



**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY  
COURSE SYLLABUS**  
Moravian College  
Spring 2016

PHI 120PM: Introduction to Philosophy

M 6:30-9:30PM

Classroom: Main Street Campus, Priscilla Payne Hurd Academic Complex, Room 117

Instructor: Dr. Leon Niemoczynski ("Dr. Leon")

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Office Hours: M 1:30-5:30PM Zinzendorf 102

**Course Description**

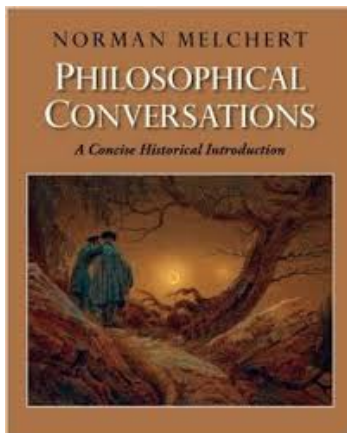
Tasks and subject matters of philosophy, including major theories of reality, knowledge, ethics, and social justice. Attention to several classic philosophical texts as primary source readings.

**Course Objectives**

The objectives of this course are the following: 1) to study the origin and nature of philosophy and philosophical reflection; 2) to analyze philosophical theories within the various branches of philosophy, such as aesthetics, epistemology, and metaphysics; 3) to examine the methods and nature of philosophical inquiry; 4) to study the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning; 5) to develop critical reading and writing skills; 6) to explore the central role of the discipline of philosophy in relation to the arts and sciences, and 7) to introduce students to some of the most prominent philosophers in history through primary texts.

**Course Objectives**

The following outcomes are expected of the students who complete this course: 1) to think and write intelligibly about ultimate questions; 2) to understand and explain of the relevance and importance of ultimate questions for the prosperity of individuals and society; 3) to critically evaluate and assess their own and others' answers to ultimate questions; 4) to write intelligibly about prominent themes in the history of philosophy; 5) to demonstrate through their writing a basic understanding of ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological concepts, doctrines, and theories; 6) to exhibit through the completion of writing assignments and exams a basic understanding of the nature of philosophical inquiry and how it relates to argumentation; 7) to write clearly about the thoughts of some of the most prominent philosophers in history.



**Required Text**

Norman Melchert, *Philosophical Conversations: A Concise Historical Introduction*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0195328462.

**Grading and Evaluation**

1. 20% - Weekly Quizzes
2. 20% - Three Take-Home Assignments (5% will go toward Test Reviews and Video Worksheets)

## 2. 60% - Three in-class Essay Exams

**1. Three Take-Home Assignments (20%):** For each unit there will be a Take-Home Assignment due the week before the Exam. Take-Home Assignments are questions based on the assigned readings from the book but also may include questions based upon other assigned sources (podcasts, videos, etc.). Responses to Take-Home Assignments **MUST** be typed (un-typed work will not be accepted) and must be turned in on the date due. Late work will be penalized 50% up to one day late and not accepted past the second day after the assignment was due. 5% of the 20% will go to credit for Test Reviews and Video Worksheets.

**2. Quiz Grade (20%):** Students are expected to study class notes and do assigned readings on daily basis. There are no make-up quizzes: missed quizzes count against you only if you have no documented excuse for the day that you missed (see attendance policy). You are only allowed to miss one quiz with a documented excuse on your first absence only. Please note: If you miss class and know that there will be a quiz when you return, you are responsible to get notes from a classmate and prepare yourself for the quiz before your return to class.

**3. Exams (60%):** Exams correspond roughly to each third of the course. Exams are hand-written essay exams. Students receive three possible test questions about one week before the exam. On the date of the exam, two of those three questions will be chosen at random. Students answer those two test questions, with the entire class period allowed for response. At a minimum, essay responses should be about 1.5 pages each (making for roughly 3 pages of hand-written response total for the exam). The more detailed the response the better.

### Grade Scale

96-99 = A / 95 = A / 90-94 = A-; 86-89 = B+ / 85 = B / 80-84 = B-; 76-79 = C+ / 75 = C / 70-74 = C-; 66-69 = D+ / 65 = D / 64-60 = D-; 60 and below = F

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data presented as one's own work. When a student submits for credit work that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. By placing his/her name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments. Please note that plagiarism covers unpublished as well as published sources. These statements apply to students who consult Wikipedia, or other online sources, and then recite information found there as if it were their own. Reciting work that is not your own without proper citation will result in a reduced grade (including "F" or zero) for the assignment. More information about the Academic Integrity Policy may be found on pages 32-38 of the Student Handbook.

