

Introduction to Philosophy: PHIL 100-01

Course Information

Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Patrick Miller

Contact: pmiller@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: On Zoom by appointment

Course Description

Philosophy studies the history of the most abstract and fundamental questions. By looking at the history of philosophy, we can see seemingly unusual views of the nature of reality that have informed popular contemporary views. Throughout this semester, we will look at the how Plato influenced later views on the soul and the afterlife; how Descartes influenced the development of ideas of the self and knowledge; and how Hume influenced the understanding of the sciences.

This course satisfies the Humanities component of the university's General Education Program, which targets the following objectives:

- Reading closely, thinking critically, and writing effectively about texts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition.
- Investigating and thoughtfully responding to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than your own.

Learning Outcomes

- Compare different arguments, their foundational views, and their historical import.
- Appraise arguments on the nature of reality and their applicability to modern views.
- Collaboratively develop interpretations of texts and arguments in response to the texts.
- Use close reading and argumentative writing skills in relation to abstract and dense materials.

Required Texts

The following list is all the required texts for the class. The exact edition is heavily recommended, it will be available at the university bookstore, as differences in translation and pagination will make it harder to follow in class. Any reading assignment scheduled but not part of the following list will be available on Canvas or through the university's library.

- Plato. *Five Dialogues*. 2nd Edition. ISBN: 978-0872206335
- Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*. 4th Edition. ISBN: 978-0872204201
- Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. ISBN: 978-0872202290

Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined by a combination of three different classes of assignments.

- 60% Exams and Quizzes
- 40% Discussion Boards

There will be three exams throughout the semester, they will consist of matching and short answers, and an essay question. These exams will be on Canvas. The rest of your grade will be through participation in group discussion boards. I will ask questions at the start of each week, and it will be an opportunity to ask for clarification from your fellow students, and me if no one gives a good answer. You will be expected to participate in each weeks discussion to receive credit for these assignments.

Grade Scale:

Unless stated otherwise, all work will be graded according to the following scale:

93-100 = A 90-92.9 = A- 87-89.9 = B+ 83-86.9 = B 80-82.9 = B- 77-79.9 = C+
73-76.9 = C 70-72.9 = C- 67-69.9 = D+ 60-66.9 =D below 60 = F

Resources: Online resource for MLA, Chicago, or other citations and other writing tip, [Purdue Online Writing Laboratory](#).¹

Late Work and Excused Absences

Late work will not be accepted unless your absence is excused. If you are aware that you will miss class or be unable to turn in an assignment on time, then please email or talk to me, so we can find a fair solution.

A grade of "I" is given only in the cases of a medical or family emergency and, in conjunction with university policy, only when a small portion of the student's work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade.

Academic Integrity Policy

I adhere to a strict policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, etc.). Any questions that you may have regarding academic integrity should be resolved before you turn in course materials to me. Information can be found in UWSP Chapter 14, available at:

["http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf"](http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf). The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university.

¹ https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

Syllabus Subject to Change

This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, as a result of any circumstance outside the University's and your professor's control.

General Degree Requirements

This course satisfies the Humanities component of the university's general education program.

Student Support Resources

[Academic and Career Advising Center \(ACAC\)](#)

209 Collins Classroom Center (CCC)
1801 4th Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-3226
acac@uwsp.edu

[Counseling Center](#)

Delzell Hall
910 Fremont Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-3553
counsel@uwsp.edu

Mental Health Resources for Students

[Mantra Health](#)

Teletherapy & Telepsychiatry

- Diverse therapists
- After-hours availability
- Medication evaluations & prescriptions

[You@UWSP](#)

Self-help & Well-being Platform

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

24/7 Mental Health Support:

- Call or text: 888-531-2142
- [Start a chat session](#)

- Crisis care available

Dean of Students Office

2100 Main Street
Old Main, Room 212
Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897
Phone: 715-346-2611
DOS@uwsp.edu

***Equal Access and Disability Accommodations**

If you have a condition that may impact your learning and/or participation in course activities, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC). The DRC will engage in an interactive process with students and identify appropriate academic accommodations and auxiliary services in accordance with the University's legal obligations. Instructors, students, and DRC staff work collaboratively to establish any necessary adjustments or supports. Accommodations are rarely applied retroactively so it is vital that students make timely requests.

Please let me know if you have questions. The DRC is located in 108 Collins Classroom Center and can be reached at 715/346-3365 and drc@uwsp.edu.

Student Health Service

Delzell Hall
910 Fremont St
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-4646

Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC)

The Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) helps students in all disciplines become more effective, confident learners. We believe all learners benefit from sharing work with knowledgeable, attentive tutors. The TLC offers four tutoring services:

- Academic Coaching: Build skills in studying, time management, test-taking, online learning, and more.
- Course Content: Practice problems, deepen understanding, and prepare for exams in natural resources, STEM, World Languages, and more.
- Reading/Writing: Brainstorm and refine papers, essays, lab reports, citations, résumés, scholarship applications, personal writing, and more.
- Tech Essentials: Develop computer literacy and learn to use UWSP-related applications such as Canvas, Microsoft 365, and Zoom.

To make an appointment, students can self-schedule using Navigate, contact us at tlctutor@uwsp.edu or 715-346-3568, or stop into CCC 234.

Stevens Point Campus Tutoring-Learning Center

234 Collins Classroom Center (CCC)
1801 4th Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-3568
tlctutor@uwsp.edu

Marshfield Campus Tutoring-Learning Center

Library
2000 W. 5th Street
Marshfield, WI 54449
715-898-6036
roleary@uwsp.edu

Wausau Campus Tutoring-Learning Center

Library
518 S. 7th Ave
Wausau, WI 54401
715-261-6148
lorandal@uwsp.edu

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 (May 28 – June 1)

Syllabus, Philo Intro PowerPoint, Parmenides (On Canvas) and Heraclitus (On Canvas)

Week 2 (June 2 – June 8)

Plato's "Euthyphro" and "Phaedo" (skip pages 133-136 and 145-150)

Week 3 (June 9 – June 15)

Exam 1, Descartes' *Meditations*, Letter, and Meditations 1-3

Week 4 (June 16 – June 22)

Meditations 4-6 and Part 5 of Descartes' *Discourse*

Week 5 (June 23 – June 29)

Exam 2, Hume's *Enquiry* sections 1, 2, 4, and 5

Week 6 (June 30 – July 6)

Enquiry sections 7, 9, and 10.

Week 7 (July 7 – July 13)

Benjamin's *Work of Art* (On Canvas)

Week 8 (July 14 – July 19)
Final Exam