

Introduction to Philosophy

PHL 200 B – Spring 2020

3 Credit Hours

UPDATED 2020-04-23

Contact Info

Instructor: Chris Holland

Email: chris.holland@asbury.edu

Office Hours by appointment

Course Description

From the Course Catalogue: Introduction to the nature, methods, and purposes of philosophical inquiry. Investigates major topics such as reality, knowledge, and ethics. Surveys and evaluates important worldviews in an attempt to formulate a Christian worldview.

From your Instructor: In this course you will be equipped with some of the basic tools for philosophical analysis and be introduced to many (but not all) of the major topics, issues, and questions discussed by classical and contemporary philosophers.

For example, in this class we will ask:

- What is philosophy?
- What is knowledge?
- Can we really know anything?
- What is the relationship between faith and reason?
- Can we prove that God exists?
- Do we have free will?
- What makes an action right or wrong?
- What does it mean to say that something is “good”?

As we move from subject to subject you will receive a brief overview of major figures who have addressed the topic and their opinions. We will also take an in-depth look at specific contributions.

Throughout the course you will be asked to relate the various topics, issues, and questions discussed to the Christian faith, in general, and to a Wesleyan perspective, in particular.

The study of philosophy can be both frustrating and exhilarating. It can challenge cherished beliefs and often addresses questions with no definitive answer. For this reason it is important to practice patience and humility in your studies. One of the cardinal rules in philosophy is to treat the work of others with charity, which means doing your best to understand their work and not misrepresent it.

By the end of this course you should have a deeper understanding of both your own beliefs and the beliefs of others. Most of all, it is hoped that you will develop a spirit of philosophical inquiry and wonder.

Course Objectives

In this class you will:

- become familiar with major philosophical fields, questions, figures, and theories
- learn to distinguish between philosophical and non-philosophical modes of inquiry
- develop critical reasoning skills that may be translated into any discipline
- read, reconstruct, and evaluate philosophical arguments
- relate philosophical topics and questions to Christian faith and practice
- relate philosophical topics and questions to a Wesleyan Christian faith and practice

Required Texts

Mele, Alfred R. *A Dialogue on Free Will and Science*. New York. Oxford University Press, 2014.
ISBN-13: 978-0199329298

Nagel, Thomas. *What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1987.
Hardback ISBN-13: 978-0195052923. Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0195174373.

Pojman, Louis and Lewis Vaughn. *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
10th ed. ISBN-13: 978-0190254773 OR 9th ed. ISBN-13: 978-0199981083.

Various class handouts and free online resources as assigned.

Optional Texts

Some students may want to supplement the required texts with one or more of the following.

Adler, Mortimer. *Aristotle for Everyone: Difficult Thought Made Easy*. New York. Touchstone, 1997.
ISBN-13: 978-0684838236.

Craig, William Lane and J. P. Moreland. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. 2nd ed.
Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-0830851874.

Kreeft, Peter. *Philosophy 101 by Socrates: An Introduction to Philosophy via Plato's Apology*. San Francisco:
Ignatius, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-0898709254 OR ISBN-13: 978-1587318306.

Pojman, Louis. *Philosophy: The Pursuit of Wisdom*. 5th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2006.
ISBN-13: 978-0495007128.

Walls, Jerry L. *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things That Matter Most*. Grand Rapids: Brazos
Press, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1587433566.

Additional Resources

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://www.iep.utm.edu>

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

Philosophy Crash Course: <https://thecrashcourse.com/courses/philosophy>

Closer to Truth: <https://www.closertotruth.com>

Reasonable Faith: <https://www.reasonablefaith.org>

Kinlaw Library Research Tools: <https://asbury.libguides.com/research>

Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

A Caution to Wikipedia Users

You will find much better material using *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* or *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* listed above, and both may be quoted and cited in your course work. Wikipedia, on the other hand, should not be quoted or cited in academic papers. You may, however, consult the reference list used by Wikipedia to find more research material. Just keep in mind that the quality of these references can and will vary greatly.

Course Grade

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following 5 elements and scale.