### Attendance Policy

Because this class meets only once per week **two and only two** absences are permitted. Each absence after the second absence will result in one letter grade depreciation per absence unless valid documentation is provided for the reason of the absence. Arriving late does count as an absence, as does persistent use of smartphone (see below). Please arrive to class promptly in order to avoid being marked absent.

### Late Work

**1. Quizzes:** Due to the fact that this course only meets once per week, unfortunately there are no make up quizzes. Please note: If you miss class and know that there will be a quiz when you return, *you are responsible to get the notes from a classmate and prepare yourself for the quiz before your return to class.* You are only allowed to miss one quiz with a documented excuse on your first absence only. After your initial absence any further absences will result in 0's in the gradebook for missed quizzes.

**2. Missed Exams:** Students have one week to make up an exam. If a student misses an exam it is their responsibility to contact the Instructor in order to arrange a make-up exam. Please be prepared to adjust your schedule accordingly to take the make-up if you miss an exam.

**3. Take-Home Assignments:** Responses to Take-Home Assignments **MUST** be typed (un-typed work will not be accepted) and must be turned in on the date due. Late work will be penalized 50% up to one day late and not accepted past the second day after the assignment was due.

### **Classroom Procedure**

1. Text messaging or any form of cell phone use (including internetting on “smart phones”) is strictly forbidden. If the Instructor finds using smartphones during class to be a problem, the Instructor reserves the right to mark you absent for that class due to smartphone use. Please put all phones and technology away during class.
2. Because of persistent and wide-spread abuse of laptops in classrooms, student will NOT be allowed to use laptops in class. Laptop use for note-taking will require documentation as a special need at which point the screen must be visible to the Instructor at all times. (According to research even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. See the study, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard” by Mueller [Princeton University] and Oppenheimer [UCLA]: *Psychological Science*, Vol. 25 No. 6 (2014):1159-1168.)
3. Regarding class participation, you are expected to be prepared each class. All students are expected to fully contribute to, and participate in, their respective Group Presentations. .
4. Please refrain from private discussion or other disruptive behavior during lecture. Disruptive students are given an immediate verbal warning, if a chronic problem (“three strikes” rule) the student is asked to leave the class.
5. You are expected to have as much fun as possible. ☺

### **Students Requiring Special Services and Accommodations**

“Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.”

## Unit One: Metaphysics (Reality)

Week of 1/18: Introduction to the Class; Socrates and *The Apology*, Socrates' 5 Step Method

Week of 1/25: Socrates and *The Euthyphro*, Divine Command Theory

Week of 2/1: Plato

Week of 2/8: Plato continued, Review for Test Unit One + **First Assignment Due**

### Reading for Unit One Take-Home Assignment

Chapter 3 "Socrates and the Sophists"

Chapter 4 "The Trial and Death of Socrates"

Read Chapter 5 "Plato: Knowing the Good and the Real"

## Unit Two: Epistemology (Truth & Knowledge)

Week of 2/15: **Test Unit One**

Week of 2/22: Aristotle and Aquinas

Week of 2/29: Descartes

Week of 3/7: *No Class for Spring Break*

Week of 3/14: Descartes; Hume

Week of 3/21: Hume continued; Review for Test Unit Two + **Second Assignment Due**

### Reading for Unit Two Take-Home Assignment

Chapter 6 "Aristotle"

Chapter 8 "Anselm and Aquinas"

Chapter 9 "Descartes: Doubting Our Way to Certainty"

Chapter 11: "David Hume: Unmasking the Pretensions of Reason"

## Unit Three: Ethics and Morality (Right & Wrong)

Week of 3/28: **Test Unit Two**

Week of 4/4: Kant's Deontological Ethics

Week of 4/11: Bentham/Mill/Moore on Utilitarianism

Week of 4/18: Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality

Week of 4/25: Review for Test Unit Three + **Third Assignment Due**

### Reading for Unit Three Take-Home Assignment

Chapter 12 "Kant: Rehabilitating Reason"

Chapter 15 "The Utilitarians"

Chapter 14 "Kierkegaard and Nietzsche" (reading on Nietzsche only)

**5/2 Final Exam Week**