

Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 141-20)

Fort Lewis College

Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Graham Clay

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Student Hours: Tuesdays at a time decided by class (survey due on Friday, Sept. 3)

Student Hours Location: Zoom

Office Hours: by appointment (via email)

Office Location: Zoom

Class Location: Canvas (100% online asynchronous)

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the discipline of philosophy consisting of a survey of central philosophical problems and attempted solutions. Issues in philosophy include the possibility of knowledge over skepticism, the nature of ultimate reality, the relation of mind and body, reason and religious faith, the standards of ethics, the nature of beauty, and the hallmarks of good reasoning. Philosophers who will guide you in your exploration of some of these topics will include Aristotle, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Emilie du Châtelet, David Hume, Linda Zagzebski, Peter van Inwagen, and Gregory Cajete. Along the way, you will learn how to read a wide variety of philosophical works, analyze others' argumentation, write philosophical essays, use some of the basic tools of logic, and reflect on your own philosophical positions.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to explain a range of central philosophical problems and some of the main arguments for and against solutions to those problems in the three principal divisions of philosophy: value theory, metaphysics and epistemology.*
2. Students will have developed their ability to think critically. This includes the ability to identify arguments, including their underlying assumptions, and critically evaluate those arguments by identifying questionable premises or weak or invalid inferences.*
3. Students will have improved their ability to read primary and secondary philosophical texts, such that they can, with some guidance, identify the main arguments in them and critically assess those arguments.

4. Students will be able to apply their philosophical knowledge to formulate and support their own positions on major philosophical issues and reply to reasoned objections to them.
5. Students will have improved their written communication skills sufficiently to offer a clear written summary of an argument from a philosophical text and explain their own critical evaluation of it.

*These learning outcomes correspond with the GT pathways requirements for an Arts and Humanities, Ways of Thinking (AH-3) course, including improved understanding of ways of thinking in philosophy, and improved competency in critical thinking.

All of these learning outcomes are also designed to contribute to the philosophy program learning outcomes.

GT Pathways:

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved Phil 141 *Introduction to Philosophy* for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the AH3 category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C–grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to <http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html>

The content of a LAC/GT-AH3 (Ways of Thinking) course shall be designed to provide students with the experience to respond analytically and critically to ways of thinking, by addressing one or more of the following:

- a. Logic
- b. Ethics
- c. The different questions dealt with by leading philosophers and/or theologians and their positions on those questions

This course meets the following LAC/GT Pathways Student Learning Outcome: *Critical Thinking* (students will be able to analyze information and ideas from multiple perspectives and articulate an argument, opinion, or a conclusion based on this analysis).

Students should be able to:
Explain an Issue (SLO 1)

- Use information to describe a problem or issue and/or articulate a question related to the topic.

Utilize Context (SLO 2)

- Evaluate the relevance of context when presenting a position.
- Identify assumptions.
- Analyze one's own and others' assumptions.

Understand Implications and Make Conclusions (SLO 5)

- Establish a conclusion that is tied to the range of information presented.
- Reflect on implications and consequences of stated conclusion.

Canvas Information:

This course will utilize the electronic course management system called "Canvas." You can access the class Canvas page through the Fort under "Courses," or under "Canvas" in the fortlewis.edu quick links, or here: <https://courses.fortlewis.edu/>. On the class Canvas site, you will find a complete virtual copy of this syllabus on the Home page integrated with the Module system, linking everything from the readings to videos, activities, assignment guidelines, and a record of your grades. If you are not familiar with Canvas, please work through the [Student Canvas Orientation](#). For technical help with Canvas contact the 24/7 support hotline at 855-971-1611 or submit a HELP ticket in Canvas.

Texts and Materials:

All texts and other course materials will be provided directly in Canvas. No texts need to be purchased or acquired outside of what is linked on the Canvas homepage.

Feedback and Communication:

Beyond my initial welcome email, all of my communication will occur via announcements on Canvas or via the course materials linked on the Canvas Home page. I strive to grade all assignments within a week of their due dates, although the three major assignments may take longer, depending on the circumstances.

Course Workload and Time Management:

How can you create a weekly schedule based on your courses and study time needed for success? As long as you know the number of credit hours you are taking, it's easy!

In online courses, one course credit is the same as one hour spent doing 'time on task.' 'Time on task' includes any time you spend interacting with course materials

and participating in learning activities such as readings, projects, assignments, videos, student-student or student-professor interaction, and exams. A 3-credit online course requires three hours of ‘time on task’ per week and 6 hours of course preparation time as well (and that’s according to the federal definition of a credit hour). Thus, you should plan on an average of 9 hours per week for this class. Sometimes it may be more, sometimes less, but this is a good total to aim for. Please let me know if you fall behind or need any help figuring out your weekly schedule and meeting these course workload expectations.

Email and Netiquette:

“Netiquette” is a protocol for interacting and behaving online. Although digital interactions are not face-to-face, they affect real people; thus, we must be sensitive to the fact that our words impact others. The following are an outline of ways that you can communicate professionally and sensitively online:

1. Be sensitive to others’ cultural, social, political and linguistic backgrounds. Everyone is different and unique. Remember to show respect for our differences.
2. Incorporate professionalism and good taste when composing responses in discussion forums, online collaboration and feedback tools, and other interactive spaces. Avoid profanity and other harsh comments. Minimize your use of slang, as it can be misinterpreted.
3. Avoid using all capital letters as it can be construed as “shouting” online, which can be perceived as aggressive behavior.
4. When using acronyms, make sure to clarify its meaning when you first use in your message.
5. Proofread your responses for accuracy and tone.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty includes all forms of unethical or illegal behavior which affects a student’s academic standing, including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, plagiarism, forgery of academic documents, falsification of information on academic documents, or unauthorized access to computer files containing academic information. Academic dishonesty may result in sanctions ranging from a lowered grade on a particular assignment to an "F" in the class and report submitted to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Please see FLC’s policy on [Academic Integrity by Students](#) for more information.

TurnItIn Plagiarism Software:

Plagiarism occurs when someone presents the ideas or work of another person as their own, without giving proper credit. Self-plagiarism means reusing work you have already published or submitted in a class. Written assignments in this course will undergo a similarity assessment by Turnitin, which is software used to detect these acts and reinforce best practices when using and citing the work of others or oneself. By taking this course, students acknowledge and give their consent that these papers will be submitted to Turnitin and might be included in a secure repository, used for comparison to papers submitted by others in the future. All Turnitin submissions will take place within Canvas, which is also where students can access any reports generated by Turnitin.

Please visit turnitin.com for copies of policies, including proprietary rights, privacy, security, and FERPA compliance. Students under the age of 18 should also refer to the "Student Age" heading in [FLC's Terms and Conditions](#).

Students with Disabilities:

Fort Lewis College is committed to providing all students a liberal arts education through a personalized learning environment. If you think you have or you do have a documented disability which will need reasonable academic accommodations, and/or if you are a Veteran who may need service, please the Disability Services Office, 280 Noble Hall, 247-7383, disabilityservices@fortlewis.edu for an appointment as soon as possible.

Reach out for Success:

College students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor, academic advisor, peer support office, or counselor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at: <https://www.fortlewis.edu/life-at-flc/student-services/student-affairs/student-affairs-home>

If you or someone else is in immediate crisis, please call the local 24-hour crisis hotline (970) 247-5245, call the Colorado 24-hour crisis hotline (844) 493-8255, text "TALK" to 382555, or call the FLC Counseling Center during regular business hours (970) 247-7212.

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge the land that Fort Lewis College is situated upon is the ancestral land and territory of the Nuuchiu (Ute) people who were forcibly removed by the United States Government. We also acknowledge that this land is connected to the communal and ceremonial spaces of the Jicarilla Abache (Apache), Pueblos of New Mexico, Hopi Sinom (Hopi), and Diné (Navajo) Nations. It is important to acknowledge this setting because the narratives of the lands in this region have long been told from dominant perspectives, without full recognition of the original land stewards who continue to inhabit and connect with this land. Thank you for your attention and respect in acknowledging this important legacy.

Grading:

50% - Weekly or Bi-Weekly Tasks

0% - Open Discussion Board Posts + Padlet Posts

Every week, there will be an open discussion board available for you to post questions, thoughts, and otherwise interact with your classmates and Dr. Clay. Likewise, at the end of the course, a Padlet page will be available for final project brainstorming. (This is not a graded assignment.)

0% - Student Hours

Every Tuesday, starting September 7, there will be a period (at a time decided by the class in a poll due Friday, September 3 at 11:59 PM) for you to come on Zoom and ask Dr. Clay about course content and assignments, talk with your classmates about the course, or just listen to what other people are saying. (This is not a graded assignment.)

10% - Activities

On some Wednesdays (noted on syllabus), there will be an activity due at 11:59 PM. The goal of these activities is to guide you through important course concepts with the assistance of some interactive activities, demonstrations, and tutorials. Your task is to read all the slides, engage with any activities, and submit any answers requested. If you earnestly complete this task on a given Wednesday by 11:59 PM, you will get a perfect score for that day. (Your activities will be graded based on completion. You will *not* get instructor feedback on these assignments.)

10% - Hypothesis Contributions (+ One Flipgrid Introduction)

On Wednesday, September 1, you must submit a Flipgrid video contribution that is 1 minute and 30 seconds long introducing yourself to the class. Then, every Wednesday, starting with Module 2, there will be two Hypothesis annotations due at 11:59 PM. The goal of these assignments is to practice thinking and interacting in a philosophical way with your classmates by jointly annotating the readings for that day. Your task is to *both* (a) annotate the reading in order to ask a substantive question about it *and* (b) respond substantively to others' questions or responses. If you earnestly complete this task on a given Wednesday by 11:59 PM, you will get a perfect score for that day. (Your annotations will be graded based on completion and effort. You will *not* get instructor feedback on these assignments. Your lowest annotation score will be dropped.)

15% - Review Quizzes

Every other Monday (noted on syllabus), there will be a multiple-choice 4-minute quiz due at 11:59 PM. The goal of these quizzes is to evaluate the extent to which you understood the readings assigned for the day of a given quiz. They are intended as checks of your comprehension. You should come to student hours or schedule an office hours appointment if you are running into trouble. The quizzes will be posted, received, and automatically graded on Canvas. (Your quizzes will be graded based on correctness. You will get automated feedback with the correct answers to these assignments. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.)

15% - Reading Responses

Every other Monday (noted on syllabus), there will be a 1-2 paragraph reading response due at 11:59 PM. The goal of these assignments is to get you in the habit of writing philosophically, relating your preconceptions and preexisting views to the course content, and reflecting on your progress. They are also intended to spark ideas that you can develop further on the discussion boards, in your papers, or beyond the class. The assignments will be posted, received, and manually graded on Canvas. If you earnestly complete this task on a given Monday by 11:59 PM, you will get a perfect score for that day. (Your reading responses will be graded based on completion and effort. You will *occasionally* receive instructor feedback on these assignments. Your lowest response score will be dropped.)

51% - Unique Tasks

0% - Videos

At the beginning of each Module (and two other times), there will be a ~6-minute video that Dr. Clay will post to help foreshadow the Module, synthesize what you have learned already, and prepare you for success in the course. (This is not a graded assignment.)

1% - Bonus Logic Challenge

There will be an hourlong bonus logic challenge due on Canvas on Friday, September 3 at 11:59 PM. It will concern the content of Activity #1, as well as a logic problem that requires you to apply this content yourself. If you understand everything in Activity #1, you are equipped to get a perfect score on this challenge. (Your answers will be graded based on correctness. You will get automated feedback with the correct answers.)

2.5% - Introductory Meeting with Dr. Clay

By Friday, September 17 at 11:59 PM, you must meet with Dr. Clay to introduce yourself, get to know Dr. Clay, and discuss your interests, goals, and priorities for the course. It is your responsibility to schedule this meeting via the Canvas Calendar link provided on Canvas. If none of the days/times on the Canvas Calendar work for you, it is your responsibility to email Dr. Clay to find a day/time that is mutually acceptable. (This task will be graded based on completion.)

