

# **PHIL101 Introduction to Philosophy\***

Winthrop University

Fall, 2012 (3 credit hours)

Section 001 (CRN13540)

Meeting: MW, 11am-12:15pm, KINA312;

Final Exam: 8 a.m. Mon., Dec. 10

Prof. M. Gregory Oakes, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: M-R, 10-11am, *and by appointment (just ask)*

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## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to philosophy. Philosophy is basic to human thought and life, and this course will show the student some of the important respects in which this is so. The student will learn and employ philosophical principles to gain insight into the nature of the human self, our knowledge of truth and reality, moral judgment, and human action. The successful student will learn the benefit of applying philosophical principles to his or her life.

This course will make significant demands of your capacity for abstract thought and argumentation. Mastery of this course will enable you to write, talk, and think more critically and to live a more engaged, aware life.

## **Course Goals**

Department Program Goal: To prepare students for a fulfilling life by equipping them with the impetus, skills, and knowledge to ask the most fundamental questions of human existence.<sup>†</sup>

- As such, the Department embodies the University's commitment to the liberal arts tradition. The Department embraces this tradition by inducing its students and faculty to examine the values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits that define the nature and quality of life. In order to engage this tradition of inquiry, the Department seeks to develop students' abilities in reasoning, analysis, criticism, argumentation, self-reflection, and self-expression. The Department also expects its students to attain a working knowledge of the fundamental issues in philosophical and religious thought.
- Moreover, through asking such fundamental questions, the Department intends to nurture collective and individual growth of the University's community of learners through enlightenment and transformation. The Department thereby seeks to inculcate the values of justice, integrity, responsibility, respect, civility, tolerance, openness, and self-criticism that constitute the best of ethical systems. Thus, the Department intends to enable its

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\* All statements in this syllabus are subject to change. In the event of minor changes to the syllabus – e.g., to a reading requirement – the student will be so-informed by announcement in class. In the event of a more substantive change, the student will be so-informed in writing as well as by announcement in class.

<sup>†</sup> See <http://www2.winthrop.edu/philrelg/goals.htm> for the complete Department Mission Statement.

students to participate and contribute knowledgeably and effectively as citizens to our democratic society and to lead rewarding, productive, and enriched lives.

In addition, this course is intended to satisfy the following Touchstone education goals.

- Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.
- Competency 2: Winthrop graduates are personally and socially responsible.
- Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.
- Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

This course also helps to satisfy your *Humanities and Arts* general education requirement. Your Humanities and Arts courses involve applying critical skills to the humanities and arts in order to understand and appreciate our diverse intellectual, institutional, and moral nature. That is precisely what we shall do in this course, by critical examination of basic philosophical theories of reality, morality, action, and human nature generally. In addition, this course helps to satisfy the general education goals of effective English language communication and critical thinking by requiring you to construct both oral and written critical evaluations of important philosophical theories.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

To be more specific, the student successful in this course will demonstrate the following:

1. An understanding of what is philosophy, including
  - a. Its dual status as both theory and practice;
  - b. Some of its primary concepts and issues, including those pertaining to metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, and action;
2. Knowledge of the structure and means of human understanding,<sup>\*</sup> including
  - a. An appreciation of the means by which concepts unify thought; and
  - b. A grasp of the intension and extension of concepts, and the relationship between these;
  - c. The capacity to analyze and synthesize concepts;
3. A clear grasp of the means of communicating concepts (ideas) to others,<sup>†</sup> especially
  - a. In writing, and
  - b. Where the concepts in question are abstract and/or philosophically basic.

These learning outcomes are the primary points in terms of which the student's work in this course will be evaluated.

### **Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course. As a philosophy class, however, it will make significant demands on the student's intellectual and especially verbal skills, even as it seeks to develop them.<sup>‡</sup>

### **Course Requirements**

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<sup>\*</sup> These Learning Outcomes help to satisfy the Department's *Critical Thinking Initiative*.

<sup>†</sup> These Learning Outcomes help to satisfy the Department's *Effective Communication Initiative*.

<sup>‡</sup> For some indication of these demands, see the writing rubric specification in the Touchstone Program, <http://www2.winthrop.edu/english/rubric.htm>

- Preparation for, attendance to, and participation in class
- A definition of philosophy
- Two essays
- A final exam (comprehensive)

**Text**

*The text for this course will be supplied to the student via the course web-site. Students will be responsible for printing text materials downloaded from the course web-site.*

**Turnitin.com**

- We will use the Turnitin website, so please register with the site if you have not previously done so. The URL is <http://www.turnitin.com>. If you need instructions on how to do this, see here: [http://www.turnitin.com/en\\_us/support/help-center/general-articles](http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/support/help-center/general-articles).
  - o Section 001 (MW):
    - ID#: 5275878
    - Password: Plato
  - o Section 002 (TR):
    - ID#: 5275880
    - Password: Aristotle

**Grading**

- The elements of the course will be weighted as follows:
 

o Preparation and participation	200 points
o Definition of Philosophy	50
o Essay One	200
o Essay Two	250
o Final Exam	<u>300</u>
o Total possible points:	1000
- Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:
 

A	940-1000
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	600-629
F	0-599

- Extra credit may be awarded for minor additional projects as they arise in class.
- Grading Information: For further information on grading, grading marks, see my stylesheet: [http://faculty.winthrop.edu/oakesm/Style\\_Sheet.pdf](http://faculty.winthrop.edu/oakesm/Style_Sheet.pdf).

