

# PHIL 201: Introduction to Philosophy

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**Course Dates:** 10/16/23 - 12/13/23

**Course Times:** This is an asynchronous course.

**Location:** Moodle (lms.peace.edu)



## Course Description

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You will embark on an introductory survey of many of the main philosophical issues in contemporary Western, and non-Western thinking. You will discuss current and historical philosophers as you examine the following topics: logic, religion, knowledge, the mind, the self, free will, and ethics.



## Student Learning Outcomes

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1. Build a solid background in philosophy and understand how to apply these areas of study to other areas of your life.
2. Become knowledgeable of current philosophical problems.
3. Gain an appreciation for what constitutes philosophy as a practical discipline and a medium for creating a more meaningful life.



## Required Course Materials

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All course materials will be made available on Moodle.



## Institutional / Course Policies

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All online courses in the School of Professional Studies are fully online and require the use of Moodle. Weekly readings, activities, and assignments will be listed in Moodle. You should expect to spend on average 10-15 hours per week on an individual 4-credit course. This includes all the readings, posts and assignments as well as being actively engaged in the discussions on the message boards. You should expect to log into the course daily, or at least 4-5 times per week.

## **Synchronous Meeting Time**

We will not have a synchronous meeting time for this class. This class will be completely asynchronous. This means you're free to complete the coursework on your own time just as long as you do it within the deadlines for each of your assignments. Your participation during class will be graded based on the assignments that you submit on a weekly basis during the semester.

Although there won't be synchronous meeting times, I will hold virtual Student Hours by appointment only, on Zoom:

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/6162431289?pwd=TzJWV0xGRVJOM1pyVDc1WGU0d201UT09>

Please note that some of the assigned readings can be challenging. As such, please make sure you are allowing for enough time to work through the materials. I recognize that you will have obligations outside of this class that may sometimes conflict with this class. I strive to introduce you to a variety of philosophical questions within this field of philosophy and help you develop important philosophical skills necessary for this course (and life), while also making sure you balance your obligations outside of this class.

I'm always here in case you need help with the material, so please make sure you keep in good communication with me and if you need to, we can always schedule an appointment over Zoom so I can better serve you.

## **Missed Work / Late Work Policy**

I believe in self-advocacy. If you are ill, have an emergency, or are otherwise unable to submit an assignment by its deadline, please let me know before that deadline. If something prevents you from talking to me beforehand, let me know as soon as you possibly can afterward, and we'll see how we can work something out.

## **Proctoring Policy**

All online courses at William Peace University require one (1) proctored exam or activity during the final week of the course. For proctoring options, please view the [Proctoring Options and Guidelines](#).

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

William Peace University seeks to develop both the intellect and character of its students. All members of the University are expected to promote a culture of academic integrity, and all students are expected to inform themselves of the University's policies and procedures related to Academic Integrity.

All forms of academic misconduct are violations of the University's Honor Code. These include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in academic work or in working with others on academic assignments, tests, or other requirements.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: Helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic misconduct.
- Falsification: Falsifying or inventing any information or citation in academic work.
- Lying: Misrepresenting information that is relevant to the classroom or academic performance
- Plagiarism: Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work, whether intentional or not.

If a faculty member suspects academic misconduct has taken place, the faculty member will forward the Academic Integrity Violation Report and all relevant evidence to the Academic Affairs designees and apply the agreed upon grade penalty if the student accepts responsibility. If the student does not accept responsibility, the University Academic Integrity Board is notified, and an Academic Integrity Board Hearing is scheduled to determine whether it is more or less likely that the student has violated the academic integrity policy and whether the recommended outcomes should be applied.

## **Tutorial Services**

Peer Tutoring is available for all WPU students free of charge. Support is offered in many subjects, including anthropology, biology, business, chemistry, criminal justice, history, math, political science, psychology, simulation and game design, and writing. Free workshops on study skills and documentation styles like MLA and APA are also offered each semester. Students can sign up for individual appointments using WPUConnect or in person at the Center for Student Success, located on the 2nd floor of Finch Library. For more information, contact Dr. Deanna Rogers, Director of Academic Support, at [drrogers@peace.edu](mailto:drrogers@peace.edu) or 919-508-2080.

## **Disability Support Services**

Disability Support Services are available to all WPU students who require reasonable accommodations due to any cognitive, physical, or psychological disability, in order to provide equal access to the educational environment. Students will need to be certified with Disability Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to receive an Academic Accommodation Plan. For more information or to become certified, please contact the Disability Support Services Coordinator by sending an email to [disability@peace.edu](mailto:disability@peace.edu).

