



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

PHIL 2 - Introduction to Philosophy

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course is an introduction to the nature of philosophical thought and skills. Issues that traditionally have been of central importance in philosophical inquiry will be emphasized. These include the nature and limits of knowledge, reality, and values. (C-ID PHIL 100).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Discuss and explain, using philosophical methods, some representative philosophical problems and the major alternative ways in which these problems have been addressed.
2. Analyze and evaluate philosophical viewpoints, including methods, arguments, and assumptions, in terms of relevance, consistency, and truth.
3. Formulate, construct and articulate their own position on a number of philosophical problems in light of what great philosophers have written.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
<u>Lecture</u>	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Nature of philosophy	9.00
a. What is philosophy?	
b. Philosophical methods	
c. Argumentation	
d. Areas and fields in philosophy	
Epistemology	8.00
a. What is knowledge?	
b. What is truth?	
c. When is a belief rational or justified?	
d. Skepticism	
e. Empiricism vs. rationalism	
Philosophy of science	6.00
a. Scientific methodology	
b. The problem of induction	
c. Fact and value	
d. Instrumentalism vs. realism	
Free will and determinism	6.00
a. Statement of the problem	
b. Libertarianism	
c. Hard determinism	
d. Soft determinism or the consistency hypothesis	
Mind/body problem	6.00
a. Cartesian dualism	
b. Physicalism	
c. Personal identity	
Ethics and Political Philosophy	8.00
a. The nature and sources of morality and political philosophy	
b. Absolutism vs relativism	
c. Major ethical positions	
d. Important political concepts and systems	
Philosophy of religion	8.00
a. Traditional arguments for the existence of God	

Topics

Lec Hrs

- Ontological argument
- Teleological argument
- Cosmological argument
- Moral argument
- b. Faith and reason
- c. The problem of evil

Total Hours: 51.00

Methods of Instruction

- A. Discussion
- B. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- C. Lecture
- D. Multimedia Presentations
- E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Quizzes
- B. Portfolios
- C. Papers
- D. Short papers
- E. Examinations
- F. Book reports
- G. Students will write at least 1,500 words. This requirement will be met either by essay examinations, short papers, or book reports. (Note: all written work will be evaluated on both its form and content.)

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the Section from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and discuss what he means by "happiness." How does his understanding of happiness compare to your own?
2. Read the Section from A.J. Ayer, "The Elimination of Metaphysics" and discuss his criteria for "a meaningful proposition." Are there any obvious weaknesses with his criteria of meaning?

Writing Assignments

1. Write a two page essay comparing and contrasting the liberalism of John Rawls with the libertarianism of Robert Nozick.
2. Write a three to five page essay answering the question: What does it mean to be human? Articulate and defend a philosophical answer to this question in light of all that you have read for this class and in light of all our class discussions.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Pick a philosophical question (such as whether humans are free, whether there are moral absolutes, and so on). Then formulate 3 to 5 specific questions related to your topic. Interview a local philosophy instructor and write up your interview.
2. Pick a political or moral topic (such as liberalism vs. libertarianism, utilitarianism vs. Kantianism, and so on). Find two or three pieces written by people who are not professional philosophers on each side of the issue. Then compare and contrast their understanding of the problem with the philosophers we have read and discussed in class. Does an academic approach to the topic improve, obfuscate, or have no affect on a person's approach to political and moral problems?

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Moore, B. & Bruder, K. (2023). *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*. McGraw-Hill, 11th. 9781264981427.

Kessler, G. E. (2016). *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader*. Cengage, 9th. 9781285874333.

Velasquez, M. (2017). *Philosophy: A Text With Readings*. Cengage, 13th. 9781305410473.

Other Learning Materials

OER: Introduction to Philosophy (<https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/94952>)

Minimum Qualifications

Philosophy (Masters Required)

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