



# University of New Haven

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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Program of Philosophy

PHIL 1101, Section 01  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Spring 2019  
M/W from 10:50 to 12:05  
112 Echlin Hall  
3 Credit Hours

Dr. Douglas Ficek  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays from 10:00 to 3:00

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Course Description

The nature of reality and how it may be known, according to the great thinkers of the Occident and the Orient.

### Extended Course Description

The father of Western philosophy, Socrates once said that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” Many years later, the British philosopher Bertrand Russell commented that “many people would rather die than think – in fact, they do!”

At its heart, philosophy is about examining life and thinking critically about ourselves and the world we live in. When we do this, according to some philosophers, we use the one quality that makes us distinct as human beings – namely, *reason*. Of course, most philosophical questions cannot be answered with absolute certainty, and that could become an annoying theme for you as we proceed through the diverse course readings. Do not get too frustrated. Just remember that philosophy is best understood as a journey, not as a destination. Consider the following passage – again, from Bertrand Russell:

“Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.”

### Required Texts

Most of the required readings for this course are available as PDFs on my professional website: [www.douglasficek.com/teaching/phil-1101](http://www.douglasficek.com/teaching/phil-1101). Download them, *print them out*, and always bring them with you to class. You cannot participate fully without them, and your attendance grade will suffer if you are consistently unprepared.

*Seriously, bring hard copies. I do not want people on their computers, tablets, or phones during class.*

Also, to complete the review essay (more information below), you will need to find (or buy) a copy of one of these books:

- *The Consolations of Philosophy* by Alain de Botton (ISBN: 0679779175)
- *The Existentialist's Survival Guide: How to Live Authentically in an Inauthentic Age* by Gordon Marino (ISBN: 0062435981)
- *How to Be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life* by Massimo Pigliucci (ISBN: 1541644530)
- *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us About the Good Life* by Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh (ISBN: 1476777845)
- *Midlife: A Philosophical Guide* by Kieran Setiya (ISBN: 0691173931)

### Course Objectives

- Students will learn (and hopefully appreciate) what it means to do philosophy.
- Students will discover new (and possibly profound) concepts, ideas, and theories.
- Students will become better arguers (in the sense making and evaluating arguments).

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain course readings in reading responses and papers.
- Students will be able to evaluate course readings in reading responses and papers.
- Students will be able to develop critical arguments in reading responses and papers.

### Course Requirements

Attendance is required for this course, and I expect you to be prepared, which means that you need to print out the appropriate texts, read them carefully, and *bring them with you* for class discussion.

To encourage critical reading and writing, I am assigning 15 one-page reading responses, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. These are extremely important, and they will constitute a plurality of your final grade. *You have to take them seriously.*

I am also assigning a review essay, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. Basically, you will be picking one book (from a selection of five), reading it, and then writing a 6-8 page review essay. *Do not procrastinate with this.*

Finally, I am assigning a 6-8 page final paper, the details of which are attached to this syllabus. We are covering a lot in this course, and in your final paper you will explore a philosophical that interests you. Look through the syllabus: *Which issues or problems interest you?*

### Expectations

This course will require significant in-class and out-of-class commitment from each student. The University estimates that a student should expect to spend two hours outside of class for each hour they are in a class.

### Grading

Final grades are based on your attendance, reading responses, a review essay, and a final paper.

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Attendance        | 10%  |
| Reading Responses | 40%  |
| Review Essay      | 25%  |
| Final Paper       | 25%  |
| Total*            | 100% |

\*Final Grades are assigned with the following scale:

| Undergraduate Scale |    |              |                   |
|---------------------|----|--------------|-------------------|
| Grades              |    | Scored       | Letter Equivalent |
| Between             |    |              |                   |
| 97                  | to | 100          | A+                |
| 94                  | to | Less than 97 | A                 |
| 90                  | to | Less than 93 | A-                |
| 87                  | to | Less than 90 | B+                |
| 84                  | to | Less than 87 | B                 |
| 80                  | to | Less than 83 | B-                |
| 77                  | to | Less than 80 | C+                |
| 74                  | to | Less than 77 | C                 |
| 70                  | to | Less than 73 | C-                |
| 67                  | to | Less than 70 | D+                |
| 63                  | to | Less than 67 | D                 |
| 60                  | to | Less than 63 | D-                |
|                     |    | Less than 60 | F                 |