## **Attendance Policy**

William Peace University students are expected to attend all classes and laboratories for which they are registered, believing that regular class attendance and participation are an essential part of a student's educational program. However, the University's policy is that students may not miss more one (1) class in a 7-week session or two (2) classes in a 15-week session or the student is subject to course failure. It is the responsibility of the student to meet the attendance policy.

All members should arrive on time for classes and activities and leave when dismissed. Students who must arrive or depart a class early should notify the instructor prior to class and do so with minimal disruption to the class.

## **Class Participation**

Your participation during class will be graded based on the assignments that you submit on a weekly basis during the semester. This class is designed to foster discussion and interaction. Students are expected to participate on a weekly basis prepared to apply readings in online discussion and activities. It is your responsibility to actively participate in class.

## **Technology Help**

William Peace University offers 24/7 technology access for all students. For technical issues with computer access, WPU-supported software, Moodle, and University google mail accounts, please contact IT Helpdesk by email [helpdesk@peace.edu](mailto:helpdesk@peace.edu) or 919-508-2417 or through PacerNet/Campus Links/IT helpdesk.



## **Assignments & Grading**

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### **Assignments and Grading**

#### **1. Readings:**

Short readings will be given throughout the semester. You are responsible for completing the required reading. This will prepare you to actively engage in the reading responses and discussion forums. You will have at least one article per week (maximum of two readings certain weeks).

#### **2. Reading Responses:**

Throughout the course, you will write three brief critical reading responses. More specifically, the response paper you write should be for the readings we're looking at that week (e.g., a reading response done in Week 6 should be based on the readings for Week 6, not a previous week's readings). This constraint aside, you are free to choose which reading you write about in case you have two readings due one specific week.

These essays should be approximately 500-600 words long (Times New Roman, pt. 12, double spaced). In your response paper, you should focus on just one of that week's assigned readings. Having picked a reading, you should then do two things. First, you should summarize one argument from the reading you selected (not the entire paper) by putting it into standard form. That is, explicitly lay out your understanding of the argument's premises and conclusions. Second, you should raise an objection to the argument you've presented. As a rough guide, presenting the standard form version of the argument should be about 30-40% of your discussion with the balance left for your objection.

The reading responses are to be submitted on Moodle on Fridays by 11:59 P.M. These are worth 10 points each.

### **3. Discussion Forum Posts:**

Every week, you'll need to submit your participation on the discussion forums on Moodle. Forums are sites where the entire group meets for conversations on topics related to our readings. Read the instructions and prompts for each forum discussion before posting your reflection.

This original posting must indicate (through informal referral of the article you read for the week) the sources of the information that supports your perspective. After posting a reflection in at least 300 words, students will reply to two peer's text (preferably they will not answer to previous replies so we can distribute the conversation) in at least 200 words. Students must submit their original text before reading their peers' assignments. Opening the forum before posting your first entry will result in the cancellation of your grade. Do not duplicate texts you submitted to fulfill your reading response requirement. "Good point" or "I agree" type answers will not earn points.

All answers must integrate the knowledge acquired through our readings. Make sure you follow our discussions protocols: they are basically a request to respect all opinions, use academic language, and keep in mind that ours is a scholarly forum, distant from Facebook, Twitter and other media in scope and purpose. The deadline for you to submit your post is on Wednesdays at 11:59 P.M. Your deadline to submit your response to your peers is on Sundays at 11:59 PM. This component of your grade is worth 20 points.

### **4. Midterm Essay:**

You will need to submit a midterm essay half-way through the course (instructions will be made visible to you during the week of July 10th-15th). You will find it on Moodle under the General Course Materials module. In your midterm, you will be asked to choose from 3 prompts to write an argumentative essay (2,000 words long) fully developing a point of view. Each of these three prompts will be related to your readings and you will be graded not based on the point of view you explain, but on your ability to provide good reasons for thinking the way you think. Your deadline to submit this midterm essay is Nov. 3rd by midnight. This essay will be worth 25 points.

### **5. Proctored Exam:**

You will need to complete your requirement of a proctored exam by the end of the semester. We will have a proctored exam as our final exam for the class. You will need to choose the option that best suits you and schedule your proctored exam by yourself. Please see our class's homepage on Moodle for further instructions.