### **Classroom Conduct and Policies**

- The following policies are attempts to define a reasonable standard of conduct in class. I reserve the right to alter or interpret them as conditions require.
- Students wishing to be excepted from any of these policies may consult with me; without my express indication, however, these policies apply to all students at all times without exception. The student's continued presence in this course signals his/her full understanding and acceptance of these policies.
- Personal Conduct Statement: Regardless of your sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political persuasion, age, or ability, you will be treated and respected in this class as a human being. Your continued presence in this course signals your commitment to act likewise.
- For information regarding Winthrop University policy on student academic conduct, please see "Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy" in the online *Student Handbook*.\*

### **Attendance, Preparation, Participation**

- Attendance is required, as are preparation for and participation in class discussion.
- Participation in class includes paying attention and contributing to discussion. Failure to participate may result in the student's being counted absent (unexcused) and/or being asked to leave the classroom.
- Preparation for class entails having completed all assigned readings and other exercises, so as to be able to discuss them intelligently. Failure to prepare adequately for class may result in the student's being marked absent (unexcused) and/or being asked to leave the classroom.
- Attendance:
  - o I will take roll each day. Each unexcused absence after your first two will result in a 50 point reduction of your overall grade.
  - o Three tardies = 1 unexcused absence.
  - o Leaving the classroom during class or before I have concluded it will count as an unexcused absence. If you must leave the room, you must request permission from me.
  - o I am happy to excuse an absence for reasonable, legitimate reasons. If you wish to be excused from class, you should contact me *before* the class in question. After the fact, in order to excuse an absence, I will require documentation of the legitimacy of your absence.
  - o Athletics and other University sponsored activities: I am happy to support your school-sponsored event. If you must miss class for such activities, you must provide appropriate documentation prior to each instance. It will be your responsibility, in consultation with me, to ensure that you meet course requirements affected by your absence/s.

### **Cell-Phones**

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\* See [www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf](http://www2.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/StudentHandbook.pdf).

- The use of cell-phones in class is prohibited.
- Please keep cell-phones silenced and put away while in class. (See exception, below.)
- Students using cell-phones in class will be asked to leave the classroom. In this event, an (unexcused) absence will be recorded.
- Further disruption of the class by cell-phone use may result in the student's failing the course.
- Exception: Students facing emergency medical or family situations requiring cell-phone contact during class may consult with the instructor, prior to class, in order to be excepted from the above policy.

#### Other Policies and Information

- No food in the classroom. (University policy.)
- No lap-top computers or tablets, except for presentations and other expressly authorized classroom activity.
- Plagiarism: It is your responsibility to understand the University's policy on plagiarism. See [www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm](http://www.winthrop.edu/english/plagiarism.htm). If you are found guilty of plagiarism in this course, you will receive an F for the course and I will report you to the Dean of Students for academic misconduct. You will not be permitted to return to class. If you are unsure of whether your use of borrowed information counts as plagiarism, consult with me, your English instructor, or the staff in the writing center.
- Disabilities: Students with medical or other recognized disability must contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me immediately (and prior to the first test or assignment) so that I am aware of your accommodation requirements. If your accommodations affect every test/assignment, please remind me prior to each one.
- Winthrop University's Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA) identifies and assists highly motivated and talented students to apply for nationally and internationally competitive awards, scholarships, fellowships, and unique opportunities both at home and abroad. ONCA gathers and disseminates award information and deadlines across the campus community, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff throughout the nationally competitive award nomination and application process. ONCA is located in Dinkins 222B. Please fill out an online information form at the bottom of the ONCA webpage <http://www.winthrop.edu/onca> or email [onca@winthrop.edu](mailto:onca@winthrop.edu) for more information.

#### Schedule

(Subject to change; students are responsible for changes announced in class)

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|---|------------------|
| - Fall Break:                                       | Oct. 12-15 (F-M) |
| - Last day to withdraw from a Fall semester course: | Oct. 19 (F)      |
| - Election Day:                                     | Nov. 6 (T)       |
| - Thanksgiving Break:                               | Nov. 21-25       |

Week of	Monday	Wednesday
	<b>I. Course Introduction: What is Philosophy?</b>	
Aug. 20		Course Introduction: What is Philosophy?
Aug. 27	Defining Philosophy Lessons I.1 and I.2 <i>Bring to class: your definition of philosophy</i>	Concepts Lesson I.3
Sept. 3	Understanding Understanding	
	<b>II. What is it? The Human Self</b>	
		Plato <i>Due to Turnitin.com: definition of philosophy</i>
Sept. 10	Descartes	Descartes/Hume
Sept. 17	Hume/Kant	Kant
	<b>III. How do I know? The Rationality of Religious Belief</b>	
Sept. 24	Anselm <i>Expository Essay Due: What is philosophy?</i>	Aquinas
Oct. 1	The Problem of Evil	Hick (Evil, cont.)
Oct. 8	Kierkegaard	Feuerbach
Oct. 15	FALL BREAK	wrap-up/catch-up
Oct. 22	Aristotle	<i>Argumentative Essay Due: What is it rational to believe?</i>
	<b>IV. What is it worth? Value Theory</b>	
Oct. 29	Aristotle/Kant	Kant
Nov. 5	Kant/Bentham	Bentham
Nov. 12	wrap-up/catch-up	Kierkegaard
Nov. 19	Nietzsche	THANKSGIVING
Nov. 26	Sartre	wrap-up/catch-up
Dec. 3	Review for Final Exam	x
<b>Final Exam: 8 a.m. Mon., Dec. 10</b>		