Graded Elements

Quizzes	10%
Argument Paper	30%
- Preliminary Paper	10%
- Peer Feedback	5%
- Final Paper	15%
Exam 1*	20%
Exam 2*	20%
Exam 3 (Final)*	20%

Grading Scale

A	94–100	C+	77–79
A-	90–93	C	73–76
B+	87–89	C-	70–72
B	83–86	D	60–69
B-	80–82	F	59 and below

*Unless you have an official university excuse, making up a missed exam or taking an exam late will be at my discretion and (if permitted) will likely involve a penalty. If you will be unable to make an exam, notify me by email in advance with the reason.

Requirements

Participation

Class participation is mandatory and failure to participate in class will result in a grade reduction. While in class, you are expected to come prepared, pay attention, contribute to discussions, and treat others with respect. This includes completing all assigned readings before class begins and, when applicable, having completed the online reading quiz for that class session.

Online Quizzes

Throughout the semester you will be required to take several online quizzes. Your average score on these quizzes will account for 10% of your final grade. Most, but not all, of the online quizzes will be about the class reading and due 30 minutes before the class period associated with the reading. Quizzes will be announced in class and posted to Discovery at least 2 days before they are due. These quizzes will be *open book* and include approximately 5 questions (question types include multiple choice, true-false, and multi-select). Reading quizzes will have a 30-minute time limit. I suggest reading over the material at least twice before beginning the quiz.

While taking the quiz, your own notes on the text are allowed. Print and online dictionaries are allowed (also remember to use your textbook's glossary). Other web searches, websites, summaries, etc. are NOT allowed. Discussing the questions with others (your roommate, a classmate, etc.) is not allowed. Finally, make sure to review your quizzes, they may include future test questions.

The lowest quiz score will be automatically dropped at the end of the semester. Keep in mind that these quizzes constitute homework and will be due whether you are able to attend that class period or not. If you have a university excused absence or other extenuating circumstance that spans the entire quiz availability, please notify me ahead of time. Make-up assignments will be given at my discretion.

Argument Paper

In this class we will look at a number of philosophical thought experiments. For this assignment, you will select one thought experiment and use it as the topic of a 1500-1800 word paper (not including your title page or bibliography). The thought experiment will come from a pre-approved list and the same experiment needs to be selected by at least 2 other students. The assignment will be graded in three stages:

1. A preliminary paper, due March 12, will account for 10% of your course grade.
2. Peer Feedback: You will need to review and provide feedback to at least one other student who is writing on the same topic. Groups will be assigned after paper topics are chosen. This will be due ~~April 7~~ **April 14** and accounts for 5% of your course grade.
3. The final paper, due ~~April 23~~ **April 28**, will account for 15% of your course grade.

Note carefully: this is NOT a research paper. Your main objective is to *analyze* a philosophical argument, not report on a topic. Your paper should:

- indicate what philosopher initially proposed the thought experiment and what she or he intended to show by it
- outline and explain its basic logic in your own words
- engage with the work of other philosophers who have pondered the thought experiment
- clearly explain why you do or do not believe that the thought experiment succeeds and what implications there are for its success or failure
- include at least 4 academic sources, including the original thought experiment
- be formatted for Chicago, MLA, or APA style (the entire paper, not just your Bibliography or Works Cited)

I suggest that you format the paper according to the style guide most used by your major. The Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is an incredible resource with sample papers for each style.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

Exams

You are required to take 3 exams in this course, including the final. Each exam accounts for 20% of your final grade and may include both objective (multiple choice, matching, true-false) and subjective (short answer/essay) questions. ~~These exams will be taken in class (not online) and you will need to bring a blue book for the final, which includes two essay questions.~~

The exam dates are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Exam 1: | February 20 |
| Exam 2: | March 26 April 2 |
| Final Exam: | May 6 @ 8 a.m. |

Extra Credit

You may complete *one* optional 800–1000 word book or documentary review to receive a maximum of 3 percentage points to your final grade. Your review must be on one of the following:

- Mortimer Adler's Book: *Aristotle for Everyone: Difficult Thought Made Easy*.
- C. S. Lewis: *The Problem of Pain*.
- Jerry Walls' Book: *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things That Matter Most*.
- Rodger Scruton's Documentary: *Why Beauty Matters*.

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/bHw4MMEnmpc> | Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/55784152>

Your review must be turned in by ~~April 28~~ **April 30** to receive credit.

Attendance Policy

Missing more than 14 class meetings will guarantee failure in the class. Each student is permitted 5 unexcused absences and each unexcused absence beyond these 5 will reduce your final grade by 1 percentage point. An unexcused absence is any absence that the registrar has not officially excused.

