



BETHANY
LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Spring 2015

PHILOSOPHY 202: Introduction to Philosophy

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

Schedule:

Section A:
Tue/Thu, 3:00–4:15 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 History and the History Minor
- *elective* for the B.A. in Broad Field Social Studies
- *elective* for the B.A. in Liberal Arts (History Concentration)
- *recommended* for Legal Studies students

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.)

Recommended Text:

- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ISBN 0-226-81638-8. \$18.00.

Objectives of the College (OCs) Pertinent to This Course (*Catalog*, Aug. 2014, p. 6):

1. To grow in the grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by means of the Gospel.
2. To demonstrate independent critical thinking so that they are not shaken from the eternal foundations on which their moral and spiritual growth is based.
3. To demonstrate responsible citizenship and awareness of social realities through the study of American and world cultural heritage as well as contemporary social, economic, and political issues (includes exposure to other cultures and ethnicities).
6. To increase their ability to use written and oral English effectively.
9. To demonstrate competency in a major field of study to serve productively as a member of a family, workplace, church, and community.

Understanding Your Vocation (OC 9)

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 9, 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. (cf. OC3; GELO)
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. (cf. OC2; GELO)
3. To evaluate philosophical arguments on the basis of “critical thinking” criteria. (cf. OC2; GELO)
4. To improve one’s ability to express philosophical arguments, both orally and in writing. (cf. OC6; GELO)
5. To recognize points of agreement and points of disagreement between various philosophies and a biblical worldview (cf. OC1; GELO)

Assessment Overview:

Class Participation	<u>10</u>	
	10	10
Essay I	5	
Essay II	5	
Essay III	5	
Essay IV	5	
Essay V	5	
Essay VI	<u>5</u>	
	30	30
Exam I	20	
Exam II	20	
Exam III	<u>20</u>	
	60	60
<hr/>		
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 Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, sec. 4.2.3 for additional advice). 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 general textbooks that serve the history discipline are available for student browsing in the History Resource Room (Honsey Hall 113).

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

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|--------------|
| 1. | Discussion I:
Discussion II:
Handout: | What Is Philosophy?
Syllabus
Syllabus | Tue. 13 Jan. |
| 2. | A Sample of Philosophy from the Ancient Near East
Readings: | Book of Job (selections) | Thu. 15 Jan. |
| 3. | Samples of Philosophy from Classical Greece and the Modern West
Readings: | Abel, 1–30 | Tue. 20 Jan. |
-

PART I: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

- | | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | The Problem of Evil
Readings: | Abel, 31–33, 74–96 (optional: 97–107) | Thu. 22 Jan. |
| 5. | Faith and Reason
Readings: | Abel, 108–29 | Tue. 27 Jan. |
| 6. | The Existence of God
Readings: | Abel, 34–54 | Thu. 29 Jan. |
| 7. | The Existence of God, continued
Readings:
Due: | Abel, 55–73
Essay I | Tue. 3 Feb. |

PART II: THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--------------|
| 8. | Rationalism
Readings: | Abel, 130–54 | Thu. 5 Feb. |
| 9. | Empiricism
Readings: | Abel, 155–74 | Tue. 10 Feb. |
| 10. | Kantianism; Feminism
Readings: | Abel, 175–198 | Thu. 12 Feb. |
| 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. 17 Feb. |
| 12. | Exam on Parts I and II | | Thu. 19 Feb. |

PART III: PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|--------------|
| 13. | The Mind-Body Problem
Readings: | Abel, 199–228 | Tue. 24 Feb. |
| 14. | Personal Identity
Readings: | Abel, 229–43 | Thu. 26 Feb. |
-

15. **Personal Identity, continued** Tue. 3 Mar.
 Readings: Abel, 244–65
Due: **Essay III**

16. **Free Will and Determinism** Thu. 5 Mar.
Readings: Abel, 266–85

17. **Free Will and Determinism, continued** Tue. 17 Mar.
Readings: Abel, 286–303

20. **Exam on Parts III and IV** Thu. 26 Mar.

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|
| 21. | Classical Moral Philosophies
Readings: Abel, 328–46 | Tue. 31 Mar. |
|-----|---|--------------|

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 22. | Kant's Categorical Imperative; Mill's Utilitarianism
Readings: Abel, 347-66 | Thu. 9 Apr. |
|-----|---|-------------|

PART VI: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

25. **Classical Political Theories** Tue. 21 Apr.
Readings: Abel, 422–44

-
- | | | | |
|-----|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 29. | Multiculturalism | | Tue. 5 May |
| | Readings: | Abel, 502–23 | |
| 30. | Review of Parts V and VI and Comprehensive Review | | Thu. 7 May |
| | Readings: | Abel, 1–33, 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 | |
| 31. | Final Exam (Parts V and VI, plus Comprehensive) | | Wed. 13 May, 3:30–5:30 p.m. |
-