

## PHIL 6 Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge, World and Self

**Course Code: PHIL 6**

**Instructor: D. Bruce Carter, Ph.D.**

**Home Institution: Syracuse University**

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**Credit: 3**

### Course Description

This Introduction to Philosophy course is a survey of many major areas of some European (and some non-European) forms of philosophy. We will explore the philosophy of science, of mind, of religion, and of language and will examine metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and philosophical approaches to questions about the nature of the world, knowledge, and ways of knowing. We will explore questions that matter to our lives, and how philosophers from a variety of perspectives have responded to these issues. We will analyze arguments for and against the existence of God, utilize logical systems of thought, and employ logical arguments and empirical evidence to evaluate arguments.

### Required Textbook

Wolff, R. P. (2012). *About Philosophy* (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York, NY USA: Pearson Publishing. (ISBN-10: 0205194125 (Available as a Kindle E-Book) (May be rented or purchased online)

**Useful web sites:** The following general websites for Philosophy are useful:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Writing in Philosophy <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca:8080/philosophy/phlwrite/index.html>

The American Philosophical Association Online <http://www.udel.edu/apa>

### Course Objectives:

Students, at the end of this course, will be able to:

- 1) Identify major philosophical perspectives and approaches to questions that have arisen over time regarding the nature of reality, of truth, of good, and the qualities of human beings.
- 2) Recognize connections and influences among various philosophical perspectives.
- 3) Employ logical skills
- 4) Argue for and against ethical claims and positions

**Course Schedule:****UNIT 1: Philosophy, Epistemology, and Pragmatism (Chapter 1 & 2)**

- 1 Course Overview & syllabus; Introduction to the field of Philosophy (Chapter 1)
- 2 The beginnings of philosophical inquiry
- 3 Theories of knowledge: Rationalism & Empiricism (Chapter 2)
- 4 The Emergence of Epistemology and Mind Body Dualism
- 5 Video 1: Noam Chomsky & the application of Rationalism
- 6 Quiz 1

**Supplemental Readings****Unit 1 Introduction to the field of philosophy & Theories of knowledge.**

Solomon, R. C., Higgins, K. M., & Martin, C. (2016). Introduction. *Introducing Philosophy: A text with associated readings* (pp. 1-23). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Plato *Republic* (*Politeia* c. 380 BCE). Bk V, 171b-483e. Trans. B. Jowett (1892), in *The Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon, vol. III, pp. 171-179. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 12-18). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Descartes, R. *Meditations on First Philosophy [Meditationes de prima philosophia, 1641]*, *Meditation I and part of II*. Trans J. Cottingham (1986), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 21-25). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

**UNIT 2: Understanding ourselves & the universe (Chapters 3 & 4)**

- 7 Metaphysics defined and explored (and what is materialism anyway?; Chapter 3)
- 8 Free will, determinism & mind-body dualism
- 9 Philosophy of science- Method & applications (Chapter 4)
- 10 Paradigms & paradigm shifts
- 11 Video 2: Reality and the Brain
- 12 Quiz 2

**Supplemental Readings****Unit 2 Metaphysics & Philosophy of Science**

Plato *Republic [Politeia, c. 380 BCE]*, 507b1-517c6. B. Jowett (Trans), *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. III, pp. 207-217. Oxford, UK: Clarendon. . In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 69-75). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Aristotle, *Categories [Kategoriai, ca. 330 BCE]*, ch. 5 (2a11-4b19). J. L. Akrill (Trans), pp. 5-12. Oxford, UK: Clarendon. . In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 76-79). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Descartes, R. "Supreme Being and Created Things". *Principles of Philosophy [Principia Philosophiae, 1644]*. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, & D. Murdoch (1985, Trans.). In *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (pp. 210-211, 215, 223-225, 232, 240, 247). Vol I. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 80-86). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Carnap, R. (1932). The elimination of metaphysics through logical analysis of language (*Überwindung der Metaphysik durch Logische Analyse der Sprache*). First published in *Erkenntnis*, vol II. Arthur Pap (Trans.). In A. J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism* (pp. 60-80). New York, NY USA: Free Press. . In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 121-126). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Hempel, C. G. (1962). Explanation in science and in history. In R. G. Colodny (Ed.), *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy* (pp 7-33). Pittsburgh, PA USA: University of Pittsburgh Press. In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 460-468). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Popper, K. (1957). Science: Conjectures and refutations. In C. A. Mace (Ed.), *British Philosophy in Mid-Century*. London UK: Routledge. In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 453-459). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (pp. 10-11, 64-65, 76-77, 81-83, 93-95, 112, 117-118). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. In J. Cottingham (ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 475-481). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

