



PHIL 1000  
Introduction to Western Philosophy  
Summer 2021  
7/12 – 8/13  
ONLINE  
3 Credit Hours

## INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. David Svolba

E-Mail: [dsvolba@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:dsvolba@fitchburgstate.edu)

Office Hours: via Google Meet on M&TH / 9-10am, China Standard Time, and by appointment

Course Website: [Blackboard.fitchburgstate.edu](https://blackboard.fitchburgstate.edu)

Although this is an online class, it's often easier to ask questions face-to-face. This is especially true in a philosophy class, as discussion in 'real time' can help us sort through ideas and clarify our own perspectives. For this reason, I will be holding 'virtual' office hours on Mondays and Thursdays of each week throughout the semester. For students who would like to talk 'live' about any course-related matters but can't make the regular office hours, I am happy to arrange appointments.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course serves as an introduction to the problems, methods and goals of classical and contemporary Western philosophy. Emphasis is placed upon how these differ from and relate to other fields of human knowledge.

## COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

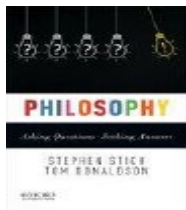
The main goal of this course is to introduce you to philosophy as a way of thinking about the kinds of deep questions that occur to all reflective people during the course of their lives. Our emphasis throughout will be on developing the set of skills essential to philosophical analysis,

including the ability to formulate basic or fundamental questions clearly and precisely, identify possible answers to these questions, evaluate the merits and demerits of these answers, and communicate the results of our critical analysis in clear, logically rigorous prose. In addition to developing a much greater appreciation of the complexity underlying our most basic beliefs about ourselves and the world students will develop logical and critical thinking skills that will be valuable to them outside of the philosophy classroom.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have acquired:

- *Knowledge* of core philosophical problems and issues, as well as the main positions philosophers have developed and defended in response to these issues.
- *Critical Thinking Skills*, or the ability to identify, evaluate, and construct logical arguments.
- *Ethical Competence*, or the ability to engage more reasonably, knowledgably, and thoughtfully in the debates that define our moral and political cultures.

## REQUIRED TEXT



Stephen Stich and Tom Donaldson. *Philosophy: Asking Questions, Seeking Answers* (Oxford University Press: 2018).

Available from Redshelf.com as a digital rental for ~ \$23.00:

<https://redshelf.com/book/937227/philosophy-937227-9780190902506-stephen-stich-tom-donaldson>

In addition to the required text, students will have to register for an online course on critical thinking and argument mapping: [How We Argue – ThinkerAnalytix Argument Mapping Course](#). Students will be required to complete this course before the end of our semester. The course should take 5-8 hours to complete. Registration costs 5.00 USD.

## COURSE LOGISTICS

Your work in this course will be primarily self-directed: you are expected to complete all assignments without prompting from me and must contact me if you have questions, difficulties, or concerns. The best way to contact me is through the Q&A forum on our Blackboard course site (via Discussion Board). By posting your questions here, students with similar questions can benefit from my answers. I will respond to all posts in the Q&A forum within 24 hours.

The course is organized around 5 learning modules. Each learning module includes a brief introduction, a philosophical thinking activity, reading assignments, viewing assignments with embedded quiz questions, and a test. For more information about these assignments, see below.

## COURSE CONTENT

Module	Chapter(s)	Topic	Complete by
1	1 and 2	Philosophy and Philosophical Arguments	7/18
2	5-8	The Nature and Possibility of Knowledge	7/25
3	9	Free Will	8/1
4	10 and 11	Mind and Personal Identity	8/8
5	12 and 13	Ethics and the Good Life	8/13

**Each student is solely responsible for completing all course requirements and for keeping track of the course schedule.**

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

<p><b>Reading Assignments</b> are included in each module. Although these are not graded directly, students will not be able to satisfactorily complete the graded assignments if they do not complete the reading assignments.</p>	--
<p><b>Activities</b> involve interactive exercises designed to elicit your philosophical intuitions on some topic. You'll complete these activities in each module and submit 100-250 words reporting on your results.</p>	<b>30 Points</b>

<b>Viewing assignments</b> clarifying and expanding on material from the reading assignments. These assignments include embedded quiz questions.	<b>50 points</b>
<b>End-of-Module Tests</b> (multiple-choice and short answer) will cover material from the reading and viewing assignments and will be taken at the conclusion of each learning module.	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Critical thinking online course</b>	<b>50 Points</b>
<b>Mid-term Exam</b> consisting of T/F, multiple-choice, and short answer questions on material from modules 1-3.	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Final Exam</b> consisting of T/F, multiple-choice, and short answer questions on material from modules 1-5.	<b>50 points</b>
Total points	<b>/ 355</b>

## GRADING SCALE

<b>4.0</b>	A	194-205
<b>3.7</b>	A-	188-194
<b>3.5</b>	A-/B+	182-188
<b>3.3</b>	B+	176-182
<b>3.0</b>	B	170-176
<b>2.7</b>	B-	164-170
<b>2.5</b>	B-/C+	157-164
<b>2.3</b>	C+	151-157
<b>2.0</b>	C	145-151
<b>1.7</b>	C-	141-145
<b>1.5</b>	C-/D+	137-141
<b>1.3</b>	D+	131-137
<b>1.0</b>	D	123-131
<b>0.0</b>	F	0-123

## POLICIES

**Communication:** All course related e-mail correspondence will go to the e-mail address you used when registering for this course. If you do not check this address regularly, you should begin doing so while enrolled in this class.

**Rescheduling:** Students who miss assignment deadlines will be permitted to submit late assignments at my discretion. I will deduct point from all late work.

**Extra-Credit Work:** I do not assign extra-credit work.

**Cheating:** Any student caught cheating in this course will automatically fail the course and will be reported to the academic authorities. If a student is unsure about what constitutes 'cheating,' s/he should consult with me.

**University Policy on Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty in all its forms, including cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and the facilitating of academic dishonesty by aiding and abetting any of the aforementioned, is not tolerated at Fitchburg State University. Violators will be subject to the university's Office of Academic Affairs established judicial process.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

To support access and inclusion, Fitchburg State offers reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities (e.g. psychical, learning, psychiatric, sensory, etc.). If you require accommodations for this class, please provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Agreement as soon as possible so that we can discuss your specific needs. Any information that you share with me will be held in the strictest confidence, unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you require academic accommodations but do not have an Accommodation Agreement, please contact Disability Services as soon as possible to establish your eligibility for services. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please call 978.665.4020 (voice/relay). Disability Services is located in the Academic Support Center on the third floor of the Hammond building.