

Date updated: 1/8/2025

Syllabus

The University of New Orleans

Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy (3 credits)

SECTION O001: Online

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Sara Bizarro
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Office Hours: M-F: 3-5 pm – [By appointment on Calendly](#) (in person/on zoom)
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Required Texts

Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, 6th Edition or 7th Edition, Oxford University Press, 2017 (ISBN-13: 978-0190674335 ISBN-10: 0190674334).

Note: All required readings will be posted on Perusall. The 6th Edition will be posted on Canvas and the 7th Edition will be digitally available if you have access to course books included in your tuition.

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: An introductory study of basic philosophical concepts and problems.

COURSE OVERVIEW: The purpose of this Introduction to Philosophy course is to provide students with an overview of the subject and its methods. Philosophy has a rich history starting with the Greeks, but it is not merely a historical subject; it is also a means by which we can think about ourselves and the world around us. To provide students with a broader view of philosophy, not just as a historical subject, but also as a way of approaching contemporary issues, this course combines historical texts, philosophical methods, and contemporary philosophical thought. We will begin by explaining what philosophy is and what philosophical arguments are, and then explore the history of Philosophy through reading selections from ancient Greek, modern, and contemporary texts. We will discuss philosophical topics such as the Free Will, the Existence of God, Feminism, Personal Identity, the Mind-Body Problem, and the Trolley Problem. We will then move to Asian Philosophy, and to conclude the course we close with a speculative section on Death and the Meaning of Life.

Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Have a grasp of the history of philosophy and be acquainted with essential philosophers and their writings.
- Cultivate reasoning skills, analysis, and evaluation of arguments, while referring to the theories and ideas learned in class.
- Discuss and defend several positions in philosophy, supporting them with complete arguments, as distinct from affirming opinion or tradition.
- Work on a final project that directly uses the topics discussed in class and implements the argumentation skills developed.

Grades

Grades will be based on a 100 percent scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
Perusall Reading Assignments and Discussions	40	A	100 – 90
Quizzes	20	B	89 – 80
Midterm and Final Exams	20	C	79 – 70
Final Project	20	D	69 – 60
Total	100	F	59 – 0

*Grades over .5 will be rounded up, so 89.5 will be rounded up to 90.

LATE WORK: Reading assignments and discussions can be submitted up to 10 days. Perusall assignments have a penalty that increases gradually as more days pass, up to a maximum of 10 days. After those 10 days extensions will only be granted in extreme and documented circumstances. In most cases no extensions will be granted. Quizzes must be taken or executed on before the due date. If you have a situation that you believe is an extenuating circumstance, you can only ask for consideration with written documentation. If you encounter any unexpected circumstances make sure to document it, as extensions will not be granted without documentation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic honesty is essential for learning, evaluating academic performance, and the entire educational function of a University. For this reason, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. The student code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>. Each student is required to pledge that all completed work will be submitted according to the principles of academic integrity as defined in the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the UNO Student Code of Conduct.

AI USE: Any and all AI use needs to be explicitly acknowledged and detailed in a note on your work at the end of each assignment where AI was used in any way. AI can be used to research and brainstorm, but it is NOT acceptable to submit anything written by AI, that is **you** need to write all your written submissions yourself, in any written work you submit. Please note that Perusall warns me of any comment that is copy/pasted so you need to type or dictate directly on the program. Please check your work with Chat GPT Zero if you want to make sure your text is not showing up as AI-created. Anything that shows up as AI-created will need to be re-written and an oral presentation of the topic in my office will be required. You can check Chat GPT Zero here: <https://gptzero.me/>

READINGS: Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly readings, reading assignments on Perusall (more information about this on Canvas.) All required readings will be posted on Canvas. The course book is useful for the final project, but all the material is posted and there is no need to purchase any course books for this class. You will need to pay a \$5 fee to use Perusall. Readings need to be completed within 10 days of the due date, and if after the due date they have 20% penalty. After the 10 days the reading/discussion post will no longer be graded.

DISCUSSIONS: Discussions will happen also on the Perusall platform. The platform will give you a grade and I may change that grade upon reviewing the discussions. Discussions have to be on topic and written (or dictated) in your own voice. Posts saying that "I agree" and such will not get a score. More instructions on proper discussions will be posted on perusal. Discussions need to be completed within 10 days of the due date, and if after the due date they have 20% penalty. After the 10 days the reading/discussion post will no longer be graded.

QUIZZES: There are weekly quizzes to make sure you are following along with the material presented. Quizzes are at the end of each folder, they have 5 questions regarding the topics of the week and two attempts. Quizzes need to be taken in the week we are on with a 10 day extension and a 20% late penalty. If quizzes are missed they will have a zero.

EXAMS: There are two exams that need to be taken with Respondus Lockdown Browser. They are open book, and consist on several multiple choice questions that may or may not have appeared in the previous quizzes.

