

# Introduction to philosophy

## (Phil 101)(online)

Note: if you are reading this on a smartphone, it might be difficult to scroll through everything. If you must use a phone, I suggest using [this link](#) instead.

### Who, where, and when?

# 74291      Location: online      Instructor: Dr. Ted Preston

Day/time: "all the time" from 8-21-23–12-7-23

email: [tpreston@riohondo.edu](mailto:tpreston@riohondo.edu)

### Student hours

Student hours (often called "office hours") are specific, regular periods of time when I am available to meet with students. I welcome you to contact or visit me during my hours to discuss your experience with the class, address your concerns, or seek assistance. I will be hosting student hours in my office during the Fall 2023 term on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 6:30-8 AM. If you would like to meet with me, but would prefer to do so by Zoom, please contact me ahead of time and I will be happy to send you a Zoom link so we can meet virtually instead. *If you would like to meet with me, but your schedule does not permit you to meet during my designated times, please contact me. We will either address your interests through messaging, or set up an alternate conference, if needed.*

### Welcome!

Welcome to the course. I'm Dr. Ted Preston. I've been studying philosophy in a formal manner since 1994 (and now I feel old. . . ), and teaching it professionally since 2001. I received my Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Psychology from Claremont McKenna College, my Master's in Philosophy from CSU Long Beach, and my Ph.D. in Philosophy from UC Riverside. I have taught at CSULB, Cal Poly Pomona, and UCR, but was hired as a full-time instructor at Rio Hondo College in 2005, where I have taught ever since. My areas of specialization are Ancient Philosophy (especially stoicism), Philosophy of Religion, and Political Philosophy. I subscribe to the ancient model of philosophy, according to which philosophy is a "way of life," aimed at self-transformation. I attempt to convey the practical, therapeutic value of philosophy in all my courses, as much as possible. I love philosophy, and I love teaching.

I'm confident that if you are reading this syllabus, you are already not only capable of doing philosophy, but that you have actually already done some philosophizing, whether you realize it or not. That does not mean, of course, that you philosophize at the same skill level as a "professional," or that your skill can't be improved. I'm here to help you improve. To that end, we will be considering the efforts of a number of philosophers throughout history and across the globe who were so good at it that I would consider them "professional." Along the way, we will practice some specific skills essential to philosophy, such as careful reading, summarizing, and the crafting of logical arguments to support our own positions that we take on philosophical issues, as well as our interpretations and agreement/disagreement with the arguments offered by other people. By the end of this course (assuming you "show up" and try), you will be better at doing philosophy. Although I make no assumptions that any of you intend to go "pro," I'm extraordinarily confident that you will benefit from your "training," no matter what your interests happen to be, or what your professional ambitions are. Practicing philosophy will make you a better thinker, a better reader, a better writer, and a better and more persuasive advocate for the things that matter to you.

## What is a syllabus?

*This* is a syllabus. A syllabus contains important information about a course, including information on schedules, assignments, grading, and course policies, at minimum. Some syllabi (including this one) also contain additional information or resources. A syllabus lets you know what to expect from a course, and also what will be expected from you, as a student. It is a very important document. Make sure you read the whole thing, and keep it someplace safe. If you happen to lose your copy of the syllabus, you can find an electronic copy on our Canvas website at any time during this term.

## Course Description & Objectives

This course examines several key "philosophical" issues including free will, the existence of God, and our moral obligations. Students of this course will develop and enhance critical thinking skills, and reading and interpretive skills. By engaging the ideas of famous philosophers on important philosophical issues, students will develop their own answers to some classic philosophical questions, as well as to questions of their own.

