus. The short paper requires 1000 words minimum, and the long paper requires 2000 words, composed entirely in your own words. Quotations from sources are permitted but they do not count towards these word requirements.

All papers must be submitted via the Blackboard Assignment system. **Papers are NOT accepted by email without instructor permission.**

Scoring Rubric for Papers

Expectation	Score
1. The paper is delivered by the deadline in the assigned format	16-20% The paper is delivered on time and composed in an appropriate format 10-15% The paper is on time but in inappropriate format 6-9% The paper is one or two days late (see paper policies for even later papers)
2. The paper content addresses the question(s) posed in the paper assignment	16-20% The content fairly consistently address the question(s) posed 10-15% The content sometimes deviates from the posed question(s) 6-9% The content frequently addresses unrelated matters 0-5% The content is mostly about matters irrelevant to question(s)
3. The paper includes the needed information and explanations to answer the assigned question(s)	31-40% The paper clearly includes needed information and explanations, presented in an organized way. 21-30% The paper only includes some important information and explanations, and/or seems somewhat disorganized 11-20% The paper omits much needed information and explanations, and needs better organization 0-9% The paper contains little valid or organized information and explanations
4. The paper is written with grammatical clarity and proper spelling	16-20% The paper is written with proper grammar and spelling so that all, or almost all, sentences can be comprehended. 10-15% The paper has some grammar/spelling problems on each page 6-9% The paper has many grammar/spelling errors on every page, and too much writing is hard to comprehend 0-5% The paper has too many grammar/spelling errors to be comprehended sufficiently

3. Exams

There will be two exams: one midterm exam and one final exam. Each examination addresses the material covered thus far in the semester – the final exam is cumulative. Students are expected to complete the examinations at the time of their deadlines.

If a student does not submit the final examination on the deadline due to a personal problem, and does not contact the instructor within 24 hours of that deadline, then the student will receive a zero points for the examination. If the student misses the final examination deadline but does promptly contact the instructor, the instructor will decide on a case-by-case basis how to proceed.

Scoring Rubric for Exams

Expectation	Evaluation (out of a total possible 100% of the points available for the exam)
1. The exam is delivered by the deadline in the assigned format	16-20% The exam is delivered on time and composed in an appropriate format 10-15% The exam is on time but in inappropriate format 0-9% The exam is one or two days late (see exam policies for even later exams)
2. The exam content addresses the question(s) posed in the paper assignment	16-20% The content fairly consistently address the question(s) posed 10-15% The content sometimes deviates from the posed question(s) 6-9% The content frequently addresses unrelated matters 0-5% The content mostly addresses matters irrelevant to question(s)
3. The exam includes the needed information and explanations to answer the assigned question(s)	31-40% The exam clearly includes needed information and explanations, presented in an organized way. 21-30% The exam only includes some important information and explanations, and/or seems somewhat disorganized 11-20% The exam omits much needed information and explanations, and needs better organization 0-9% The exam contains little valid or organized information and explanations
4. The exam is written with grammatical clarity and proper spelling	16-20% It is written with proper grammar and spelling so that all, or almost all, sentences can be comprehended. 10-15% It contains some grammar/spelling problems on each page 6-9% It has many grammar/spelling errors on every page, and too much writing is hard to comprehend 0-5% It has too many grammar/spelling errors to be comprehended sufficiently

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

THE INSTRUCTOR MAY MODIFY THIS SCHEDULE DURING THE COURSE, WITH ADVANCE NOTICE TO STUDENTS – MONITOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEEK	READINGS	EVENTS
ONE Aug 31-Sept 6	Plato, Republic, Book 1	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
TWO Sept 7-Sept 13	Plato, Republic, Book 2, 3	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
THREE Sept 14-Sept 20	Plato, Republic, Book 4, 5, 6	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
FOUR Sept 21-Sept 27	Plato, Republic, Book 7, 8	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
FIVE Sept 28-Oct 4	Plato, Euthyphro	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
SIX Oct 5-Oct 11	Plato, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
SEVEN Oct 12-Oct 18	Descartes, Meditation 1, 2	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm Oct 14: Exam One due Oct 24: Midterm grades posted
EIGHT Oct 19-Oct 25	Descartes, Meditation 3, 4	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
NINE Oct 26-Nov 1	Descartes, Meditation 5, 6	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm Oct 28: Paper One due
TEN Nov 2-Nov 8	Kant, Groundwork, selection	Your observation is due on Friday by 9pm
ELEVEN Nov 9-Nov 25	Kant, Groundwork, selection	Your observation is due on Friday Nov 14 by 9pm
TWELVE Nov 30-Dec 11	Mill, Utilitarianism, selection	Your observation is due on Friday Dec 5 by 9pm Dec 11: Paper Two due from all students Dec 11: Final Exam due from graduating seniors
Dec 12-Dec 18	Final Exam period	Dec 18: Final Exam due from non-graduating students