### **6. Quizzes/Extra Credit:**

There will be 3-question surprise quizzes for students to get up to three free points from time to time throughout the semester. These points can count toward your midterm grade, reading responses, or any other assignment that the student wishes to use their points on. This way, points, for example, can be used in lieu of assignments or midterm essay (reading responses or discussion forum posts) only if you accumulate enough points before the deadline of said assignment. The only assignment where points

cannot be used for is your proctored exam by the end of the semester. Also, if a student fails a quiz, it won't count against them (the quizzes are meant to only benefit students).

#### Grade scale for all graded materials:

A: 100-90  
B: 89-80  
C: 79-70  
D: 69-60  
F: 59-0

#### Course Assignments

Participation	Percentage
Discussion Forum Posts	20
Assignments	Percentage
Reading Response 1	10
Reading Response 2	10
Reading Response 3	10
Exams	Percentage
Midterm	25
Final	25



#### Course Schedule

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**Disclaimer:** I reserve the right to make any changes to the course (content, deadlines, etc.). Further, I reserve the right to establish fair procedures for grading for students in exceptional cases. All and any modifications to this syllabus will be in accordance with WPU policies and will be posted and distributed in a timely manner.

#### Week 1 (Oct 16-22): Intro to Philosophy

- **READ:** Syllabus and The Pink Guide to Philosophy  
<https://sites.google.com/a/wellesley.edu/pinkguidetophilosophy/>
- **WATCH:** Crash Course Philosophy videos on What is Philosophy  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A\\_CAkYt3GY&list=PLUHoo4L8qXthO958RfdrAL8XAHvk5xuu9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY&list=PLUHoo4L8qXthO958RfdrAL8XAHvk5xuu9) and Philosophical Reasoning:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKEhdsnKKHs&list=PLUHoo4L8qXthO958RfdrAL8XAHvk5xuu9&index=2>
- **DUE:** Introduction Post and Discussion Forum Post #1

#### Week 2 (Oct 23-29): Practical Ethics

- **READ:** 2022 Ethics Bowl cases (posted on Moodle) and Britannica's Blog on Applied Ethics:  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethics-philosophy/Bioethics>

- **WATCH:** Crash Course videos on Kantianism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8blys6JoEDw> Utilitarianism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI> and Aristotle's Virtue Theory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvtOWEXDIQ>
- **DUE:** Reading Response 1

### **Week 3 (Oct 30-Nov 5): Social Epistemology and Truth**

- **READ:** SEP's entrance for Social Epistemology: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-social/>
- **WATCH:** CrashCourse video on Epistemology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXhj3hHK9hQ> and Rationalism and Empiricism Debate: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30IQK0bmdDQ>
- **DUE:** Midterm essay is due on Nov 3rd by midnight.

### **MIDTERM WEEK (Nov 6-12): Philosophy for/with Children**

- **READ:** "Philosophical Sensitivity" by Jana Mohr Lone and Chapter 1 & 2 in "Philosophy in the Classroom" by Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and Frederick S. Oscanyan
- **WATCH:** Philosophy in the Borderlands program (El Paso TX and Ciudad Juárez MX): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnt-XFg90Jk>
- **DUE:** Discussion Forum Post #2

### **Week 5 (Nov 13-19): Social Justice (Philosophy, Law System, and Activism)**

- **READ:** Chapter 1 & 12 in "Women, Race, and Class" by Angela Davis and "Speciesism and moral status" by Peter Singer
- **WATCH:** Crash Course video on Justice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOCTHVCKm90>
- **DUE:** Reading Response 2

### **Week 6 (Nov 20-26): Thanksgiving Break (no readings or assignments due this week. Focus on resting!)**

### **Week 7 (Nov 27-Dec 3): Latinx Philosophy and Identity Issues**

- **READ:** "Queer Latinidad" by Maria Juana Rodríguez and Chapter 7 in Gloria Anzaldúa's "The Borderlands: La Frontera, The New Mestiza"
- **WATCH:** Denis Ricardo's YouTube video explanation on Gloria Anzaldúa and mestiza consciousness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWSLZaYzNZI>
- **DUE:** Discussion Forum #3 and Reading Response 3

### **FINAL WEEK (Dec 4-10): The Meaning of Life (Existential and Continental Philosophy)**

- **READ:** No readings this week (focus on studying for your proctored exam!)
- **WATCH:** Crash Course video on What is a Good Life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra1Dmz-5HjU>
- Existentialism (and intro to other meaning theories): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaDvRdLMkHs>
- Finding Something to Live and Die For | The Philosophy of Viktor Frankl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX-8-IYhQKk>
- Nihilism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lejrVRiK9w>
- **DUE:** Proctored Exam