## Desired Exiting Skills

1. Identify & explain the standard divisions of philosophy.

2. Compare & contrast different, historically significant philosophical theories or attempts to answer standard philosophical questions.
3. Examine the most important questions of human experience which have been raised by every civilization, and be able to explain the practical significance of both the questions, and possible answers.
4. Recognize the historical impact of the important ideas of philosophers which influenced history and society, and which created the temporal context in which we live.
5. Evaluate ideas, philosophers, teachings, doctrines, which impact on all facets of human life.
6. Employ philosophy oneself, and explain how the philosophical method can have daily practical significance.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Throughout this term, your performance on student learning outcomes will be evaluated. Outcomes to be assessed may include the following:

- Given previous instruction in a philosophical theory the student will correctly identify and explain the basic elements of that theory.
- Provided with a real world scenario, students will correctly apply a philosophical theory to it.
- Given a philosophical work, students will demonstrate an understanding through a competent paraphrase of it.
- Provided with a philosophical argument, students will defend a point of view.

## Textbook

- "Introduction to Philosophy: Ways of Life from Around the World," 8th edition, by Ted Preston. (ISBN: ) 979-8404673234

## Online Course Expectations

Because this is either a hybrid or fully online course, it requires online participation. You should expect to make frequent visits to our class website to review the lecture notes and to take all of your quizzes and exams. If you are unwilling, or unable, to satisfy these demands, you should reconsider taking this course. All of our quizzes and exams must be taken online. If you are unfamiliar with the internet, or how to access and use our course website, you should seek assistance immediately. For fully online courses, we will have no scheduled in-person meetings, and it is therefore assumed that you are dedicating, on your own, the time at home, and online, to reading, reviewing, and studying. Failure to do so will make this class very difficult.

To access this course's website: <http://riohondo.instructure.com/>

- 1) Follow instructions for username and password
- 2) Your Canvas Username uses this format (see sample below):
  - a) First Name dot Last Name Last 4 digits of student ID: John.smith1234
  - b) Your *initial* Canvas Password uses your \*AccessRio password which is your 6 digit birthday unless you have changed your password (see sample Below): 071785 if born on July 17, 1985
- 3) Edit your “account” and “settings” to supply a working email address

## Grading Philosophy

I understand that you are probably concerned with (or at least interested in) your grade for this course, and how it will be determined. I know that I was definitely concerned about grades when I was a student—and also *overly* concerned at times! The fact of the matter is that, whatever we might think about grades, I am required to enter a grade for you at the end of our course, and, like it or not, your grade in this course (and your overall grades as they appear on your transcript) could “matter” to you in certain practical ways, such as eligibility for financial aid or participation in sports, acceptance to transfer Colleges or Universities, etc. So, given that grades are necessary and potentially important to you, allow me to explain how grading will work in this course.

First of all, I would like us to recognize what grades are, and what they are *not*. Ideally, grades are reports of your progress with a particular body of material or set of skills, as demonstrated by your performance on particular assignments, as determined by an expert in that field of knowledge. That’s just a fancy way of saying that grades are supposed to be a reflection of your skill level. What grades do *not* indicate is your value as a person, your general intelligence, or even how much effort you put into a course. A student who earns an “A” is no “better” than a student who earns any other grade. A student who earns a grade other than an “A” can still be (and often is!) very smart.

Finally, while effort often correlates with grades, it's not a guarantee. For various reasons, some students might already be very skilled and won't have to work very hard to show competency, and other students might work very hard but still find themselves challenged by the course.

In summary, while I know this is easy for me to say, and much more difficult for some of you to internalize, grading isn't (or shouldn't be) "personal."

I hope that those words were helpful. We will now get into some details.

One of my jobs as your professor is to try to guide and motivate you to become more skilled as a student of philosophy. It might be helpful to think of me as a "coach," or a "personal trainer." Like a personal trainer, my job is to use my own skills to help you develop yours. That means not only sharing my expertise (acquired through decades of practice) with you, but also providing you access to resources that can help you. You will find links to a great many resources, both on and off campus, in our "tips and resources" module on Canvas. These include not just things like tutoring opportunities and financial aid, but also resources to address housing insecurity, mental health concerns, accommodations for learning disabilities, support systems for undocumented students, and many other things.

