

Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 1301)



Credit: 3 semester credit hours (3 hours lecture)

Prerequisite/Co-requisite: None.

Course Description

A study of major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications.

Required Textbooks and Materials

1. *Philosophical Dilemmas: A Pro and Con Introduction to the Major Questions and Philosophers* by Phil Washburn, 4th edition, 2013. Oxford University Press.
 - a. ISBN: 978-0199920402
2. A package of #882 scantrons and two #2 pencils.
3. Use of the library, Internet, and current information sources such as newspapers, TV and journals.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

Core Objectives

The following four Core Objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills:** To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. **Communication Skills:** To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **Personal Responsibility:** To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
4. **Social Responsibility:** To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Course Outline

A. Introduction

1. Philosophy and Socrates

B. HAPPINESS, OBLIGATIONS, AND

VALUES

1.1 Is Morality Relative?

2. Protagoras and the Sophists
3. Plato

Yes: Relativist. "Moral Relativism"

No: Absolutist. "Right for You, Wrong for Me?"

1.2 Can We Understand Happiness?

4. Aristotle
5. The Hellenistic Age and

Skepticism

Yes: Definer. "Happiness"

No: Critic. "The Elusive Dream"

1.3 Is Pleasure the Only Value?

6. Epicurus
7. Marcus Aurelius

Yes: Hedonist. "Hedonism"

No: Pluralist. "A World of Values"

1.4 Is Society the Source of Values?

8. Confucius
9. Christianity

Yes: Functionalist. "An Objective Basis for Morality"

No: Moral Theist. "The Current Crisis and Its Solution"

1.5 Is Happiness the Standard of Morality?

10. Kant and the Age of Reason
11. Mill and Happiness

Yes: Utilitarian. "Utilitarianism"

No: Formalist. "The Principle of Morality"

1.6 Are We Always Selfish?

12. Hume and the Moral Sense
13. Nietzsche

Yes: Psychological Egoist. "No Free Lunch"

No: Psychological Altruist. "Is Love Selfish?"

1.7 Current Controversy: Should

Doctors Ever End People's Lives?

No: Protector. "Having Reasons for Moral Decisions"

Yes: Euthanizer. "The Complex Issue of Euthanasia"

2. GOD, IMMORTALITY, AND FAITH

2.1 Is the Soul Immortal?

14. Plato and the Immortal Soul

15. Lucretius

No: Mortalist. "Immortality"

Yes: Survivor. "For and Against an Afterlife"

2.2 Is Faith an Answer?

16. Augustine

17. Abelard

Yes: Believer. "Accepting Limits"

No: Questioner. "Faith and Its Consequences"

2.3 Is It Necessary that God Exists?

18. Anselm

19. Ockham

Yes: Logical Theist. "Possible and Impossible"

No: Scientist. "It Ain't Necessarily So"

2.4 Is There Evidence that God Exists?

20. Ockham

21. Machiavelli

22. Galileo

Yes: Causal Theist. "In the Beginning"

Yes: Design Theist. "Design or Chance?"

No: Atheist. "The Retreat of the Gods"

2.5 Can God Allow Innocent Suffering?

23. Leibniz

24. Voltaire

No: Contradictor. "There Is No God"

Yes: Reconciler. "Character and Contentment"

2.6 Current Controversy: Is Buddhism Philosophy?

Yes: Buddhist. "The Philosophy of

PHIL 1301
Course Syllabus

Buddhism"

No: Specialist. "The Difference Between Religion and Philosophy"

3. KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE, AND TRUTH

3.1 Is Certainty the Standard of Knowledge?

25. Bacon

26. Descartes and Certainty

Yes: Foundationalist. "Certainty"

No: Pragmatist. "The Test of Knowledge"

3.2 Is Experience the Source of All Knowledge?

27. Locke and Experience

28. Spinoza

Yes: Empiricist. "The Source of Knowledge"

No: Rationalist. "The Strange Case of the Mathematician"

3.3 Can We Know About the External World?

29. Berkeley

30. Reid

No: Internalist. "Knowledge of the External World"

Yes: Perceiver. "The Limits of Ignorance"

3.4 Is It Possible that We Know Nothing At All?

31. Hume and Skepticism

32. Kant's Copernican Revolution

No: Predictor. "Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made Of"

Yes: Skeptic. "Past and Future"

3.5 Does Science Give Us Real Knowledge?

33. Comte

34. Schopenhauer

Yes: Positivist. "Science as Knowledge"

No: Romantic. "What Kind of Understanding?"