Please note: officially excused absences are granted by the register and do NOT include ordinary illness, doctor's appointments, or other family events (i.e. a sibling's wedding)—see the current Asbury Bulletin for the official policy. In other words, just because you have a good reason for an absence does not mean it is excused by the university.

Technology Policy

You may use a laptop computer or tablet during class, but during class time the computer should be used for note-taking purposes only. You should not so much as have other applications open during class time.

Cell phones should be set to Do Not Disturb and texting during class is not allowed. If you know you will need to receive a phone call or text message during a particular class period, please let me know at the beginning of class that you might need to respond to a text or step out to receive a call.

Course Evaluation

You are expected to complete the course evaluation which Asbury University will make available online near the end of the semester. If you complete the evaluation for this course, you will receive double credit for the best short essay on your final and your grade for the other essay will be dropped. For example, if you received 28 points on your first essay and 19 points on your second essay, you would receive a total of 56 points (instead of 47). The university opens the evaluation for a window of time at the end of the semester before closing it, and students are responsible for making themselves aware of and observing that window.

Center for Academic Excellence

You are encouraged to take advantage of the Asbury University Center for Academic Excellence which provides writing help, tutoring and other services. Their office is located in Kinlaw Library, Room 139.

You can learn more here: <https://www.asbury.edu/academics/resources/cae/>

Students With Learning Differences

If you wish to receive accommodations due to disability, please contact the Director of Academic Accessibility Resources at academicaccessibility@asbury.edu or (859) 858-3511 x2283.

Academic Accessibility Resources (AAR) provides reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). AAR offers academic accommodations on a case-by-case basis depending on student self-report, past history of need, and current need of academic accommodations. Even though the AAR reserves the right to request supporting documentation for requested services, we encourage students to meet with our AAR Director as soon as possible because accommodations are not retroactive. Students who receive academic accommodations complete the same course requirements as all students, and accommodations will not interfere with the fundamental requirements or objectives of the course. Academic accommodations are meant to provide equal access to students.

Students who would like more information about receiving academic accommodations can contact the AAR Director at academicaccessibility@asbury.edu or (859) 858-3511 X2283. Disability information will remain confidential unless permission is given by the student or where disclosure is required by law.

Documentation is housed in the Center for Academic Excellence and the Academic Accessibility Resources office. Documentation will be kept five years past graduation and three years past transfer or withdrawal.

For more information visit: <https://www.asbury.edu/academics/resources/academic-accessibility/>

Academic Integrity (From the Asbury Bulletin):

Academic integrity, the embodiment of the moral and spiritual principles to which we adhere, is the essential basis of the Asbury University academic community. Integrity, as partially defined by the Student or Program Handbook on Community Life Expectations, is “both knowing the right thing to do and doing it regardless of the circumstances.” This definition may be applied to all of the scholastic interactions of the academic community. Every member of the community shares responsibility for maintaining mutual trust, respect, and integrity. Violations of such trust and specific acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action.

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty can be defined as any type of cheating relative to a formal academic requirement. Academic dishonesty is typically thought of first as plagiarism. Plagiarism, whether intentionally or unintentionally, occurs when credit is taken for what someone else worked hard to discover and record if there is no clarification from where or from whom information is taken. Plagiarism is the use of another’s ideas, words, thoughts, or organization without appropriate credit and documentation when used for a project, paper, presentation, or exam.

More examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: unauthorized collaborations, fabrications of data, unauthorized access to sources on an exam, excessive revision by someone other than the student, re-use of previous work without permission, and other situations described by faculty for specific purposes.

Appeals Process

Students desiring to appeal a determination of academic dishonesty will follow the ‘Academic Appeals Procedure’ found in the Probation, Suspension, and Appeals section of the Asbury University Bulletin.

Determination of Academic Dishonesty and Consequences:

Faculty will address suspected occurrences of academic dishonesty as follows:

The faculty member will meet with the student individually to discuss the incident. At the faculty member’s discretion, the department chair will either be notified of the meeting or be asked to be present for it. The student will be informed of the department chair’s involvement.

At the faculty member’s discretion the student will receive a lowered grade, an ‘F’ or 0% on the assignment in question.

The faculty member will report the incident in writing to the Registrar who will maintain a record of academic integrity violations.