I understand that, while you are a student, you are many *other* things as well—and that "life happens." Sometimes, other issues or responsibilities will make it challenging for you to participate in this course and complete assignments. I understand that even the most responsible and conscientious students can face circumstances that interfere with success in school. These circumstances might be financial, family related, work-related, health-related, legal issues, etc. If you find yourself struggling with any of these (or other) issues, our campus provides many resources that might be helpful. I have provided a list of resources on Canvas. In addition, please feel free to contact me if you feel comfortable doing so and I will try to direct you to appropriate resources or offices. Please understand that while I am available to provide what assistance I can, it is neither my role nor my desire to "judge" you. For that reason, I have implemented a variety of policies designed to provide a cushion for when "life happens," "no questions asked."

- I provide many opportunities to earn points throughout the semester, with a variety of assignment types, and with no individual assignment counting for more than 10 points (in a 110 point class). These assignments are designed to promote your course success in a variety of ways.
  - Weekly Canvas reading quizzes are designed to provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding of what you have read. These are short quizzes assessing basic (and important) ideas from the chapters. Study guides for these quizzes are provided at the beginning of every chapter. You will have the opportunity to take each quiz a total of 2 times, if desired, with your final score being the *average* (if applicable) of

your 2 attempts. In addition, your lowest quiz score of the course will be dropped.

- Weekly discussions are designed to encourage participation. These exercises are intended to be thought-provoking and even fun, providing opportunities for you to develop and share your thoughts, and to interact with other students in our class. If you are a “good sport” by participating in the exercises, follow the instructions, and meet the stated requirements, you can be confident to earn full credit. In addition, your lowest discussion score of the course will be dropped.
- There are 2 scheduled online exams: a “mid-term” and a “final.” These exams are short answers/essay in format. These exams are intended to assess your competence in explaining and applying philosophy. Assignments may be submitted after their due date with a 10% deduction in your maximum score for each twenty-four hour period from when the assignment was due, with a maximum late penalty of 30%. Anyone who scores less than a “C” on the midterm (i.e., a score of less than 7 out of 10) will be allowed to resubmit their exam for a maximum score of 7. Please note that this resubmission opportunity does **not** apply to midterm exam scores that are less than a “C” due to late penalties. **I will drop your lowest exam score at the end of the term.** If you do not submit an exam (including the final exam), that exam will be the one that is dropped.
- The “Build a Better Argument” (BABA) assignment series is designed to give you an opportunity to develop your skills at articulating and defending your point of view. This series consists of several very simple assignments, each of which builds upon the one that came before it. Because this assignment series requires that each part be completed, I do *not* drop your lowest score out of this assignment category—but each assignment is only worth 1 or 2 points.
- It is my intention that no one gets lost or “left behind.” For that reason, I want to hear from you at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the course. At the beginning of the course, you will be asked to complete a brief survey so that I can learn about your preparation and any concerns you might have. In the middle of the course, you will be asked to “check-in” with me on canvas to discuss your course progress and any concerns or questions you might have. At the end of the course, you’ll be asked to provide your anonymous feedback on the course so that I (and future students) can benefit from your suggestions.
- “Extra credit:” There are no “extra credit” *assignments* for this class. Instead, the *equivalent* of extra credit has already been built into the class by virtue of the fact that the course is graded on a 100 point scale, even though more than 100 points are possible. There is nothing “extra” that you need to do to earn these additional points. Simply complete all of the required assignments, on time, and you will have had your opportunity to earn the extra points. This, combined with the fact that I drop your lowest quiz, exam, and discussion scores, amounts to a very *generous* grading system.

