



Course Syllabus
Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL-1033 (online)
Fall 2021

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Tyler M. Williams

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Office hours: M 9:00-10:00, TW 9:00-11:00 a.m.

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to major periods, concepts, themes, and thinkers in the history of philosophy. Although breadth will be a priority, we will be guided this semester by studying how philosophers have famously questioned the nature of reality, knowledge, identity, God, evil, obedience, and freedom. By tracing the endurance of Socrates' famous claim that "the unexamined life is not worth living," students will learn the importance of philosophy for living a "meaningful" life of critical inquiry. We often hear about ideas that "challenge conventional wisdom," but rarely do we consider exactly what "conventional wisdom" is, where it comes from, and what it means to challenge it. This course introduces students to major themes in the history of philosophy and, in doing so, it demonstrates how philosophy has been a discipline singularly devoted to challenging the conventions and presuppositions of what we think we know. Since "philosophy" literally means "love of wisdom" in Greek, one can say that, for the philosopher, to love wisdom is to challenge it (or, to challenge those who think they have it). We will be consistently interested in questioning exactly how philosophy challenges conventional wisdom and what effect this questioning has on crafting philosophically and socially engaged citizens.

Required Texts

- There are no required texts for students to purchase. Instead, all required reading will be made available as PDF documents in the course's D2L page.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2017-18](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Enrollment in *any* college class comprises a binding social contract, which includes a respect for every student's right to learn. Conduct that diminishes the quality of other students' learning will not be tolerated. Every student is expected to engage with the course material in a responsible and respectful manner. Sleeping or chatting in class, coming unprepared, projecting disengagement, texting, doing another course's work—all of these actions *directly* disrespect the material and imply an unwillingness to take seriously the privileges of being able to learn in a college classroom.

Students are expected to uphold the standards of “Academic Integrity” set forth by the [MSU Student Honor Creed](#). The instructor will notify the appropriate authority of any infringement of academic honesty.

“Cheating” includes the unauthorized use of certain information, materials, or devices in exams, papers, or assignments. Additionally, grading will abide by the University’s plagiarism policy.

“Plagiarism” includes but is not limited to using the published or unpublished works of another person without recognition, either by paraphrase or direct quotation. The use of materials generated by agencies engaged in “selling” term papers is also plagiarism.

A student who makes use of plagiarized material, or anyone that profits from (or abets) cheating, will be DISMISSED from the course. Cases will also be referred to the Dean of Students for possible dismissal from the university.

Please visit the Office of Student Conduct for more information about guidelines regarding Academic Dishonesty, its prevention, and the procedures for its prosecution.

Grading

Table 1: Final grades for the course will be determined according to the following distribution:

Assignments	Weight
Engagement	5%
Quiz Average	20%
Test 1	25%
Test 2	25%
Test 3	25%

Table 2: Grades will be administered on an A-F scale according to the following percentages:

Grade	Value
A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

Quizzes

Routine quizzes will be administered via D2L throughout the semester. Quizzes ensure that students keep pace with the syllabus. For this reason, quizzes will be based entirely off of class readings and lectures. Quiz dates are marked on the course schedule. When quiz averages are calculated for the final course grade, the lowest single quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes will be comprised of a single multiple choice question pulled randomly from a larger “pool” of available questions. Each quiz will be available for students to take between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on the date posted on the schedule. Missed quizzes cannot be taken after the deadline.

Tests

Three tests will be administered throughout the semester. Tests will not be cumulative and will cover material discussed and prepared in class. Tests will be posted for students to download, complete, and return to the appropriate Assignments dropbox in D2L. These dropboxes are equipped with plagiarism detection software. Instructions per exam will be disseminated at least two weeks prior to the due date.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be accepted in this course. Students are therefore encouraged to keep pace with the syllabus from the start of the semester to avoid a situation in which extra credit would be desired.

Make Up Work/Tests

Quizzes cannot be made up retroactively. All assignments are organized to accommodate various work and travel schedules. Unforeseen, exceptional circumstances that prevent a student from taking a *test* will require credible documentation *at that time* to make-up the assignment.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

MSU's D2L program is a requirement this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to complete all of the course modules. The instructor receives a report form D2L of which students completed which modules when. This counts as your "attendance." Other forms of engagement include participation in the online discussion and question boards – both as original posters, as interlocutors in discussions, and as respondents to fellow students' questions.

Instructor Class Policies

Help — Students should discuss any concerns with the instructor as soon as possible. Many of the readings will be difficult, so *please* ask questions in class for clarification. Office hours are available via telephone (my phone number is at the top of the syllabus) or videoconferencing. An appointment is not required for office hours consultation, since they're "drop-in" hours, but it's appreciated.

Technology — As an online course, internet access and technological capabilities (internet, D2L, microphone, webcam) are required and it is the student's responsibility to ensure reliable access.