3.6 Current Controversy: Does Truth Exist?

Yes: Representationalist. "True Belief and False Beliefs"

No: Postmodernist. "Ten Theses on Language"

4. LIBERTY, EQUALITY, JUSTICE

4.1 Is Equality the Highest Social Value?

35. More

36. Burke

Yes: Egalitarian. "Society and Property"

No: Elitist. "What Elitists Believe"

4.2 Is Society Based On A Contract?

37. Locke and the Social Contract

38. Hegel

Yes: Contractor. "The Social Contract"

No: Organicist. "The Social Organism"

4.3 Is Liberty the Highest Social Value?

39. Rousseau

40. Mill and Liberty

Yes: Libertarian. "Liberty, the Supreme Social Value"

No: Paternalist. "Empty Phrases"

4.4 Is Capitalism Just?

41. Marx

42. Spencer

Yes: Capitalist. "Capitalism, Democracy, and Justice"

No: Socialist. "Capitalist Society"

4.5 Do Individuals Have Absolute Human Rights?

43. Rawls

44. Singer

Yes: Rights Defender. "The Foundation of Human Rights"

No: Rights Skeptic. "A Confused Idea"

4.6. Current Controversy: Is Race Essential To Identity?

Yes: Essentialist. "The Meaning of Being Black"

No: Nonessentialist. "Race and Identity"

5. FREE WILL, MIND, AND HUMAN NATURE

5.1 Is the Mind Nothing But the Brain?

45. Descartes and Dualism

46. Hobbes

Yes: Materialist. "Body and Soul"

PHIL 1301

Course Syllabus

No: Dualist. "The Inner Life"

5.2 Are We Free?

47. Holbach

48. Kierkegaard

No: Hard Determinist. "One World, Not Two"

Yes: Metaphysical Libertarian. "Free Will and Common Sense"

5.3 Are Scientific Laws Compatible With Free Will?

49. Hume and Free Will

50. James

Yes: Soft Determinist. "Verbal Disputes, Facts, and Free Will"

No: Incompatibilist. "Caused Actions Are Not Free"

5.4 Are We Responsible For Our Actions?

51. Freud

52. Sartre

No: Excuser. "Rejecting Responsibility"

Yes: Judge. "No Excuse"

5.5 Can Computers Think?

54. Searlenstein

Yes: Mechanist. "Can Computers Think?"

No: Mentalist. "People vs. Machines"

5.6 Current Controversy: Are the Differences Between Men and Women Philosophically Significant?

No: Unifier. "Men, Women, and People"

Yes: Complementer. "Who's Afraid of Difference?"

Appendix: How to Write an Essay

Glossary of Contrasting Positions

Index

Grade Scale

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

Course Evaluation

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

1. Attendance	10%
2. Assignments	25%
3. Exams	50%
4. Common Assignment	15%

Course Policies

1. No food, drinks, or use of tobacco products in class.
2. Computers, telephones, headphones, and any other electronic devices must be turned off while in class or used only with permission of the instructor.
3. Do not bring children to class.
4. Late work will be considered only in the case of a documentable emergency beyond the student's control. Late/make-up work may be accepted solely at the instructor's discretion.
5. If you wish to drop a course, the student is responsible for initiating and completing the drop process. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an 'F' in the course.
6. Additional class policies as defined by the individual course instructor.

PHIL 1301
Course Syllabus

Technical Requirements (for courses using Blackboard)

The latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, software, Java, etc. can be found online at: <http://www.blackboard.com/student-resources.aspx>. A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of the online technology and resources.

Disabilities Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. Among other things, these statutes require that all students with documented disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409) 880-1737 or visit the office in Student Services, Cecil Beeson Building. You may also visit the online resource at <http://www.lit.edu/depts/stuserv/special/defaults.aspx>

Student Code of Conduct Statement

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu or obtained in print upon request at the Student Services Office. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document.

Starfish

LIT utilizes an early alert system called Starfish. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails from Starfish regarding your course grades, attendance, or academic performance. Faculty members record student attendance, raise flags and kudos to express concern or give praise, and you can make an appointment with faculty and staff all through the Starfish home page. You can also login to Blackboard or MyLIT and click on the Starfish link to view academic alerts and detailed information. It is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to these emails and information in Starfish and consider taking the recommended actions. Starfish is used to help you be a successful student at LIT.