- Assignment due dates serve the important function of keeping students on track, and spreading out the workload over the whole term—not to mention the fact that I am required to submit a course grade at the end of our term. That being said, “life happens,” and you might not always have the ability to complete an assignment by the due date. Assignments may always be submitted after their due date with a 10% deduction in your maximum score for each twenty-four hour period from when the assignment was due, stopping when the deduction reaches 30%. Assignments from any week of our course may be submitted at any time all the way until the second-to-the-last week of our course.
- Feedback will be provided on a rolling basis as students submit their work, but typically within 1-2 days of submission. You may check your scores and feedback in the “my grades” portion of this site. When you click on “my grades,” you will see all of your assignments with the grades listed on the right-hand side. The ones that have been completed and scored appear in blue font (indicating a hyperlink). Click on the score of the assignment you’re interested in. On the right-hand side of the screen, you will see a score under “calculated grade.” It will also appear in blue. Click on that score. You will then be able to see any feedback to your answers, as well as the correct answers (once they have been released).
- As you progress through this course, I encourage you to think of yourself as “leveling up.” All of you begin the game equally, as beginners, with zero points. Every week, you will have opportunities to earn points. As you earn points (or gain “experience points”) you will eventually “level up” and earn a new achievement (metaphorically speaking). While it’s inspiring to think that every student wants to complete every assignment and earn the maximum number of points of which they are capable, realistically, not everyone has the same goal. Because you start with 0 points in our course, and earn points for every assignment along the way, your score can never go “down” from its current total, but can only go “up” until no more assignments are available. Once you have reached at least the minimum number of points for the grade you seek to earn, you can technically be “finished” and stop “playing the game.” **Please don’t interpret this as me encouraging anyone to stop participating, or to “aim low.”** Far from it—I would like it if everyone aimed for an A, and hit the mark, and as a default recommendation I suggest everyone have that as their “plan A” (so to speak). However, due to any number of factors, you might have demands and even priorities other than this class. If your goal is a B, and you confirm that you already have earned enough points for a B, you have the luxury of being “done” with our class, and focusing on your other responsibilities. For the “completionists” out there, by all means keep running up your score until the timer runs out!

# Grades

Assignment	Number	Points	Total
Course policies quiz	1	5	5
Quizzes	8	5	35*
Discussions	8	5	35**
Start of term survey	1	4	4
Success plan	1	1	1
Midterm check-in	1	5	5
Build a Better Argument	7	1 or 2 each	10
Midterm exam	1	10	10
Final exam	1	"0"****	0
End of term survey	1	5	5
Total			110



Points	Grades
94.50-110	A
82.50-94.49	B
69.5—82.49	C
59.5—69.49	D
0-59.49	F

Note: 110 points are possible, but you are graded on a 100 point scale

(\* ) I drop your lowest quiz score

(\*\* ) I drop your lowest discussion score

(\*\*\* ) I drop your lowest exam score

### Critical Dates for this Course

Term:	Fall 2023
Last day to add class:	04-SEP-2023
Last day to drop with a refund:	04-SEP-2023
Last day to drop without a "W":	15-SEP-2023
Last day to drop with a "W":	09-NOV-2023
Pass/No Pass Petition Deadline Date:	08-DEC-2023

## Study Guides

To promote your understanding and your reading/use of the text, I have provided a set of comprehension questions at the beginning of each chapter in the textbook. Use them as study guides for quizzes/exams. They will focus on key ideas from the readings and lecture notes. If you are able to answer all the questions (correctly) and explain the ideas (correctly) in an intelligent way, you will be well-prepared for the quizzes/exams. These are not assignments.

They will not be collected, and they are not worth any points. They are meant solely as a tool to help you study and to promote your success.

## Quizzes

- There are a total of 8 online quizzes located on our course website. These are brief quizzes, meant to take no more than a few minutes for each question—though if you are well-prepared, I suspect some of you will finish in much less time than that. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz.
- There will be no make-up quizzes under any circumstances. It is your responsibility to remain aware of due dates. All quizzes will expire at 11:59 PM on the date indicated (Sunday evening). They must be submitted before that time in order to be scored. If you have not submitted your quiz by 11:59 PM, it will be submitted for you at 11:59 PM, possibly resulting in the loss of any unsaved answers. Please note that this is **not** a "go at your own pace" course, and deadlines will come and go whether you have completed the assignment, or not. Sometimes, multiple quizzes will be due at the same time, so pay attention to our reading schedule.
- I recommend that you **DO NOT attempt to take quizzes using your smartphone**. Although Canvas offers apps for both apple and android phones, many students find it difficult to complete assignments on their phone. While you will probably be able to look at basic text (e.g., lecture notes or announcements) using your phone, it is possible that you will encounter problems such as hidden timers, difficulty seeing all available answers to questions, etc.
- **Once you open a quiz, the timer starts, and can't be reset.** While you may close the quiz window and return to it later, the timer continues to run. In other words, you do not get any extension of time if you exit the quiz, nor can you "pause" them once you have begun. Before opening any quiz, therefore, make sure you are ready, and will not be interrupted.
- Your quiz will present you with one question at a time, drawn randomly from a pool of questions, and in random order. It is unlikely that two students in the same class will experience exactly the same quiz, in the same order.
- "Weekend no tech support window policy": for many years, the due date for all of my online assignments was 11 AM Friday morning. I used this deadline for a variety of reasons, one of which was an effort to keep your weekend free from work (for my class at least) and give you a chance to recharge. Over the years, multiple students requested a weekend deadline instead, claiming that they tend to do their work on the weekends. With some reluctance, I have complied. While I still strongly recommend that everyone complete their work much earlier in the week for a variety of reasons, if you prefer to work on the weekends, that is now your option – but I will continue to use *my* weekend to rest. Practically speaking, what this means is that you should expect less email responsiveness from me during the weekends. If you do not begin your quiz by 9 PM Friday evening, don't expect that tech support will be available (from *me*) in the event that you experience computer/internet problems. You must also understand that you must allow time not only for you to contact me, but for me to reply to you, and for you to