Recordings — Lectures, lecture notes, assignments, etc. remain the intellectual property of the instructor. Students are not permitted to disseminate the content of our online class outside D2L.

Conduct — Actions that diminish the quality of other students' learning will not be tolerated. Insults, slurs, or attacks of any kind will be grounds for permanent removal from the course. Every student is expected to engage with the course material in a responsible and respectful manner. This includes basic etiquette during videoconferencing sessions. To avoid distractions, students are expected to be fully dressed, seated, and presentable on camera.

Email — Check emails regularly, since that will be the only method by which students are informed about class cancellations or any changes to the course. Your instructor will email you via D2L. Therefore, either make sure you check your D2L email regularly, or change the settings of your D2L inbox to reroute your D2L emails to a preferred email address. When emailing your professors, please ensure that proper etiquette and professionalism is being observed. Always check the syllabus

and the course schedule first to ensure that any questions are not already answered there. Your instructor will not respond at length to emails about writing assignments after the assignment has been posted. Please allow 24 hours for an email reply.

Disability Support Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to <http://www.mwsu.edu/student-life/disability>.

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Changes to Syllabus

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. All details of any changes made to the course will be made available to students via email.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies — Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy — College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy — To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and

federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: August 23-27

Monday: Module 1: Introduction to course and procedures
Wednesday: Module 2: Deductive reasoning tutorial (no reading due)
Friday: Module 2: Inductive reasoning tutorial (no reading due)

UNIT ONE:

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY AND WHY DO IT?

WEEK TWO: August 30 – September 3

Monday: Module 3: Plato's *Apology* 17a-28d
Wednesday: Module 3: Plato's *Apology* 28e-42a
Friday: Module 4: Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave" 514a-518e. **Quiz 1**

WEEK THREE: September 6-10

Monday: No module: Labor Day
Wednesday: Module 5: Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"
Friday: Module 5: Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations" **Quiz 2**

WEEK FOUR: September 13-17

Monday: No module: Optional review session
Wednesday: No module: **Test #1 due by 11:59 p.m. via D2L assignments dropbox**

UNIT TWO:

WHAT CAN I KNOW?

Friday: Module 6: René Descartes *Meditation 1*

WEEK FIVE: September 20-24

Monday: Module 7: René Descartes *Meditation 2*
Wednesday: Module 7: René Descartes *Meditation 2* continued
Friday: Module 7: René Descartes *Meditation 3*. **Quiz 3**

UNIT THREE:

DOES GOD EXIST?

WEEK SIX: September 27 – October 1

Monday: Module 8: St. Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion* chapters 2-3
Wednesday: Module 9: St. Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways"
Friday: Module 10: Pascal's Wager. **Quiz 4**

WEEK SEVEN: October 4-8

Monday: Module 11: The Epicurean Paradox
Wednesday: Module 12: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*
Friday: Module 13: St. Augustine, *Confessions* and *Enchiridion*. **Quiz 5**

WEEK EIGHT: October 11-15

Monday: Module 14: David Hume, *Dialogues on Natural Religion*
 Wednesday: Module 15: John Schellenberg, "Divine Hiddenness"
 Friday: Module 16: Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*. Quiz 6

WEEK NINE: October 18-22

Monday: No module: Integrated flex day for catchup
 Wednesday: No module: Optional review session
 Friday: No module: Test #2 due by 11:59 p.m. via D2L assignments dropbox

UNIT FOUR:WHY DO WE CONSENT TO BE RULED BY GOVERNMENTS?**WEEK TEN: October 25-29**

Monday: Module 17: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* chapter XIII
 Wednesday: Module 17: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* chapter XIV
 Friday: Module 17: Hobbes, *Leviathan* continued. Quiz 7

WEEK ELEVEN: November 1-5

Monday: Module 18: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*
 Wednesday: Module 19: Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence*
 Friday: Module 20: Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" Quiz 8

WEEK TWELVE: November 8-12

Monday: Module 21: Plato's *Crito* 43a-50a
 Wednesday: Module 21: Plato's *Crito* 50a-54e
 Friday: No module: Integrated flex day for catchup Quiz 9

UNIT FIVE:FREEDOM AND SUBJUGATION**WEEK THIRTEEN: November 15-19**

Monday: Module 22: Martin Luther King Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
 Wednesday: Module 23: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*
 Friday: Module 23: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* continued Quiz 10

WEEK FOURTEEN: November 22-26

Monday: Module 24: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ch. 2
 Wednesday: Module 24: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ch. 2 continued
 Friday: Module 25: Marc Crépon, "The Invention of Singularity in School" Quiz 11

WEEK FIFTEEN: November 29 – December 3

Monday: No module: Integrated flex day for catchup (no reading due)
 Wednesday: No module: Optional review session
 Friday: No module: Test #3 due by 11:59 p.m. via D2L assignment dropbox