## Course Outline/Schedule

- January 23 – Course Introduction

### **METAPHILOSOPHY**

- January 28 – “Philosophy and Human Affairs” by Kwame Gyekye

### **PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

- January 30 – *Proslogion* (selections) by Anselm of Canterbury, *Summa Theologica* (selections) by Thomas Aquinas, and *Natural Theology* (selections) by William Paley
- February 4 – “The Ethics of Belief” by William K. Clifford and “The Will to Believe” by William James\*
- February 6 – “The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism” by William L. Rowe
- February 11 – “A Critique of Christian Masochism” by Dorothee Soelle

### **ETHICS**

- February 13 – *Euthyphro* by Plato
- February 18 – “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” by James Rachels
- February 20 – “Virtue Theory” by Rosalind Hursthouse
- February 25 – “Do the Wicked Flourish? Virtue Ethics and Unjust Social Privilege” by Lisa Tessman\*

- February 27 – *The Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals* (selections) by Immanuel Kant
- March 4 – *Utilitarianism* (selections) by John Stuart Mill and “Ivan’s Challenge” by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- March 6 – “The Objectivist Ethics” by Ayn Rand
- March 11 – “Confucianism and *Ubuntu*: Reflections on a Dialogue Between Chinese and African Traditions” by Daniel A. Bell and Thaddeus Metz
- March 13 – “A Defense of Abortion” by Judith Jarvis Thomson
- March 18 – SPRING BREAK
- March 20 – SPRING BREAK
- March 25 – “A Defense of the Death Penalty” by Louis P. Pojman

#### **EPISTEMOLOGY**

- March 27 – *Meditations on First Philosophy* (selections) by René Descartes\*
- April 1 – “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” by Edmund L. Gettier
- April 3 – “Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types” by Linda Martín Alcoff
- April 8 – *On Bullshit* by Harry Frankfurt

#### **PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

- April 10 – *Mencius* (selections) by Mencius and “Human Nature Is Bad” by Xunzi\*
- April 15 – “Courage Under Fire: Testing Epictetus’s Doctrines in a Laboratory of Human Behavior” by James B. Stockdale
- April 17 – *I and Thou* (selections) by Martin Buber
- April 22 – *Existentialism Is a Humanism* by Jean-Paul Sartre

#### **TO BE DETERMINED\*\***

- April 24 – TBD
- April 29 – TBD

#### **PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH**

- May 1 – “Death and Denial” by Ernest Becker
- May 6 – *Phaedo* by Plato\*
- May 14 – FINAL EXAM (8:00-10:00)\*\*\*

\* This text (or set of texts) requires a reading response.

\*\* Students, with my guidance, will determine the readings for these days.

\*\*\* There will not be a final exam, but your final paper will be due on this date.

### [2018-2019 Academic Calendar](#)

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES & ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

### **Add/Drop Policy**

January 30, 2019 is the final day to drop this course so that it does not appear on your transcript. After the first week of class, self-service registration will not be enabled for students to directly add or drop classes. Students should contact the registrar’s office directly or the Academic Success Center for assistance with adding and dropping courses during this time.

## Attendance Policies

Students are expected to attend regularly and promptly all their classes, appointments, and exercises. The instructor has the right to dismiss from class any student who has been absent more than two weeks (pro-rated for terms different from that of the semester). A dismissed student will receive a withdrawal (W) from the course if they are still eligible for a withdrawal per the university "Withdrawal from a Course" policy, or a failure (F) if not.

## Religious Observance Policy for Students

The University of New Haven respects the right of its students to observe religious holidays that may necessitate their absence from class or from other required University-sponsored activities. Students who wish to observe such holidays should not be penalized for their absence although, in academic courses, they are responsible for making up missed work. Instructors should try to avoid scheduling exams or quizzes on religious holidays, but where such conflicts occur, should provide reasonable accommodations for missed assignment deadlines or exams. If a class, an assignment due date, or exam interferes with the observance of such a religious holiday, it is the student's responsibility to notify his or her instructor, preferably at the beginning of the term, but otherwise at least two weeks before the holiday. In a similar vein, students who will not participate in other required activities due to religious observance should notify the staff or faculty member who oversees the program with the same lead-time.