receive the message. Even if you have legitimate tech support issues, and contact me within the allowed time, the best that will happen is that I will reset your quiz. You will not get an extension of the deadline. Therefore, you must regularly check your email and/or the course site to see if I have responded to your request for help--understanding that I check my email less frequently during the weekends.. I recommend you take the quizzes earlier rather than later. Procrastinate at your own risk!

- You will be allowed to take each quiz twice, and your final score will be the **average** of your two scores. You should only take a quiz a second time if you are unhappy with your first score, and confident you will do better on your second. **Under no circumstances will “make-up” quizzes be available should you miss a deadline, experience a computer error, fall ill, travel, etc.** Because everyone already gets a "do over," if needed, quizzes will not be reset in the event that a student "accidentally" selects an answer they did not intend, submits the quiz before completing all of the questions, experiences a malfunction, etc. Therefore, plan ahead! Also, be sure to follow all of the steps needed to complete the quiz (i.e., select your answer, submit it, etc.). Failure to follow all steps will result in the quiz scoring incorrectly. It is **your** responsibility to make sure you follow all the needed steps.
- Your quiz will present you with one question at a time, drawn randomly from a pool of questions, and in random order. It is unlikely that two students in the same class will experience exactly the same quiz, in the same order.
- Finally, feedback and correct answers will be provided once all of the quizzes are graded and scored for that week. Since many people wait until "the last minute" to complete the assignment, this means that it will likely be some time Monday morning before feedback and correct answers are released. You may check your scores and feedback in the "my grades" portion of this site. When you click on "my grades," you will see all of your assignments with the grades listed on the right-hand side. The ones that have been completed and scored appear in blue font (indicating a hyperlink). Click on the score of the assignment you're interested in. On the right-hand side of the screen, you will see a score under "calculated grade." It will also appear in blue. Click on that score. You will then be able to see any feedback to your answers, as well as the correct answers (once they have been released). You will have access to this information for 1 week from the expiration of the quiz.

## Exams

There are a total of 2 scheduled online exams, a “mid-term” and a “final.” These exams are short answers/essays in format. These exams are intended to assess your competence in explaining and applying philosophy. Assignments may be submitted after their due date with a 10% deduction in your maximum score for each twenty-four hour period from when the assignment was due, with a maximum late penalty of 30%. Anyone who scores less than a “C” on the midterm (i.e., a score of less than 7 out of 10) will be allowed to resubmit their exam for a maximum score of 7. Please note that this

resubmission opportunity does **not** apply to midterm exam scores that are less than a "C" due to late penalties. **I will drop your lowest exam score at the end of the term.** If you do not submit an exam (including the final exam), that exam will be the one that is dropped.

## Discussions

You will be required to participate in regular online discussion forums this term. Details and instructions are provided on our course site.

