



BETHANY
LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Fall 2018

PHILOSOPHY 202: Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Dr. Ryan MacPherson
Honsey Hall 308
www.ryanmacpherson.com

Schedule:

Section A:
Tue/Thu, 1:30–2:45 p.m.
Honsey Hall 310

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
Proverbs 1:7 (NKJV)

Catalog Description:

This course introduces the basic methods of philosophy by studying the traditional problems of philosophy. Emphasis is placed on developing skills of reading and analyzing philosophical writing, and executing analytic critiques of basic philosophy texts. *Credits: 3. Pre-requisites: none.*

Relation to Students' Curricular Needs:

- *satisfies* the General Education Core Requirement for History
- *elective* for the B.A. in Liberal Arts
- *elective* for the B.A. in Legal Studies and Legal Studies Minor
- *required* for the Minor in Philosophy

Required Texts:

- Abel, Donald C. *Fifty Readings in Philosophy*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011. ISBN: 978-0073535807.
- Abel, Donald C. “Glossary of Philosophical Terms.” 2012. (Class handout.)
- Excerpts from the Book of Job. *The Holy Bible: New King James Version*. (Class handout.)

Objectives of the College (OCs) Pertinent to This Course:

1. Recognize that the historic Christian faith professes that God the Holy Trinity is the source of all knowledge and truth, and that His wisdom is most clearly revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
especially: ... D. Reflect on how your course of study is shaping you for a life of Christian vocation in the family, church, and society.
2. Demonstrate intellectual, creative, and problem-solving skills.
 - A. Identify and correctly frame problems using appropriate content, theories, and methods.
 - B. Work both collaboratively and independently to produce innovative applications of knowledge, creative expressions, or new insights connected to bodies of knowledge from various fields.
 - C. Gather relevant information on an issue to formulate a defensible conclusion, new idea, or connections among ideas.
 - D. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using logical reasoning skills.
 - E. Articulate a message effectively in oral and written forms.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of personal and public responsibility.
especially: ... B. Reflect upon your involvement as an engaged citizen in different communities and cultures.
4. Develop habits of thinking that apply to a fulfilling life of learning.
especially: A. Apply content knowledge and skills flexibly to new situations, including professional and vocational contexts.

Understanding Your Vocation (OC 1D)

Your “vocation” is *how your station in life serves as a channel of God’s blessings to the people around you*. Each person has multiple, overlapping stations in life (child, sibling, spouse, parent, student,

neighbor, employee, registered voter, etc.). As indicated in OC 1D, Bethany Lutheran College seeks to expand your vocational opportunities so that you might better serve others to the glory of God.

General Education Learning Outcome (GELO)

“To identify and explain the perennial concerns fundamental to human nature and experience as these are observed and expressed in history, literature, philosophy, and languages.”

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):

1. To identify and distinguish major contributors to western philosophy, such as Plato, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, and Mill.
2. To explain why the perennial “problems” in philosophy are problematic—such as the existence of God, the problem of evil, the mind/body problem, and the freewill/determinism debate.
3. To evaluate philosophical arguments on the basis of “critical thinking” criteria.
4. To improve one’s ability to express philosophical arguments, both orally and in writing.
5. To recognize points of agreement and points of disagreement between various philosophies and a biblical worldview.

Assessment Overview:

Class Participation	10	
Quizzes	<u>6</u>	
	16	16
Essay I	5	
Essay II	5	
Essay III	5	
Essay IV	5	
Essay V	5	
Essay VI	<u>5</u>	
	30	30
Exam I	18	
Exam II	18	
Exam III	<u>18</u>	
	54	54
Total		100

93.34 - 100.00	A
90.00 - 93.33	A-
86.67 - 89.99	B+
83.34 - 86.66	B
80.00 - 83.33	B-
76.68 - 79.99	C+
73.34 - 76.66	C
70.00 - 73.33	C-
66.67 - 69.99	D+
63.34 - 66.66	D
60.00 - 63.33	D-
00.00 - 59.99	F

Class Participation (CLOs 1-5):

Students are required to *earn* a “class participation grade” by maintaining punctual attendance with assigned texts at hand, completing assigned study questions and worksheets prior to class, actively participating in class discussions, and being absent no more than twice during the semester. Absences may be excused if a valid reason is supplied (such as a sports event for student athletes, or a prolonged illness). **However, student athletes, speech team members, or others who miss a substantial number of classes should realize that their grade likely will suffer as a consequence of not being present to learn alongside their classmates. Thus, even “excused” absences can result indirectly in lower grades.** The professor reserves the right to drop students from the class for excessive absences or habitually tardy attendance.