## Withdrawal from a Course

April 2, 2019 (February 19, 2019 for Mini-Term 1) is the final date to request a withdrawal for this term. Students wishing to withdraw from a course must officially do so by completing the [online](#) form or by submitting a [course withdrawal form](#) to the registrar's office. This request must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar (and signed by the International Services Office if you are an international student). The grade of W will be recorded, but the course will not affect the GPA.

## Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

To know what is expected of them, students are responsible for reading and understanding the statement regarding academic honesty in the [Student Handbook](#). Please ask me about my expectations regarding permissible or encouraged forms of student collaboration if there is any confusion about this topic.

The [Dean of Students Office](#) offers a range of support to students. It answers questions, provides information about and referrals to campus resources; assists in students' adjustment to the University; promotes programs which address student needs, concerns and interests; and helps students in resolving problems of any type.

## Commitment to Positive Learning Environment

The University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or intimate partner violence. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty/staff member, they must notify our college's Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose to request confidentiality from the University). If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Caroline

Koziatek, at (203) 932.7479 or [ckoziatek@newhaven.edu](mailto:ckoziatek@newhaven.edu). For more information visit [Title IX at the University of New Haven](#).

## **Reporting Bias Incidents**

At the University of New Haven, there is an expectation that all community members are committed to creating and supporting a climate which promotes civility, mutual respect, and open-mindedness. There also exists an understanding that with the freedom of expression comes the responsibility to support community members' right to live and work in an environment free from harassment and fear. It is expected that all members of the University community will engage in anti-bias behavior and refrain from actions that intimidate, humiliate, or demean persons or groups or that undermine their security or self-esteem. ([Reporting Options](#))

## **UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

The University recognizes that students can often use some help outside of class and offers academic assistance through several offices.

### **Centers for Academic Success and Advising (CASA)**

The Centers for Academic Success and Advising is comprised of the following offices:

#### **Center for Student Success (CSS)**

The Center for Student Success (CSS), located in Maxcy 106, provides academic support to students, including success strategies, registration assistance, degree audit guidance, and study and time-management skills. CSS staff work with students to connect them to campus resources, navigate processes, and assist in resolving issues as they arise. The CSS is also maintains the Starfish Early Alert system and provides students with progress reports from their instructors.

#### **Center for Learning Resources (CLR)**

The Center for Learning Resources (CLR), located in the Peterson Library, provides academic content support to graduate and undergraduate students using metacognitive strategies that help students become aware of and learn to apply optimal learning processes in the pursuit of creating independent learners. CLR tutors focus sessions on discussions of concepts and processes and typically use external examples to help students grasp and apply the material.

#### **Starfish Early Alert System**

*The University of New Haven utilizes the Starfish Early Alert system. Starfish is designed to promote student success by coordinating communication between students, instructors and support staff. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails regarding your academic progress. You will also be contacted by the Center for Student Success to discuss any concerns and develop a plan for success. It is important that you check your university email regularly and take the recommended actions. Learn more about Starfish here:*

<https://mycharger.newhaven.edu/web/mycharger/for-students>

### **University Writing Center**

The mission of the Writing Center (an expansion of the Writer to Writer peer-tutoring program) is to provide high-quality tutoring to undergraduate and graduate students as they write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Tutors are undergraduate and graduate students studying Biology, Communications, Criminal Justice, National Security, Engineering, English, Environmental Science, Finance, Forensic Science, Legal Studies, Marine Biology, Music, Nutrition, and Psychology. We are here to work with you at any stage in the writing process; just bring in your assignment, your ideas, and any writing you've done so far. To make an appointment, you can register for an account with our scheduling site at <https://newhaven.mywconline.com> or visit us in person at our desk on the first floor of Peterson library (just to the left after you enter the library).

### **Accessibility Resources Center**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to share, in confidence, information about needed specific course accommodations. The Accessibility Resources Center, located in Sheffield Hall, is responsible for and committed to providing services and support that serve to promote educational equity and ensure that students are able to participate in the opportunities available at the University of New Haven. Accommodations cannot be made without written documentation from the Accessibility Resources Center.

### **Counseling & Psychological Services**

The Counseling Center offers a variety of services aimed at helping students resolve personal difficulties and acquire the balance, skills, and knowledge that will enable them to take full advantage of their experience at the University of New Haven.