

PHIL 1301.401

Introduction to Philosophy

Course Syllabus

Fall 2025

Course Number: PHIL 1301

Course Title: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor's Information:

Instructor: Will Geisler, PhD (cand.) Politics, MA Politics, MA Liberal Arts, BA Philosophy

Online Office Hours: 8:00am-9:00pm Daily

Email: wgeisler@panola.edu. (I will return all emails within 48 hours)

Phone Number: 972.983.1816

Class Information:

Course Number: PHIL 1301 (FA/25 Online)

Meeting Dates: August 18, 2025 – December 10, 2025

Meeting Times: Online

Meeting Location: Online

Books Required:

No books are required. Primary source readings in Philosophy will be provided in the course.

Course Description: A study of major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications.

Course Credit Hours: 3 credit hours. (A)

Prerequisites: Meet TSI college-readiness standard for Reading and Writing; or equivalent.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

Grade Scale (based on 1000 total points possible)

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 0-599

Orientation/Start Here

Read the course syllabus

Do the Introductory Discussion Board (25 points).

Do the Plagiarism Tutorial

Do the Orientation Quiz (10 points)

Chapter Work

For each Unit, do the following in the order they appear in the Modules section:

1. Read the Chapter
2. Watch the Chapter PowerPoint
3. Watch the Chapter Video Lecture.
4. Do the Chapter Discussion board.
5. Study and then take the Chapter Quiz.
6. Post and comment about something relating to the author studied in the chapter or philosophy in general. Be sure to write 3-4 sentences explaining your thoughts on the article or video you posted.

7. Do the Unit Applied Philosophy Paper.
8. Review the Unit Test study questions.
9. Watch the Unit Test Review Video.
10. Study and then take the Unit Exam.

Chapter Quizzes (225 points)

There are 10 chapter quizzes.

Unit Tests (300 points)

There are three unit tests in this course (the Unit 3 Test is the Final Exam). The time limit for the unit exams is 120 minutes. You make take the Unit Exams only once. Unit Tests must be taken in the testing center at Panola College or with an authorized proctor. Contact me if you plan to use a location other than the testing center at least three days prior to the exam. Before taking the test, make sure you study.

Course Philosophy Paper (100 points)

There is a course philosophy paper in the course. See instructions for this paper on Canvas. Any plagiarism or academic dishonesty on this paper may result in an automatic F for the course.

Discussion Boards (235 points)

There are nine discussion boards. Each chapter discussion board is worth 25 points (10 points for the Concluding Discussion Board). To get the full 25 points, you must write a 250-300 word response to the given prompt (use your word processor to count the number of words and include that at the end of your post). Your response should carefully address all parts of the question in a coherent, organized, and professional manner. You must also respond to someone else's post with a 100-word response (use word court again).

Your responses should be your own words. Do not cut and paste - this is plagiarism. If you do quote the textbook or other sources, be sure to use parenthetical citation or footnotes for proper attribution. If you cut and paste and do not use your own words, you may be cited for plagiarism, reported the College, given a 0 on the assignment, and an F in the course. You may also face possible disciplinary action by the College.

You will primarily be graded on the completeness of your posts. Make sure you read the comments made on your posts.

Late Work Policy

Ample time has been allotted to complete all assignments. All assignments are expected on or before the deadline indicated in the syllabus. Any student that needs to submit a late assignment should contact me in advance of the deadline for approval (which may or may not be granted)

and to make alternative arrangements or the assignment may receive a reduced grade or a 0 at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading Time: Work done in this course will generally be graded with a week of being turned in by the student.

Assessment and Assignment Rules

1. *Instructor Academic Discretion:* The government department recognizes the necessity of academic freedom. As such, each instructor maintains the right to stipulate rules in addition to this syllabus concerning assignments, make-up work, grading rubrics, classroom recordings, excused absences, extra credit, and any other matters within the individual course offerings. All of the supplemental rules will be made available to the students at the start of the semester or in advance of the completion dates for individual assignments.
2. *Academic Freedom:* The government department recognizes the right of the instructor and the students to address controversial subjects. Academic freedom is in essence the freedom of speech in the classroom through which ideas may be challenged and truth may be pursued. Consequently, the department firmly upholds the right of instructors and students to express in writing, speech, or symbolism their understanding, opinions, and knowledge on controversial subjects. The US Supreme Court has consistently upheld that the freedom of speech “concerning public affairs is more than self-expression; it is the essence of self-government.” ([Garrison v. Louisiana](#)): that “speech on public issues occupies the highest rung of the hierarchy of First Amendment values and is entitled to special protection” ([Connick v. Myers](#)): and “that Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable” ([Texas v. Johnson](#)). Therefore, academic freedom in this public, government-funded course protects the instructor and students who express opinions on public issues which some may deem offensive.