## Build a Better Argument

The "Build a Better Argument" (BABA) assignment series is designed to give you an opportunity to develop your skills at articulating and defending your point of view. This series consists of several very simple assignments, each of which builds upon the one that came before it. Because this assignment series requires that each part be completed, I do *not* drop your lowest score out of this assignment category—but each assignment is only worth 1 or 2 points.

## Extra Credit

There are no "extra credit" assignments for this class. Please do not ask for any, as none will be provided. Instead, the equivalent of extra credit has already been built into our class by virtue of the fact that the course is graded on a 100 point scale, even though more than 100 points are possible. There is nothing "extra" that you need to do to earn these additional points. Simply complete all of the required assignments, on time, and you will have had your opportunity to earn the extra points.

To put this in context (and to show just how generous my system really is!), consider my grading scale v. a standard "100%" model. To "pass" my class requires only 64%. To earn an A requires only 82%!

Minimum points needed	% of available points (out of 110)	Grade in <i>my</i> class	Grade in "normal" class
94.50-110	86%	A	B
82.50-94.49	75%	B	C
69.5—82.49	63%	C	D

59.5—69.49	54%	D	F
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## Resources

Our campus has numerous resources to help you succeed. A thorough list (with links) is provided on Canvas.

## Academic Accommodations

There is nothing shameful or that should be embarrassing about having a learning disability. Disabilities are not a reflection of who you are, or your worth, but of how your brain happens to work. If you know, or suspect, you have a disability that might create an unnecessary obstacle to your success, please contact our campus office of Disabled Students Programs & Services in person at SS-330, by phone at (562) 908-3420, or electronically at the following URL: <https://www.riohondo.edu/dsps/dsps-homepage/contact-us> DSPS will notify me of any needed accommodations, such as additional testing time, note takers, etc.

## Academic Honesty

I am confident that all of you are people of integrity, who intend to act honorably and honestly, including that you will refrain from academic dishonesty (“cheating”). Our campus policies on these matters are provided below. Please seek further clarification from me in the event that you are not certain whether or not an act would be considered “cheating.”

Cheating and plagiarism will be prosecuted according to the most severe college policies. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero for the assignment (at minimum) and could be subject to further disciplinary action. **Note: any zero score received as a result of cheating/plagiarism will NOT be eligible to be dropped as a “lowest” score for any category of assignment that drops the lowest score.** In this case, the next-lowest score will be dropped instead.

Students should familiarize themselves with the College policies on cheating and plagiarism, as stated on page 40 of the most recent College catalog:

Cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means. Helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty is also considered cheating. The following are only some of the many forms cheating may take:

- Copying another's work on an exam, paper, or project; any behavior that defeats the intent of an exam
- Possessing or using unauthorized materials during an exam; or collaborating on a project, homework, or other assignment to be turned in for credit where the instructor expressly forbids such collaboration
- Communicating with fellow students during an exam, taking an exam for another student, purposely allowing another student to copy during an exam, or providing coursework for another student to turn in as his or her own effort
- Fabricating, falsifying or misrepresenting data or results from experiments, interviews or surveys
- Submitting the same work in more than one class for credit without permission from the instructor
- Knowingly furnishing false information to the college including forgery, altering of campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating lab assignments, or altering medical excuses

Plagiarism is defined as representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise. Plagiarism consists of taking the words or substance of another work and either copying or paraphrasing without giving credit to the source whether that material is paraphrased or copied verbatim or near verbatim form. Plagiarism is applicable to written, oral, and artistic work. The following examples are only some of the many forms plagiarism may take:

- Word-for-word copying of work written by someone else
- Failure to give proper credit for ideas, statements of facts, or conclusions derived by another, including undocumented web source usage. **THIS INCLUDES THE UNAUTHORIZED USE OF AI PROGRAMS.**
- Failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether a paragraph, sentence, or phrase
- Close and extended paraphrasing of another work without acknowledging the source
- Submitting a paper purchased from a research or term paper service, including the internet
- Other Specific Examples of Academic Dishonesty
- Purposely allowing another student to copy from your paper during a test
- Giving homework, term paper or other academic work to another student to plagiarize
- Having another person submit any work in your name
- Lying to an instructor or college official to improve your grade
- Altering graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading
- Stealing tests
- Forging signatures on college documents, altering campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating assignments, or altering medical excuses

