

Philosophy 120: Introduction to Philosophy  
 Professor Carol J. Moeller  
 Spring 2013

Class Meets: Tuesdays, Thursdays: 8:55 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.  
 Classroom: Comenius 114  
 Office: Comenius 110  
 Office Hours: T, TH: 7:45-8:45 a.m., 11:45 a.m. -12:45 p.m., and by appointment.  
 Phone: 610-625-7881  
 Email: moeller@moravian.edu  
 (Please allow at least 24 hours for responses to your emails.)

**Required Text:**

McLaughlin, Jeff, editor, *An Introduction to Philosophy in Black and White and Color*, 2011, Prentice-Hall.

Make sure you bring the text to every class!

**Course Description**

Tasks and subject matters of philosophy, including major theories of reality, knowledge, religion, morality, and social justice. Attention to several classic philosophical texts as primary source readings. (M3)

The following are some of Philosophy 120's learning outcomes:

1. Achieve a broad understanding of Western philosophy, focusing upon such themes as who we are (individually and collectively), how to make sense of the world, and how we should live.
2. Strengthen skills for fair and sympathetic treatment of philosophical views and for critical reflection upon them.
3. develop verbal, writing, and thinking abilities to understand philosophical work, examine it in depth, evaluate work critically, take positions, argue for them, and defend against competing views.

**Course requirements** (as percentage of final grade)

**I. Engagement**

A. One Presentation. (These may be done alone or in a pair.) In this presentation of 8-10 minutes (on assigned class days), you should provide an overview of the main points of the readings for that day explained in your own words (though you may point to sections of the text for clarification and support), offering your own analyses, questions, and responses to them.

B. Occasional quizzes, worksheets, collective work projects and/or other brief assignments, (some graded by letter or number, some simply for credit as satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

C. Overall engagement and attendance (both qualitative and quantitative).\* Note: in addition to the attendance grade here, unexcused absences beyond two will count against your final grade at a rate of 0.5% each. Please inform me before the date of an excused absence, giving relevant documentation in advance.

Average grade on the above (I.A-I.C):      →                                      5%\*\*

**II. Examinations:**

First Exam	20%
Second Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

<b>III. Essay:</b> One 5-6 Page Essay: including stages required	<u>25%</u>
	100%

## Course Requirements Further Explained

II. Exams: Three Exams (20%, 25%, and 25%, for total of 70%): These will be somewhat cumulative, building on material covered throughout the length of the course. Each of these three exams will involve a combination of paragraph and essay writing with shorter answer type questions (e.g., true/false, one-sentence answers, etc.)

III. Essay (25%): 5 - 6 double-spaced pages (with reasonably-sized font, margins, etc.) on topic selected from those I distribute, or your own proposed topic with my written approval. In the essay, you will demonstrate your grasp of the course materials and go beyond them to develop your own positions and arguments. These essays will not necessarily be research papers involving outside research and sources beyond the books for the course. Rather, they may simply involve working the texts for class and responding to them critically, showing how and why you agree or disagree with the author's central argument on a topic. These will be due in stages (details to follow).

**\*\*Note:** 5% may not see like much, say on a presentation one would rather not do or would do an unsatisfactory job on, but skipping it would give you a 0 as a portion of your final grade. It could bring an 80 down to a 78 for the course grade.

**Coursework:** Before each class, read and reflect upon everything that we are covering in class.

**Intellectual Environment:** Teaching and learning, on all of our parts, requires consistent effort. An atmosphere supporting high intellectual levels of discussion and written work is invaluable.

**Work Expectations:** These readings will range from moderately difficult to extremely difficult.

To be understood they must be read, reread, and questioned in great detail. One needs to be able to express the author's ideas in one's own words precisely. Expect to work hard to understand the readings, then still harder to respond to them.