Academic freedom does not protect the libel or slander of *private persons*. Libel and slander consist of written and verbal defamation of a person’s character through the *intentional* disbursement of *patently false* information. ([New York Times v. Sullivan](#) and [Gertz v. Robert Welch](#)). Furthermore, academic freedom does not protect obscenity as it is possible to freely discuss controversial issues without being obscene. Obscenity follows three basic guidelines: (a) whether “the average person, applying contemporary community standards” would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, (b) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law, and (c) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. ([Miller v. California](#)). In an appeal to the “community standards” of the classroom, students are required to wear modest clothing and maintain a standard of behavior consistent with the college code of conduct so as not to disrupt the learning environment. The instructor and the college reserve the right to remove students from the class, fail students and hold disciplinary actions in accord with college policy for issues of libel, slander, and obscenity.

Finally, academic freedom and free speech are not excusatory protections for the violation of the student code of conduct, for poor performance on graded materials, or for failure to submit graded materials.

3. *Academic Honesty*: The central theme of education is the enlightenment of the mind. This can only be achieved by hard, honest work. Consequently, cheating and plagiarism are strictly prohibited in the course. A student must not receive from or give any other student information, answers, or help during an exam. A student must not "steal" the answers from an unsuspecting student during an exam. A student must not use any sources for answers during an exam (including, but not limited to notes, books, or electronic devices) without prior authorization from the professor. A student must not obtain exam questions illegally, tamper with the exam questions, nor change the results of an exam after it has been graded.

Students are prohibited from plagiarizing any assignments. Plagiarism consists of the taking of another person's ideas, words, or information and claiming those properties as one's own. Properly quoting and citing borrowed information is NOT plagiarism. However, since academic integrity is based on the originality of a student's work, no student may submit an assignment that contains an excessive amount of properly cited material. The standards and violations of academic honesty shall be further defined by the individual instructor (in accord with college policy). Individual instructors reserve the right to employ any means of proving academic dishonesty. Students have the right to contest a plagiarism or cheating claim through the college appeals process.

4. AI is a helpful tool for research; therefore, it may be used by students for research purposes. However, the goal of this course is for students to gain a particular set of skills and knowledge, as stated in the instructional goals, learning outcomes, and course content of this syllabi. Students who use AI for an easy/quick grade (regardless of the assignment type) rather than the acquisition of skill and knowledge are hindering their academic growth. Consequently, the instructor, whose expertise is the basis for assessing student development, reserves the right to change a student's grade on any work, provably or suspiciously related to AI, which is inconsistent with these goals. In cases of disputed grades, an instructor may require students to repeat their performance on a course assignment in a controlled environment and without the use of AI to demonstrate their true acquisition of course skills and knowledge. The refusal or failure to repeat the performance shall be considered the acceptance of the originally assessed grade.
5. Course participation is tantamount to successful learning. Quiz and exam grades are not always indicative of a student's actual performance in a class. Consequently, the instructor reserves the right to adjust a student's grade for better or worse based on class performance. Consistent engagement, excellent conduct, and a clear thirst for knowledge may be rewarded with a higher grade. Conversely, poor conduct, such as inappropriate behavior or derogatory language may result in a lowered grade or complete dismissal from the class. The final decision falls on the instructor's discretion.

Census Date: The census date for this course is listed in the academic calendar on the College website. Students who have not completed an assignment by this date will be reported to the College and to financial aid as non-attending and may be dropped from the course.

Withdrawal Policy: The last day to withdraw from this course with a W is on the College website. It is the *student's responsibility* to drop the course; I cannot do it for you. Students who fail to drop the course and remain on the roll after the drop date will receive a grade based on the work they did for the class. That grade is usually an F.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Every member of the College community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The College may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment, credit or class work, research, the award of a degree, and/or submitting work that is not one's own. All work submitted for credit is expected to be the student's own work.