- Collaboration without permission of instructor
- Gaining unlawful or unauthorized access to college or district computers or servers

In situations where cheating or plagiarism has occurred, the faculty member is to determine the academic consequence in compliance with Education Code, and board policy and procedures, which prohibit dropping a student from a course for engaging in academic dishonesty. Faculty members shall inform students of the grade penalty that will be assessed. The consequences may be any of the following options:

- Receiving a “0” on that assignment
- Being referred to the Dean of Student Affairs for further disciplinary action

## Your Success *Matters*

I have instituted numerous policies for this course designed to promote your successful completion, and with equity in mind.

- I try to make my course policies as clear as possible, sometimes possibly even “over explaining.” You will usually find important policies repeated in multiple locations (e.g. syllabus, canvas). Despite my efforts, certain policies might still remain unclear to you. If that is the case, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to clarify.
- My assumption is that most of you are first-generation college students, and I try to provide information accordingly. You will find many resources and guides on our course Canvas site, including a video on “how to do college.” Please use these resources as you see fit, and feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.
- “Safe space” policy: Receiving, considering, and addressing criticism of one’s views—even deeply held views—is an essential experience of not only philosophy specifically, but education in general. To “protect” you from disagreement, criticism, and exposure to other points of view (including ideas and perspectives that you might find to be offensive) would not only be patronizing to you, but would rob you of the experiences necessary for intellectual and personal growth. Although philosophy inevitably confronts potentially controversial subjects, our classroom is intended to be a safe environment in which *respectful* conversation (including disagreement) can occur. This does not mean that everyone is required to have the same point of view, nor is that even desirable, but it does mean that disagreement or criticism must be expressed respectfully, and without resorting to personal attacks. Moreover, “hate speech,” against *any* group of people, but particularly on the basis of race or ethnicity, religion, sexuality, sex or gender identity, or disability, is never acceptable in class or on our Canvas site. In our class, there is never sufficient justification to use racial epithets or other derogatory terms.
- Although the teaching of philosophy in the West has been historically exclusive, the practice of philosophy itself is very much *inclusive*. Every inhabited continent throughout human history has produced deep-thinking human beings who have grappled with the mysteries of life and who have attempted to use reason and argument to address those

mysteries. Philosophy is a subject matter, and a way of life, accessible to every race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. To illustrate this, my textbook and this course includes a diverse selection of voices contributing to the great conversation that is philosophy. Your voice is welcome in that conversation as well.

- I expect the same dedication and responsibility of myself that I expect from you. You can count on me to be prompt in the grading and scoring of assignments and meticulous in my record-keeping. Please occasionally check your grade on canvas for the sake of accuracy. On your end, I expect you to take every assignment seriously, and to put forth your best effort to successfully complete course assignments.
- The textbook for this course is accessible both with respect to writing style and cost. It is significantly less expensive than most philosophy textbooks, and I have provided a free copy that is available at the reserve desk at our campus library. Some campus programs, such as EOP&S provide book vouchers, or loans to purchase textbooks. If you think you might benefit from such services, please contact a campus counselor to explore your options.
- My grading policy (see above) is designed to be inclusive and equity-minded, providing opportunities for improvement while acknowledging the complexities of life.

## Success Strategies

The following is a list of some of the most common causes of students succeeding in my class (and I suspect in others' classes as well):

- **Committing to being a student.** This means prioritizing coming to class, completing assignments, studying, etc.
- Expecting to have to **devote significant time or energy to succeed**, and then doing so. Expect to dedicate several hours each week *outside of class* to this course.
- Develop successful **time management** and **prioritization** techniques, if you don't already have them. I have provided suggestions on canvas for how to do so.
- **Seeking help** when one doesn't understand. Philosophy is often difficult and confusing. There should be nothing embarrassing about asking a question by email or in the "ask the professor" discussion forum. If you need to improve your study skills, communications skills, or test taking skills for this course, you are advised to seek a tutor's assistance in the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) located in LR 114.
- **Using a dictionary** to look up the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Seeking help after doing poorly on the first assignment of the class. It puzzles me when I see someone do poorly (say, a "D" or worse) on a first assignment, do nothing about it, and then continue to get the same sort of grade on the remaining class assignments. If something has gone wrong, you should want to do something to "fix" it. Taking the same action over and over again expecting different results just doesn't make sense. I'm here to help you find new strategies for success, if you let me.