### UNIT 3: Ethics & Applied Ethics (Chapter 5 & 6)

- 13 The varieties of ethical theory (Chapter 5)
- 14 Utilitarian & other ethical theories
- 15 Liberalism, Socialism, Capitalism & the Social Contract (Chapter 6);
- 16 Capitalism & the Social Contract
- 17 Video 3: Ethical dimensions in Scientific Research: The Tuskegee Experiment
- 18 Quiz 3

### Supplemental Readings

#### Unit 3 Ethics and Applied Ethics

Plato. *Republic* (*Politeia* c. 380 BCE). Bk II, 357b2-367c5-483e. Trans. B. Jowett (1892), in *The Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon, vol. III, pp. 36-47. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 487-492). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Aristotle. *Nichomean Ethics* [*Ethika Nikomacheia*, ca. 325 BCE]. Extracts from Bk I, ch. 7 and Bk II, chs 1, 5, and 6 (1097b21-1098a18, 1103a16-b25, 1105b19-1107 a8). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 492-495). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Leopold, A. (1949). The Land Ethic. From A. Leopold, *A Sand Country Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 201-226 abridged). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 585-590). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Kass, L. R. (1997). The wisdom of repugnance. *The New Republic*, 2 June 1997, 17-26 abridged. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 608-616). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Rachels, J. (1975). Active and passive euthanasia. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 78-80. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 602-607). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

#### **UNIT 4: Human & Divine Endeavors (Chapters 7 & 8)**

- 19 Philosophy of Art & Poetry (Chapter 7)
- 20 Marcuse, Danto & the World of Art
- 21 Philosophy of Religion & Faith (Chapter 8)
- 22 Arguments for God & the Problem of Evil
- 23 Video 4: The Debate on God
- 24 Quiz 4

#### **Supplemental Readings**

##### **Unit 4 Philosophy of Art and Poetry**

Satre, J-P. (1950). The Psychology of Imagination. [From L'iminaire: Psychologie phenomenologique de l'imagination [1940], pp. 21-27. London UK: Rider. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 739-744). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Wittgenstein, L. (1938). Exerpts from Lectures on Aesthetics. In L. Wittgenstein, *Lectures and conversations on aesthetics, psychology and religious belief* (Ed. C. Barrett). Oxford, UK: Blackwell. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 744-749). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Sibley, F. (1959). Aesthetic concepts. *Philosophical Review*, 68, 421-450. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 750-755). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

##### **Unit 5 Philosophy of Religion and Faith**

Pascal, B. (ca. 1660). *Pensees*. (J. Cottingham, Trans.). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 778-782). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Shopenhauer. "On the vanity of existence." From A. Shopenhauer, *Parega und Paralipomena* (1851), vol. II, ch. 2. (T. B. Saunders, Trans). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 782-785). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Russell, B. (1903). A Free Man's Worship. Reprinted in Russell, *Collected Papers*, vol. 12. In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 790-796). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Craig, W. L. (1984). The absurdity of life without God. From W. L. Craig (1984), *Reasonable Faith, Christian Truth and Apologetics* (pp. 57-75). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 809-814). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Nozick, R. (1989). Philosophy's Life. From R. Nozick, *The Examined Life*, chp 26 (pp. 297-302). In J. Cottingham (Ed.), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology* (pp. 815-819). Malden, MA USA: Blackwell Publishing.

**\*NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class.**

### Grading & Evaluation:

Assignment	Points total	Percent of Grade
4 Unit Quizzes (on SchoolIn; 40 points each)	160 points	80%
Video Responses (10 points per Response)	40 points	20%
Total	200 points	100%

### Assignments

1. **Quizzes**- I will administer a quiz at the end of each unit. These quizzes will be a way to check your learning of the material in the text and lecture. Each quiz will cover the material covered in class and in readings that week. Each quiz is worth 20% of your grade in the course. Exams will be administered online.
2. **Video Response**- Each week you will be shown a video as one of your lectures. The video will present information that is part of what is being discussed in class that week. The Videos are labelled "Video 1," "Video 2," etc. in the schedule. Your task is to write a one page typed, double-spaced response to the video. You may express agreement or disagreement with one or more of the points the speaker made in the video. OR you can relate the material in the video to something that is happening currently in the world or in your society today. OR you can present your own ideas about the topic discussed in the video. You may watch the video any time during the week the topic is discussed but you must send your response during that week (that is, by the Saturday EDST at the end of the week) to me attached to an email message. My email address is [dbcarter@syr.edu](mailto:dbcarter@syr.edu) . I will grade your response on a 0 (no response) to 10 (excellent response) scale.
3. **Attendance**- This course is online so there is no in-person attendance.

### Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

## Course Policies

### Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that they can help you find a solution.

### Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons includes: (1) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (2) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to the student or student's family.

### Commit to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

### Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

"The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades."

### Definitions

"**Cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means."

"**Plagiarism** is a form of cheating."

"Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution."