Introduction to Philosophy - (PHIL-1)

Section #: 53914

Meeting Days/Times: 12:00AM-12:00AM

Start Date: 01/08/2024 - End Date: 05/17/2024

Instructor: Marisa Maccaro

Term: 2024SP

Room: WEB WEB

Units: 3.00

Instructor

Name: Marisa E. Maccaro

Email address: marisa.maccaro@reedleycollege.edu

Office Location/Hours: See Canvas Course homepage

Welcome Message

Welcome, Philosophers! I’m so excited to teach this course and I’m looking forward to getting to know each of you.

This course is an introduction to three of the main branches of Philosophy: metaphysics (“What exists?”) epistemology (“What can we know?”), and ethics (“What should I do?”). I hope that you will leave this course with an understanding of the ways others have answered these questions and with some intellectual tools that can help you do the same.

Below you will find information about course content, requirements, and policies. Please don’t hesitate to ask if you have any questions. It’s okay if you feel overwhelmed, confused, and/or frustrated while reading this syllabus or at any point throughout the semester. Philosophy’s hard. For everyone. But that doesn't mean you can't do well. The best students approach the subject with humility, curiosity, and a willingness to mess

up. I’ll make mistakes expressing ideas, and you will too. Think of this course as a lab for testing ideas rather than a museum for the pristine ideas you already have.

You can do this. Let’s have a great semester together!

Course Description

This course introduces students to traditional and contemporary views in metaphysics, epistemology, and value-theory. Topics may include the sources and limits of knowledge, the nature of reality, the relationship between mind and body, free will and determinism, the existence of God, and the nature of morally right action. Readings will include selections drawn from the primary texts of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, or Kant, as well as various twentieth century philosophers.

PreRequisites/CoRequisites and Advisories

Prerequisite: None

Corequisite: None

Advisory: ENGL-1A Reading and Composition

Required Texts/Materials

This is a textbook-free course! All readings and material will be provided by the instructor and posted on Canvas. There is no textbook for the class.

Course Objectives

1. Achieve a familiarity with and appreciation of the philosophic endeavor as a whole (i.e., its scope, concerns, purpose, and methods), the specific endeavors of a number of well-known philosophers, and the relevance of philosophical inquiry to their own lives.
2. Demonstrate a familiarity with and appreciation of the philosophic endeavor as a whole, and the specific endeavors of a number of well-known philosophers, through discussion and writing.
3. Recognize, describe, and distinguish between metaphysical, epistemological, and value-theoretic issues in a variety of texts.
4. Develop skills pertaining to the recognition, clarification, and evaluation of arguments, which they can apply both to the arguments of others and to those of their own making.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Apply standards for argument assessment in evaluating the arguments of the great philosophers and the arguments that the students themselves create.
2. Articulate metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical themes in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, or Kant, as well as some representative twentieth century philosophers.

Early Alert

Reedley College has a team of individuals working closely with instructors to ensure students receive the support and resources necessary for academic success. In addition to messaging you through the Canvas Inbox, I will be using the Starfish Early Alert

Program to communicate concerns or praise (kudos) about your progress. Throughout the semester, you may receive an “EARLY ALERT” message from Starfish Solutions.

The message will be sent to your SCCCD student email account and either contain a Kudo or a Flag.

A Kudo acknowledges your hard work, and a Flag identifies an area that may pose a barrier to success in this class. Students receiving a flag will be instructed to either contact me (your instructor) or contact a counselor.

Please follow the email instructions promptly so we can address the issue as quickly as possible. Your success is important to all of us!

Attendance Policy

Attendance in online classes is measured by your participation in class activities and assignments. Merely logging on does not count as attendance. I can only keep students enrolled in the course who participate in the first two weeks of class activities and assignments.

Participation and Engagement

I will be actively involved in the course. Most of my feedback will be delivered via comments on your writing assignments. You can also expect regular announcements from me in Canvas. I will hold five office hours a week. Outside of that I may be reached by Canvas inbox.

I enjoy talking to students about the material, so don’t hesitate to contact me if you have questions about the material or your grade. I will attempt to respond to any communication you initiate within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends). Please be in the habit of checking your Canvas Dashboard daily as I may relay important course information through announcements.

Drop Policy & Deadlines

Drop Policy:

I am committed to your success, and I will do all I can to help you succeed. However, it is also my responsibility to drop students from the course when they are not making satisfactory progress. Here are the reasons I might drop you from the course:

* You don't login within the first week of class (unless you have made advance arrangements with me).
* You don't turn in any assignments for two consecutive weeks before the drop date (without prior arrangement).

I will consider exceptions to these policies on a case by case basis. Here’s the main thing: if you’re experiencing challenges that make it difficult for you to comply with these policies, please let me know immediately so we can work out a plan. I’m here to help you succeed!

Deadlines:

Fee reversal/refund – 1/19

Add or drop to avoid W (in person) – 1/26

Add or drop to avoid W (on Self-Service) – 1/28

Drop with a ‘W’ (to avoid a letter grade) – 3/8

Holidays

1/15 Martin Luther King Day—No Classes, Campus Closed

2/16 Lincoln Day— No Classes, Campus Closed

2/19 Washington Day—No Classes, Campus Open

3/25-3/29 Spring Break—No Classes, Campus Closed

Class Outline/Calendar

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Module | Primary Reading Assignment | Assignment |
| 1 (1/8-1/14) | 1 | Introduction | Introduce yourself discussion board post |
| Brad Dowden, “Claims, Issues, and Arguments” |
| 2 (1/15-1/21) | 2 | Rene Descartes, *Meditations* I & II | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 3 (1/22-1/28) | 3 | Marcus William Hunt, “Reasons to Believe” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Robert Sloan Lee, “Non-Standard Arguments for God’s Existence” |
| 4 (1/29-2/4) | 4 | William Rowe, "Is evil evidence against belief in God?" & Fyodor Dostoyevsky, excerpt from The Brothers Karamazov | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann, "Evil does not make atheism more reasonable" |
| 5 (2/5-2/11) | 5 | Baron Paul Henri d'Holbach, “A Defense of Determinism” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” |
| 6 (2/12-2/18) | 6 | Harry Frankfurt, “Alternate Possibilities’ and Moral Responsibility” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Adrina Roskies, “Neuroscientific challenges to free will and responsibility” |
| 7 (2/19-2/25) | 7 | David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section IV & V | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 8 (2/26-3/3) | 8 | Rene Descartes, *Meditation VI* | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 9 (3/4-3/10) | 9 | John Searle, "Can Computers Think?" | **Paper 1 Due Friday @ 11:59 pm** |
| “David Chalmers, "The Puzzle of Consciousness" |
| 10 (3/11-3/17) | 10 | Alyssa Ney, “Metaphysics of Race” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?” |
| 11 (3/18-3/24) | 11 | Shannon Sullivan, “White Ignorance and Colonial Oppression: Or, Why I Know So Little about Puerto Rico” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 12 (3/25-3/31) | 12 | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
| 13 (4/1-4/7) | 13 | Heather Stewart, “’Why Didn't She Say Something Sooner?’": Doubt, Denial, Silencing, and the Epistemic Harms of the #MeToo Movement” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 14 (4/8-4/14) | 14 | Regina Rini, “Fake News and Partisan Epistemology” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| C. Thi Nguyen, “Escape the Echo Chamber” |
| 15 (4/15-421) | 15 | Titus Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, Book III | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 16 (4/22-4/28) | 16 | Thomas Nagel, “Death” & Fred Feldman, “Some Puzzles About the Evil of Death” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| 17 (4/29-5/5) | 17 | Schopenhauer, “The Vanity of Existence” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* |
| 18 (5/6-5/12) | 18 | Albert Camus, “The Myth of Sisyphus” | Initial discussion board post due Friday @ 11:59 pm, two replies to peers due Sunday @ 11:59 pm |
| Susan Wolf, “The Meanings of Lives” |
| 19 (5/13-5/17) | 19 | Finals Week | **Paper 2 due Wednesday @ 11:59 pm** |

Assignments

*Discussion Board Posts* *(45%) (15 posts, 3 points each)*

Because we are not meeting in person, or otherwise face-to-face, I want to ensure that you have an opportunity to discuss the course content with each other and with me, and to be an active participant in the class. By the beginning of each week, I will post a prompt about the reading for that week for you to respond to in at least 200 words on a discussion board by Thursday at 11:59 pm. After your initial post, you are required to respond to two of your classmates’ initial posts in at least 100 words by Sunday at 11:59 pm.

These posts amount to your “participation” in the course, but they ae also opportunities to practice your writing skills. Meaningful discussion board engagement can take many forms—you can post your own questions, critiques, or ideas about a reading, or you might respond to questions or build on ideas raised by your peers. The hope is that we can maintain as organic of a discussion as possible.

When you are composing your posts, you should keep in mind the important difference between expository and critical posts. An expository post merely explains something. And although some of the prompts will call for some explanation, make sure you are also writing something critical. Critical writing involves the construction of an argument— a position or thesis that you defend. This means you need to support the claims you make.

I cannot express enough how important it is to write thoughtful, clear, and well-informed posts in order to do well in this online course. Your discussion posts ought to be considered as a representation of your best comments and thoughts on the material. Take your time on them.

Tip: Great posts are often personal. Either dig into the philosophical issues that arise and give your own opinion or relate a personal story or experience that is relevant to the topic.

Forum Etiquette: While discussion board posts are not held to the standard of essay writing, you should still engage professionally. Keep in mind that this is not social media—make sure you are writing in complete sentences and in ways that are accessible to your peers. Moreover, keep in mind that when we are not engaging face to face, some of the context and/or the tone of our comments can be lost in translation. I ask that you try to frame your comments in ways that are not likely to be misinterpreted, or otherwise read as, something disrespectful.

*Papers (55%)*

You will be required to write two papers throughout the semester. These are expected to be between 800 and 1200 words. These papers have two aims: 1) to demonstrate that you understand the course content, and 2) to allow you to take and defend a position of your own. You can, for example, write a paper in which you set out a position from one of the papers we’ve read in the course, and then show why you agree (or disagree) with the author’s argument. You might also choose to present two contrasting views we have covered and take a position on which you think is stronger. These assignments are intended to require close reading of courses texts, as well as to enhance your skills in argument analysis and written communication.

The first paper will be due mid-semester and is worth 15% of your final grade. For this first paper, you’ll also be required to submit an outline for an additional 5%. The second paper will be due during finals week and is worth 30% of your final grade. For the second paper, you will be required to submit a draft for peer review one week before the due date. The draft is worth 5% of your final grade.

Grading Scale Grading/Evaluation:

A (90-100%)

B (80-89%)

C (70-79%)

D (60-69)

F (59% or below)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment Category | Percent of Final Grade |
| Paper 1 Outline | 5% |
| Paper 1 | 15% |
| Paper 2 Draft (for peer review) | 5% |
| Paper 2 | 30% |
| Discussion Board Posts | 45% |
| Total | 100% |

Make Up & Late Work

I want you to be successful in this class. The best way to do that is to meet all deadlines and submit all your work. That said, I understand that life may sometimes stand in the way of completing your assignments. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, please get in touch with me whatever the situation might be. In general, all tests and assignments are allowed to be made up, and points will not be deducted in cases of emergency. Typically, if you miss an assignment, I will reach out to help you make a plan for making up the work and staying on track.

Extra Credit

While there are no opportunities for extra credit in this class, there are many opportunities for you to succeed without it. Reach out to me early and often so that we can work together to ensure your success.

Class Norms

Be respectful of your classmates; take your education seriously; and refrain from doing anything that creates obstacles for others in the class to do the same. I want ALL my students to enjoy the class, so please play your part in facilitating a safe and supportive (online) classroom environment. Critical thinking often leads to controversy, and you will likely disagree with your classmates at times. Friendly debate is encouraged, but personal attacks on your classmates’ views are not. Philosophers think of disagreements as opportunities to grow!

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

A disability does not define a person; it only defines a way that a person's brain or body works. PLEASE don't be embarrassed to take advantage of these services if you qualify (and don't be embarrassed to see if you qualify!) Your success is important to me, so I intend to meet you where you are, and I am happy to accommodate your needs.

Reedley College is committed to creating accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. To obtain academic adjustments or auxiliary aids, students must be registered with the DSP&S office on campus. DSP&S can be reached at 559-494-3032 and is located in the DSP&S Building. All information is kept confidential. If you are already registered with the DSP&S office, please provide your Notice of Accommodation form to me as soon as possible, preferably during the first two weeks of class.

If your accommodation includes taking the tests in the DSP&S office, it is your responsibility to make an appointment to take the test on or before the day and time of the in-class test and to inform me of the appointment.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you have any questions.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students at Reedley College are entitled to the best education that the college can make available to them, and they, their instructors, and their fellow students share the responsibility to ensure that this education is honestly attained. Because cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities erode the integrity of the college, each student is expected to exert an entirely honest effort in all academic endeavors. Academic dishonesty in any form is a very serious offense and will incur serious consequences.

That said, students face a lot of pressures while in school. Sometimes, when time is short, you might feel tempted to take a shortcut and cheat or copy someone else’s work. It is far better to simply reach out to me for help. I enjoy working with students, and I understand that sometimes situations in your life prevent you from completing an assignment as you would like, that you run out of time, or make mistakes. It is better to be late on an assignment than to be dishonest on one. Contact me, so I can help you! If you do make a mistake, I will reach out to you, but I must follow the disciplinary procedures listed below.

**Cheating**

Cheating is the act or attempted act of taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a fraudulent or deceptive manner, such as having improper access to answers, in an attempt to gain an unearned academic advantage. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying from another’s work, supplying one’s work to another, giving or receiving copies of examinations without an instructor’s permission, using or displaying notes or devices inappropriate to the conditions of the examination, allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student, or failing to disclose research results completely.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating and is the use of another’s words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or encouraging, permitting, or assisting another to do any act that could subject him or her to discipline. Incidents of cheating and plagiarism may result in a variety of sanctions and penalties that may range from a failing grade on the particular examination, paper, project, or assignment in question to a failing grade in the course, at the discretion of the instructor and depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents.

Support Services

Reedley College has many resources available to help students through their educational journey.  This is a partial list of the more popular resources.  Refer to the Online Information Center or Counseling and Advising if you do not find what you need here.

**I don't know what I am looking for!**

*Online Information Center*

The Online Information Center provides a live chat to help guide you to the information you need.   Check hours available on the webpage.

**How do I get help with basic needs like food and housing?**

[*Tiger Pantry*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/student-activities/tiger-pantry.html)

The Tiger Pantry offers non-perishable food items, personal toiletries, fresh produce and vegetables, and school supplies. This is made possible by donations and a collaboration with the Community Food Bank. It is available to all currently enrolled Reedley College students.

559.638.0300 x3105 (Student Activities Office)

*Homelessness Liaison*

The Homeless Liaison can help you get connected to a support program on campus and provide information about the Reedley College dorms. The liaison will also help you get connected to Fresno County Resources to find local homeless shelters.

[Aaren.Cobb@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:Aaren.Cobb@reedleycollege.edu) ~   phone 559.638.0340  ~  text 559.419.0256

**How do I pay for college?**

[Financial Aid](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/index.html)

Provides students information to secure the financial resources to pay for their education.

[reedley.financialaid@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:reedley.financialaid@reedleycollege.edu)  ~   559.638.0312

[Scholarships](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid/scholarships/index.html)

This Reedley College financial resource provided by local businesses, community groups, alumni, and a variety of private sources.  Applications are generally due early Spring semester; check website for specific due dates.

559.638.0312

[*Career Center*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/career--employment-center.html)

The Career Center offers career and employment services, including help finding a job or internship.

[cec@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:cec@reedleycollege.edu)  ~   559.637.2543

*Student Support Programs & Centers*

There are a number of programs that can help you pay for college, connect to campus, and plan your studies. [EOPS](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/extended-opportunity-programs-and-services-eops/index.html) and [CalWORKs](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/calworks.html) are just two of the many Student Support Programs at Reedley College.  There are many programs available for students in a variety of areas and interests.  Students are encouraged to talk to their counselors about programs that might be appropriate for them.  Schedule time with a counselor for further information. Many of these programs are listed on the [Student Services page](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/index.html).

[Counseling and Advising](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html) ~  [counseling@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:counseling@reedleycollege.edu)  ~  559.638.0337

**How do I get healthcare and mental health assistance?**

[*Health Services*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/health-services/index.html)

Health Services is a nurse-run clinic available to currently enrolled students. The College Nurse Practitioner provides advanced nursing assessment and treatment for acute illnesses and injuries, preventative screening services, health education, and medical referrals to local health care providers.

559.638.0328

[Psychological Services](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/campus-life/health-services/psychological-services.html)

Psychological services is a program designed to meet mental health needs of the college community in Reedley. These services are available at no charge to students and assist in the promotion of healthy emotion and psychological responses. Psychological services include 4-6 confidential counseling sessions for college students. Care is provided by a clinical psychologist and supervised graduate interns.

559.638.0328

**How do I get help with technology?**

*Canvas Help*

Click on the icon at the bottom of the global navigation bar on the far left side of this window (pictured) to access links to Canvas Guides.

*Student Help Desk*

Ask questions about logging in to Canvas, email, WebAdvisor, or other local systems.

559.499.6070

*Canvas Student Orientation*

If you feel like you need to learn more about how to use Canvas, we have a self-enroll, self-paced Canvas Student Orientation course that is completely online for students to take within Canvas. Click the [self-enroll link](https://scccd.instructure.com/enroll/K6DWKL) if you would like to check it out

**Where can I get help being successful in my classes?**

[Academic Support Centers (Tutoring Services)](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/index.html)

Visit these locations to get connected to tutors.

* [Learning Center -- Tutorial (all subjects)](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/learning-center.html)
* [Math Center](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/math-center.html)
* [Reading & Writing Center](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/academics/tutoring-services/reading-and-writing-center/index.html)

[*Disabled Students Program & Services (DSP&S)*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/disabled-student-programs-and-services/index.html)

DSP&S provides services and accommodations that assist students with documented disabilities to reach their maximum potential while achieving their educational goals.

[DSPS@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:DSPS@reedleycollege.edu) ~   559.638.0332

**How do I stay on track?**

[*Counseling and Advising*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html)

Counselors are available to help you with academic planning to help you stay on track and assist you with connecting to support resources that provide additional support based on your individual needs.

 Visit the [Academic Counseling and Advising](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html) page to set up an appointment to meet with a Pathway Counselor.     
   
Academic Counseling is also available in all of our Student Support Programs.  Visit the individual program for more information.

[*Counseling and Advising*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/index.html)*~*  [counseling@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:counseling@reedleycollege.edu)  ~  559.638.0337

[*Admissions and Records*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/admissions-aid/admissions/index.html)

Admissions and records can help you add, drop, and register for your classes.

[admissions@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:admissions@reedleycollege.edu) ~  559.638.0323

[*Transfer Center*](https://www.reedleycollege.edu/student-services/counseling/transfer-services.html)

The Reedley College Transfer Center is designed to assist students explore, prepare and succeed in their transfer plans. We provide a variety of resources and services to help students transfer from Reedley College to other colleges and universities for completion of their educational goals.

[transfercenter@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:transfercenter@reedleycollege.edu)  ~   559.638.0300 ext. 3234