Essays (CLOs 1–5)

Each student will write and orally present to the class six essays, one concerning each of the six chief philosophical “problems” to be explored in this course. The instructor and classmates will both provide immediate feedback to foster optimal student learning. The professor also will assess each essay for a grade and will be available to meet individually with students both during the writing process and after the student has submitted the essay for a grade. Specific instructions and assessment criteria will be distributed in class in advance of each assignment.

Exams (CLOs 1–5):

Students will take three exams, each focused on two of the philosophical “problems” to be explored in this course. Question formats will include multiple choice, matching, or true/false for basic names and concepts plus short essays (a brief paragraph) and long essays (one to two pages) for addressing key philosophical problems. To prepare students for the exam, quizzes will be given during class discussion periods throughout the semester.

Timely Submission Policy:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated below. *If a student anticipates difficulty completing an assignment on time, he or she should request a deadline extension well in advance of the due date.* This policy is intended to encourage planning and communication skills that will be helpful later in life. Generally, the less often and the longer in advance that a student requests a deadline extension, the more willing the professor will be to grant the request.

Unless a student has received a deadline extension, then the following late penalties will apply:

- a 5% grade deduction for submitting an assignment after the start of class, but prior to 4:30 p.m. on the due date; and,
- an additional 10% grade deduction for *each* additional school day that the assignment is late. (“School day” means Monday through Friday, excluding school holidays.)

Written assignments must be submitted in hard copy, not electronic format. An unstapled multi-page assignment will not be accepted; the standard late penalty will apply once the paper is stapled.

Because the essays assigned for this class shape class discussions so profoundly on their due dates, a student who knows in advance that he or she will be absent on such a date should supply the instructor with a copy of his or her paper prior to that class period so that this paper can still be included in that day’s discussion.

Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism may be defined briefly as the presentation of another’s original work as if it is one’s own, whether by copying exact wording, using similar phrasing, or pursuing a similar course of argument. Avoiding plagiarism in essays generally requires nothing more than giving credit where credit is due, by referring the reader to the original source and placing quotation marks around any copied language. (See *The St. Martin’s Style Guide*, sec. 34 for Chicago-style citation formats. Copies are available in the History Resource Room—see below.) Students who commit an act of plagiarism risk a failing grade for the assignment or exam and for the entire course, and even expulsion from the college. The instructor will follow whatever due process policies are established by the college, both for the sake of the student and for the integrity of the college as an academic institution that respects the intellectual property rights of others.

This policy is not an idle statement. The professor has previously enforced it, with the result of one student failing an entire course and other students receiving zero credit for major writing assignments, which resulted in their final course grades dropping from the B and C range into the D range.

History Resource Room:

Several professional periodicals and encyclopedias that serve the philosophical discipline are available for student browsing in the History Resource Room (HH 300). Students majoring or minoring in history are encouraged to use this room for private study and quiet conversation.

Syllabus Revisions:

The instructor may modify this syllabus during the semester should unusual circumstances arise. Generally, however, students can be confident that the policies and schedule will be followed closely.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

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| 1. | Discussion I:
Discussion II:
Handout: | What Is Philosophy?
Syllabus
Syllabus | Tue. 28 Aug. |
| 2. | A Sample of Philosophy from the Ancient Near East (Job)
Readings: | Book of Job (selections) | Thu. 29 Aug. |
| 3. | Samples of Philosophy from Classical Greece (Plato) and the Modern West (Russel)
Readings: | Abel, 1–30 | Tue. 4 Sept. |
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PART I: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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| 4. | The Problem of Evil (Augustine, Mackie, Hick)
Readings: | Abel, 31–33, 74–96 (optional: 97–107) | Thu. 6 Sept. |
| 5. | Faith and Reason (Plato, Pascal)
Tue. 11 Sept.
Readings: | Abel, 108–29 | |
| 6. | The Existence of God (Anselm, Aquinas, Hume)
Readings: | Abel, 34–54 | Thu. 13 Sept. |
| 7. | The Existence of God, continued (Paley, Dawkins)
Readings: | Abel, 55–73 | Tue. 18 Sept. |