Scholastic dishonesty shall involve, but is not limited to, one or more of the following acts: plagiarism, cheating, collusion, use of annotated texts or teacher's editions, use of information about exams posted on the Internet or in any electronic medium, and/or falsifying academic records. Students are expected to record honestly and accurately the results of all their research. Falsification of research results includes misrepresentations, distortions, or omissions in data or reports on research. While specific examples are listed below, this is not an exhaustive list and scholastic dishonesty may encompass other conduct, including any conduct through electronic or computerized means:

Plagiarism is the use of an author's words or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation. In the preparation of all papers and other written work, students must distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from other sources. The term "sources" includes not only published primary and secondary materials, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from a source, the student must indicate the source.

Cheating is the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination or to complete an assignment; collaborating with another student during an examination without authority; using, buying, selling, soliciting, stealing, or otherwise obtaining course assignments and/or examination questions in advance; unauthorized copying of computer or Internet files; using someone else's work for assignments as if it were one's own. Student may submit or resubmit an assignment (in whole or in part) for more than one (1) class or institution without permission from the professor(s); or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course.

Collusion is intentionally or unintentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, failing to secure academic work; providing a

paper or project to another student; providing an inappropriate level of assistance or unauthorized collaboration; communicating answers to a classmate about an examination or any other course assignment; removing tests or answer sheets from a test site; and allowing a classmate to copy answers.

Students found responsible for scholastic dishonesty offenses may receive an authorized disciplinary penalty or penalties from the College. The student may also receive an academic penalty in the course where the scholastic dishonesty took place. The faculty member will determine the appropriate academic penalty. Any student who has been found to have been academically dishonest due to plagiarism, cheating, or collusion on an assignment may receive a grade of zero for the assignment and may be given an F for the course.

Course Schedule

All tasks for each chapter should be completed by the chapter deadline. All chapter deadlines are 11:59pm on the date indicated. All other tasks should be completed by the due date indicated.

Orientation

Read all items

Do Plagiarism Tutorial (due 8-19)

Introductory Discussion Forum (due 8-19)

Orientation Quiz (due 8-19)

Unit 1

Read Chapter 1 "Plato's Allegory of the Cave"

Watch Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video Lecture

Chapter 1 Discussion Forum (due 8-25)

Chapter 1 Quiz (due 9-3)

Read Chapter 2 "Plato's Euthyphro"

Watch Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video Lecture

Chapter 2 Discussion Forum (due 9-7)

Chapter 2 Quiz (due 9-14)

Read Chapter 3 "Plato's Apology"

Watch Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video Lecture

Chapter 3 Discussion Forum (due 9-20)

Chapter 3 Quiz (due 9-25)

Unit 1 Test (must use Respondus Lockdown Browser) (Due 9-27)

Unit 2

Read Chapter 4 "Epicurus"

Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 4 Discussion Forum (due 10-4)
Chapter 4 Quiz (due 10-8)

Read Chapter 5 "Thomas Aquinas"
Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 5 Discussion Forum (due 10-15)
Chapter 5 Quiz (due 10-19)

Read Chapter 6 "Thomas Hobbes"
Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 6 Discussion Forum (due 10-25)
Chapter 6 Quiz (due 10-30)

Unit 2 Test (Respondus Lockdown Browser required) due 11-1)

Unit 3
Read Chapter 7 "Nietzsche"
Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 7 Discussion Forum (due 11-10)
Chapter 7 Quiz (due 11-12)

Read Chapter 8 "Jose Ortega Y Gasset"
Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 8 Discussion Forum (11-25)
Chapter 8 Quiz (due 11-26)

Read Chapter 9 "Jean-Paul Sartre"
Watch Chapter PowerPoint
Watch Chapter Video Lecture
Chapter 9 Discussion Forum (due 11-28)
Chapter 9 Quiz (due 12-1)

Course Philosophy Paper (due 12-5)

Watch Unit Test Study Review
Final Exam (Unit 3 Test) (Require Lockdown Browser) (due 12-8)

Concluding Discussion Forum (due 12-9)

The professor reserves the right to change or amend this syllabus.