FINAL PROJECT: The final project can be an essay, a video or a podcast. Students will need to choose a topic that was either discussed in class or if not discussed in class is in the course book. There will be an assignment sheet posted with specific instructions regarding the final project. In order to have a good grade these instructions need to be closely followed. Students are encouraged to set up office hours to discuss their ideas for the final project.

CONTENT NOTICE/TRIGGER WARNING: This is a philosophy class, so it is an argument-based, which means there are different opinions expressed in class. There are also topics that may be problematic to some students, for instance, questioning if reality exists, discussing arguments for the existence of God, and questions about life, death, and suicide may be discussed as well.

Course Policies

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are only granted in extreme and documented extenuating circumstances and must be discussed and arranged well before the last class meeting. If a student asks for an incomplete at the end of the course, it will be denied, unless there are extreme and documented medical or other severe circumstances. If your situation is not documented, you need to find a way to officially confirm the reason why you are asking for an incomplete.

WITHDRAWALS: Check the academic calendar for withdrawal dates. You do not need to tell me anything, you can withdraw within the University rules. I understand that life happens and sometimes it is not the right time to take a class. You can always return to it the following semester.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodation. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: Please remember that both the Library and Learning Resource Center are available to assist all students regarding writing and research.

PHIL 1000 – Online - Spring 2025 Timeline

(subject to revision, test dates and Exam dates TBA)

DAY	TOPIC/READING
Week 1	<p>What is Philosophy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus and Course Preview. • Branches of Philosophy. • Required Readings: Syllabus and Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy", p. 13-15 • Further readings: "What Is Philosophy?" Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley, p. 3-12
Week 2	<p>Texas Sharpshooter, Invisible Dragon, and Strawman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments and Fallacies • Videos: Monty Python Argument Clinic, Texas Sharpshooter, and 31 Logical Fallacies. • Required Participation Activity: Bring a fallacy to Class.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Listening: The Texas Sharpshooter Fallacy
Week 3	<p>The Gadfly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Socratics and Socrates • Required Reading: Plato, "Defense of Socrates", p. 16-39 • Further Reading: Aristophanes, "The Clouds"
Week 4	<p>Ring of Gyges, Allegory of the Cave, and Ship of State</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato. • Required Reading: Plato, "Republic - Allegory of the Cave." p. 567-576 • Further reading: Plato, 557-567
Week 5	<p>Bad Haircuts and Statues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, Science and Virtue Ethics. • Movie: <i>Groundhog Day</i>. • Required Reading: Reading: Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics." p. 374-378
Week 6	<p>The Evil Genie, Apples and Billiard Balls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descartes. "I Think Therefore I Am." • How do we know anything really exists? • Descartes and the Matrix. • Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. • Thinking through Descartes' Skepticism. • Required Reading: Descartes, "Meditations.", p. 94-105 & 173-178 • Further Reading: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.
Week 7	<p>The Axe Murderer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge and perception. • Kantian Ethics. • Required Reading: Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals." p. 378-383 <p>Mid-term Exam</p>
Week 8	<p>The Ship of Theseus, Cobblers, and Locke's Parrot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes an object the same over time, even when it physically changes? • What makes a person the same person over their entire life? • Required Readings: Smart, "A case of Identity", Perry, "The Problem of Personal Identity", p. 229-233
Week 9	<p>Mary's Room, The Chinese Room, Vegemite and Bats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we ever know what it is like to be an animal? Can we know what it is like to be a bat? • Can machines think? Can a computer be conscious?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Readings: Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?" p. 153-156, Alan Turing, "Computer Machinery and Intelligence" p. 161-165; Searle "Do computers think?" 165-167
Week 10	<p>The Watchmaker, Pascal's Wager, and the Problem of Evil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does God exist? Are there good arguments for or against the existence of God? • Required Reading: Pascal, "The Wager", p. 309-311. • Further readings: Part 7, God, p. 253-330
Week 11	<p>Coquettes, Officers and Ain't I a Woman?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks. • Required Reading: Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" • Further Readings: Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks.
Week 12	<p>Cake or Peach and Voting Booths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Will: Metaphysics, Psychology and Moral Responsibility. • Required Reading: Thomas Nagel, "Free Will", p. 181-186. • Further Reading: Part 5, Free Will, p. 181-228
Week 13	<p>The Trolley Problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trolley Problem. • Required Readings: Judith Jarvis Thompson, "The Trolley Problem," p. 629-630, & "Turning the Trolley" p. 630-633
Week 14	<p>A Cup of Tea, the Moon, and Every Minute Zen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism, Confucianism, Tao and Zen. • Required Reading: "Twelve Zen Stories," p. 713-719 • Further Readings: Part 15, Asian Outlooks, p. 697-713
Week 15	<p>Death and the Meaning of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a reason to fear death? What is bad about dying? • What is the meaning of life? • Required Readings (choose one): Richard Taylor, "The Meaning of Life", p. 679-687; Susan Wolf, "Meaning in Life", p. 687-690; Christine Vitrano, "Meaningful Lives", 691-693
Exam Date And Final Project	Final Exam and Final Project