**Seeing Me:** If you have any trouble with any of the material, please bring it up in class, email me, or come see me. Don't wait. Come to my office hours. If you cannot make these, let me know and we can set up another time to meet. You can be sure that others are having similar difficulties or questions. Try to identify what your specific difficulties are, e.g., motivation, interest, reading comprehension, note-taking, writing, quiz and test-taking skills, philosophical reasoning. I can best help you get on track by seeing where in particular you have gone wrong. If you need to get something to me, leave it at my office.

**Seeking help:** Please see me with any questions you may have. Come to office hours. If those do not work out for you, arrange an appointment outside of office hours. Email me with questions, to find a time to meet, etc. I am available to talk over essay topics and to look at essay drafts as well.

**Learning Services:** If you know or suspect you might be in need of Learning Services assistance, in anything from study skills or time management to disability issues, please contact Learning Services as soon as possible. This is particularly urgent if you know or suspect you might need accommodations to negotiate disability issues with the class. The office would

simply contact me about the accommodation requested; they respect privacy. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Writing Center: Please make use of the free services of The Writing Center by appointment.

However, it is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Class Protocol: Since we are all adults, I need not specify all of the various ways in which we ought to treat each other with respect, being silent (especially while another person is speaking), being on time, having cell phones and pagers turned off, not texting (even if you think no one can tell), etc. Treat one another with

respect. Be sure to make any criticisms as constructive as possible, challenging an idea without attacking a person. Anyone appearing to be disruptive or disrespectful will be asked to leave class. On a second occurrence the person would be dismissed from the course altogether.

Academic Integrity: Be sure to observe strictly Moravian College policies on academic integrity.

Do your own work. Give credit any time you quote, paraphrase, or use anyone else's words or ideas. Give credit wherever it is due. Failure to do so -- whether intentional or accidental -- is academic dishonesty and is taken seriously, resulting in at least a 0 on the relevant assignment. For further specific information and resources on academic honesty, see the Student Handbook, the professor, or the Academic Dean's Office.

Documentation: You must document your work correctly. Use a style manual (such as M.L.A. or Chicago) access one through the Internet, or use a library copy. Please see a librarian or me if you need help with documentation. Pay special attention to the documentation of any Internet sources. If you use an Internet source, you must include the web address plus a hard copy of the article used, attaching these as an appendix.

Disability Issues: Students with disabilities should inform me or Learning Services right away so that we can discuss how to negotiate any related issues through Learning Services.

Responsibilities of each class member:

- 1) Come to class prepared, having done the readings and any assignments before class, having carefully and reflected upon them, with notes jotted down for questions, comments, and clarifications.
- 2) Participate fully in class, giving full attention to whomever is speaking, refraining from side talking.
- 3) Contribute to an atmosphere of learning, being focused and respectful of the ideas at stake, of the course materials, and of each other.
- 4) Regular participation in presentations, discussions, group work, etc.
- 5) Honest self-assessment on these criteria. (I may periodically ask you assess yourselves on these criteria.)

Grading and Academic Integrity:

Grading and academic integrity policies for this course are in accordance with Moravian College standards, as expressed in the Catalog (p. 43). Please note the following about grading.

Grading scheme: 97-100=A+ 93-96.9=A 90-92.9=A- 87-89.9=B+ 83-86.9=B 80-82.9=B- 77-79.9=C+ 73-76.9=C 70-72.9=C- 67-69.9=D+ 63-66.9=D 60-62.9=D- 0-59.9=F

A (4.00 points) and A- (3.67): "These grades indicate achievement of the highest caliber. They involve expectations of independent work, original thinking, and the ability to acquire and effectively use knowledge."

B+ (3.33), B (3.00), and B- (2.67): "These grades indicate higher than average achievement. Evidence of independent work and original thinking is expected."

C+ (2.33), C (2.00), and C- (1.67): “These grades are given when the student has devoted a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention to the work of the course, and has satisfied the following criteria: familiarity with the content of the course, familiarity with the methods of study of the course, and active participation in the work of the class.”