- a. If the incident is the student’s second offense of academic dishonesty as verified by the Registrar, the student will meet with the Dean of the college or school where the most recent incident occurred. At the Dean’s discretion, the student may be given an ‘F’ in the course.
- b. If the incident is the student’s third offense, the student will be suspended from Asbury University.

Preliminary Schedule*

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
1/14	What is Philosophy?	
1/16		<i>Apology</i> by Plato, available online: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1656 audio version: https://librivox.org/apology-by-plato/ Nagel Ch. 1
1/21	Logic	If you have the 10th or 11th ed. of Pojman and Vaughn read: I. The Good of Philosophy (stop right before the heading Fallacious Reasoning). If you have the 9th ed. read: Excursus: A Little Bit of Logic
1/23		If you have the 10th or 11th ed. of Pojman and Vaughn read: from “Fallacious Reasoning” to the end of the chapter. You can skip the exercises at the end. If you have the 9th ed. read: “Fallacious Reasoning.” You can skip the exercises.
1/28	Knowledge	Nagel Ch. 2 III.A. What Can We Know? Classical Theories of Knowledge
1/30		René Descartes: Cartesian Doubt and the Search for Foundational Knowledge John Locke: The Empiricist Theory of Knowledge
2/4		G. E. Moore: Proof of an External World III.B. Truth, Rationality, and Cognitive Relativism Bertrand Russell: The Correspondence Theory of Truth
2/6		William James: The Pragmatic Theory of Truth Richard Rorty: Dismantling Truth: Solidarity Versus Objectivity
2/11	Faith and Reason	II.C. Is Faith Compatible with Reason? Blaise Pascal: Yes, Faith Is a Logical Bet Antony Flew, R. M. Hare, and Basil Mitchell: A Debate on the Rationality of Religious Belief
2/13		W. K. Clifford: The Ethics of Belief William James: The Will to Believe
2/18		Alvin Plantinga: Religious Belief Without Evidence Richard Swinburne, <i>Faith and Reason</i> , 2nd ed. Ch. 4 and the epilogue (online).
2/20		EXAM 1
2/25	Mind-Body Problem	Nagel Chs. 3–4 IV. Introduction & IV.A. What Am I? A Mind or a Body? René Descartes: Substance Dualism
2/27		J. P. Moreland: A Contemporary Defense of Dualism David Chalmers: Property Dualism
3/3		Paul Churchland: On Functionalism and Materialism Thomas Nagel: What Is It Like to Be a Bat?
3/5	Free Will	Nagel Ch. 6

* Nothing here is set in stone. We will almost certainly depart from this schedule. We will rearrange, add, or remove readings. **Even exam dates may change.** Changes to the schedule will be announced in class and posted on Discovery.

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
3/10		Mele Chs. 1–3
3/12		Preliminary Paper Due Mele Chs. 4–7
Spring Break (3/16–3/28)		
Class Begins Meeting Online via Zoom (Tuesday and Tuesdays 8 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Eastern Time)		
3/31		Mele Chs. 8–10 V. Freedom of the Will and Determinism: Introduction
4/2		EXAM 2 (Posted as a quiz on Discovery)
4/7	The Existence of God	II. Introduction & II.A. Is Belief in God Rationally Justified? Thomas Aquinas: The Five Ways
4/9		William Paley: The Watch and the Watchmaker David Hume: A Critique of the Teleological Argument Optional reading from Robin Collins (online)
4/14		Peer Feedback Due Paul Edwards: A Critique of the Cosmological Argument William Lane Craig: The <i>Kalam</i> Cosmological Argument and the Anthropic Principle
4/16	Problem of Evil	II.B Why Is There Evil William Rowe: The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism
4/21		John Hick: There Is a Reason Why God Allows Evil
4/23	Ethics	Nagel Ch. 7 VI. Ethics: Introduction VI.A Are There Any Moral Absolutes or Is Morality Completely Relative? James Rachels: Morality Is Not Relative
4/28	God and Morality	ARGUMENT PAPER DUE James Rachels: The Divine Command Theory
4/30	Ethics	EXTRA CREDIT DUE VI.C. Which Is the Correct Ethical Theory? John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism Aristotle: The Ethics of Virtue
5/6		FINAL EXAM EXAM 2 (Posted as a quiz on Discovery) TBD