PART II: THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

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| 8. | Rationalism (Plato, Descartes)
Readings:
Due: | Abel, 130–54
Essay I | Thu. 20 Sept. |
| 9. | Empiricism (Locke, Hume)
Readings: | Abel, 155–74 | Tue. 25 Sept. |
| 10. | Kantianism (Kant); Feminism (Jaggar)
Readings: | Abel, 175–198 | Thu. 27 Sept. |
| 11. | Review of Parts I and II
Readings:
Due:
Discussion: | Abel, 31–33, 130–32; review other pages as needed
Essay II
Roundtable of Essays I and II; Review for Exam | Tue. 2 Oct. |
| 12. | Exam on Parts I and II | | Thu. 4 Oct. |

PART III: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

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| 13. | The Mind-Body Problem (Descartes, Caruthers, Nagel)
Readings: | Abel, 199–228 | Tue. 9 Oct. |
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Fall Break	No Class	Thu. 11 Oct.
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14. **Personal Identity (Locke, Schechtman)**
Tue. 16 Oct.
Readings: Abel, 229–43
15. **Personal Identity, continued (Giles, Dennett)** Thu. 18 Oct.
Readings: Abel, 244–65

PART IV: FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

16. **Hard Determinism (d'Holbach) vs. Libertarianism/Indeterminism (James)** Tue. 23 Oct.
Readings: Abel, 266–85
Handout: Free Will and Determinism
Due: Essay III
17. **Soft Determinism (Stace) and Self-Determinism (Taylor)** Thu. 25 Oct.
Readings: Abel, 286–303
18. **Biological Determinism and Moral Responsibility (Holstrom, Strawson)** Tue. 30 Oct.
Readings: Abel, 304–27
19. **Review of Parts III and IV** Thu. 1 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 199–200, 266–68; review other pages as needed
Due: Essay IV
Discussion: Roundtable of Essays III and IV; Review for Exam
20. **Exam on Parts III and IV** Tue. 6 Nov.

PART V: ETHICS

21. **Classical Moral Philosophies (Aristotle, Aquinas)** Thu. 8 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 328–46
22. **Categorical Imperative (Kant); Utilitarianism (Mill)** Tue. 13 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 347–66
23. **Leap of Faith (Kierkegaard); Will to Power (Nietzsche)** Thu. 15 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 367–85
24. **Existentialism (Satre); Critiquing Relativism (Rachels)** Tue. 20 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 386–409 (optional: 410–21)

Thanksgiving	No Class	Thu. 22 Nov.
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PART VI: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

25. **Classical Political Theories (Plato, Hobbes)** Tue. 27 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 422–44
Due: Essay V
26. **Enlightenment Political Thought (Locke, Wollstonecraft)** Thu. 29 Nov.
Readings: Abel, 445–65
27. **Modern Political Thought (Marx/Engels, Mill)** Tue. 4 Dec.
Readings: Abel, 466–83

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| 28. | Natural Rights (King) and Human Rights (Rawls)
Readings: Abel, 484–501 | Thu. 6 Dec. |
| 29. | Multiculturalism (Raz, Philips)
Readings: Abel, 502–23 | Tue. 11 Dec. |
| 30. | Review of Parts V and VI and Comprehensive Review
Readings: Abel, 1–4, 31–33, 130–32, 199–200,
266–68, 328–30, 422–24; review other pages as needed
Due: Essay VI
Discussion: Roundtable of Essays V and VI; Review for Exam | Thu. 13 Dec. |
| 31. | Final Exam (Parts V and VI, plus Comprehensive) | Tue. 18 Dec., 1–3 p.m.
Please verify at www.blc.edu/exams . |