D+ (1.33), D (1.00), and D- (0.67): “These grades indicate unsatisfactory work, below the standard

expected by the College. They indicate work which in one or more important aspects falls below the average expected of students for graduation. The work is, however, sufficient to be credited for graduation, if balanced by superior work in other courses.”

F (0.00): “This indicates failure.”

Moravian College standards on academic integrity and plagiarism are available in Academic Honesty at Moravian College, available from the Office of the Dean of the College (in Colonial Hall, first floor). Plagiarism is very serious, resulting in automatic failure on the relevant assignment, even if the action is unintentional, such as the failure to cite the source of paraphrased ideas. We will discuss these issues on particular assignments, such as essays.

For this course, the following pointers may be helpful. Follow instructions on graded assignments, doing your own work unless the assignment is explicitly given as a group project or as allowing for open-book work. In doing essays, be sure to give references and credit for any ideas which are not entirely your own. That is, when quoting or paraphrasing or even referring to the idea(s) of another, cite the source. If you are not sure whether a reference is required, give a reference anyway. If in doubt, err on the side of overly generous reference giving, and consult with the professor for guidance. In addition, borderline grades may swing up or down (say, from a C- to a C, if the numerical grade is just on the line between those), depending upon a student’s course contribution.

Missed presentations, exams, quizzes, and other assignments are only eligible for make-up in cases of emergency circumstances, at the professor’s discretion. Contact the professor immediately in such a case. In the interests of fairness, documentation may be required.

Final note on grading: Please be aware that there is a qualitative component to grading that is up to the professor’s judgment. If you do not understand the comments or grade on any assignment (or for the course), please ask me about it. If you wish to challenge a grade and are not satisfied with my response, you may appeal

to the department chair, Dr. Bernardo Cantens, Zinzendorf 203610-861-1589. Note: This syllabus may be revised with the notice of the professor.

The following is borrowed entirely from Dr. Khristina Haddad, Political Science, and used for this class.

### **What does an engagement grade represent?**

**A** Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.

**B** Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.

**C** Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.

**D** Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.

**F** Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature

### Philosophy 120 Course Schedule

Dates		Pages
Jan. 15	T	First Day
Jan. 17	Th	“How to Do Philosophy,” Hand-Out “What Value Does Philosophy Have?” pp. 1 - 4
Jan. 22	T	pp. 4 - 18
Jan. 24	Th	“Epistemology” pp. 19 - 34
Jan. 29	T	pp. 35 – 42, 68 - 79
Jan. 31	Th	Review
Feb. 5	T	<b>Exam 1</b>
Feb. 7	Th	“Metaphysics” pp. 84 – 94, 101 - 110
Feb. 12	T	pp. 126 - 138
Feb. 14	Th	pp. 156 - 165
Feb. 19	T	pp. “Religion” pp. 166 - 178
Feb. 21	Th	pp. 178 – 187
Feb. 26	T	pp. 209 - 229
Feb. 28	Th	pp. 229 - 239
March 5	T	No Class – Spring Break
March 7	Th	No Class – Spring Break
March 12	T	Review
March 14	Th	<b>Exam 2</b>
March 19	T	“Socio-Political Philosophy” 240-259
March 21	Th	pp. 240-259 (continued)
March 26	T	pp. 259 – 281
March 28	Th	pp. 291 - 306
April 2	T	pp. 306 - 332
April 4	Th	“Ethics” pp. 332 - 358
April 9	T	pp. 332 – 358 (continued)
April 11	Th	pp. 358 – 373 <b>5-6 Page Essay Due at the beginning of Class Thursday, April 11</b>
April 16	T	pp. 382 - 400
April 18	Th	pp. 400 – 424
April 23	T	Wrap-Up
April 25	Th	Review

**Final Exam:** TR2 classes – **Thursday, May 2, 1:30PM**