- Being concerned about your understanding and course performance throughout the *entire* term, not just at the end.
- Actually **doing the assigned reading**, and taking me seriously when I say you'll probably need to read slowly, carefully, and multiple times in order to achieve understanding.
- Taking each assignment seriously. Trying to write the best answer, rather than the fastest/shortest one. Completing an assignment with as much effort as needed for success. Not simply assuming that "I'll know what you mean," and explaining one's reasoning instead. Not waiting until the last minute to study, or to begin writing, or, in some cases, to even **read** what the assignment **is**. I can almost always tell when that has occurred by the quality of the work submitted.
- **Taking pride in one's work.** Using the spell-checker, and proof-reading before submitting an assignment, when applicable. Looking up the correct spelling of philosophers' names, when such information is readily available. Seeking help from tutors when one knows that one struggles with English grammar (for whatever reason).
- Keeping the instructor informed of one's status in the course. If you miss an exam, or fail to turn in an assignment on time, or cease coming to class, you should contact your instructor as soon as you possibly can to let him or her know *why*. Communicate!
- Making extensive use of the course canvas page!
- Recognizing what grades are, and what they are **not**. Grades are simply reports of your progress with regard to a particular body of material or set of skills, as evidenced by your performance on particular assignments, as judged by an expert in that field of knowledge. *They are not reflections of your value as a person, nor rewards for effort.*

## Reading & Assignment Schedule

Reading must be completed prior to class. Some of the readings are brief, but they are all "dense." Careful reading will always be required for understanding, and multiple readings will often be required of understanding. It will be very difficult to catch up if you get behind in the reading. Since we cannot discuss each reading in class, in detail, you must take responsibility for understanding parts of the readings, in some cases, on your own.

Week	Monday	Topic	Reading	Sunday	Assignments due no later than 11:59 PM
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1	21-Aug	Intro to course		27-Aug	Course Policies Quiz, Success Plan, Start of Term Survey, Discussion #1 (introductions)
2	28-Aug	Value of PHIL	Intro (Suggested : 1,2,3)	3-Sep	BABA 1.1
3	4-Sep	Artist of Life	Pdf on Canvas	10-Sep	Discussion #2 (Lee)
4	11-Sep	"Epistemology 101"	4,5,6,7	17-Sep	BABA 1.2
5	18-Sep	continued	4,5,6,7	24-Sep	Quiz #1 (Epistemology)
6	25-Sep	Skepticism & Certainty	8	1-Oct	Discussion #3 (Skepticism), Quiz #2 (Skepticism & Certainty), BABA 1.3
7	2-Oct	Personal Identity	11	8-Oct	Quiz #3 (PI)
8	9-Oct	continued	11	15-Oct	Discussion #4 (PI), BABA 1.4
9	16-Oct	Human Nature	13	22-Oct	Quiz #4 (Human Nature), Discussion #5

					(Human Nature), Midterm Exam
10	23-Oct	Social Contract	21	29-Oct	Midterm Check-in, BABA 1.5
11	30-Oct	Aristotle & Confucius	17,18	5-Nov	Quiz #5 (Aristotle, Discussion #6 (Confucius)
12	6-Nov	Nahua & Akan	19,20	12-Nov	Quiz #6 (Nahua), BABA 1.6
13	13-Nov	Consequentialism	Pdf on Canvas	19-Nov	Quiz #7 (Mozi), Discussion #7 (Mozi)
14	20-Nov	Death & Meaning	28	26-Nov	Discussion #8 (Death), BABA 1.7
15	27-Nov	Philosophical Therapy	29	<b>3-Dec</b>	Quiz #8 (Stoicism)Final Exam, End of Term Survey
16	4-Dec				