10% - Expository Paper

Due Friday, October 8 at 11:59 PM, this 1000-word-maximum expository paper will concern the topics of Module 2. You have some flexibility in the thesis of your paper—perhaps you would like to tackle nudging or perhaps Kantianism—but the structure and content of the paper must conform with Dr. Clay's requirements. These requirements are that the paper is *purely* explanatory (i.e., not critical or persuasive), is in your own words, and has a 3-part structure (introduction, body, and conclusion). More information about this paper, as well as a grading rubric, will be provided on Canvas. (Your paper will be graded based on the rubric. You will get instructor feedback on this paper.)

15% - Critical Paper

Due Friday, November 5 at 11:59 PM, this 1500-word-maximum critical paper will concern the topics of Module 3 or Module 4. You have some flexibility in the thesis of your paper—perhaps you would like to tackle

incompatibilism or perhaps the bundle view—but the structure and content of the paper must conform with Dr. Clay's requirements. These requirements are that the paper gives reasons *to reject* a philosophical position (i.e., not merely expository), is in your own words, and has a 4-part structure (introduction, exposition of position rejected, reasons for rejection, conclusion). More information about this paper, as well as a grading rubric, will be provided on Canvas. (Your paper will be graded based on the rubric. You will get instructor feedback on this paper.)

2.5% - Meeting with Dr. Clay about Persuasive Project

By Friday, December 3 at 11:59 PM, you must meet with Dr. Clay to discuss your ideas about, plans for, and/or drafts of your persuasive project. It is your responsibility to schedule this meeting via the Canvas Calendar link provided on Canvas. If none of the days/times on the Canvas Calendar work for you, it is your responsibility to email Dr. Clay to find a day/time that is mutually acceptable. (This task will be graded based on completion.)

20% - Persuasive Project

Due Thursday, December 16 at 11:59 PM, this 2000-word-maximum persuasive paper OR 10-minute-maximum video will concern the topics of Module 5. You have some flexibility in the thesis of your project—perhaps you would like to argue that an all-good God exists or perhaps that a certain solution to the problem of evil works—but the structure of the paper or video must conform with Dr. Clay's requirements. These requirements are that the paper or video gives reasons *in favor of* a philosophical position (not merely critical), is in your own words, and has a 6-part structure (introduction, exposition of position defended, reasons for favoring it, good objection to position defended, your critical response to objection, conclusion). More information about this project, as well as a grading rubric, will be provided on Canvas. (Your project will be graded based on the rubric. You will get instructor feedback on this project.)

Late Policy:

All assignments turned in late will lose 10% from their earned grade for each day that they are late. So, for instance, if you were to turn in a paper 19 hours after the deadline, and if you would have earned an 99% on it, you would lose 10% to end with a grade of 89%.

Grading Scale by Percentage:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Point Range</i>
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Class Schedule

COLOR KEY:

- : Videos (not graded)
- : Readings (not graded)
- : Student Hours, Student Hours Survey, Mid-Term Survey (not graded)
- : Flipgrid Introductions, Quizzes, Reading Responses, Hypothesis Annotations, Activities, Meetings with Dr. Clay, Papers/Projects (graded)
- : Bonus Logic Quiz (extra credit)

NOTE:

All items are listed on the day that they are due (or should be completed by). All **red** assignments, **extra credit** assignments, and **surveys** are due by 11:59 PM on the day that they are listed. Feel free to work ahead if you prefer to do so.

Wednesday, September 15 - *Veganism*

Reading #6: - Excerpts from Norcross, A., (2004), "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases."

Hypothesis #2

-- Meet 1-on-1 with Dr. Clay by Friday, September 17 at 11:59 PM --

Monday, September 20 - *Virtue Ethics*

Video #3

Reading #7: - Excerpts from Aristotle, (~330 BCE), *Nicomachean Ethics*.

- Excerpts from Zagzebski, L., (1996), *Virtues of the Mind*.

- [Short video introduction to virtue ethics.](#)

Quiz #2

Tuesday, September 21 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, September 22 - *Utilitarianism*

Reading #8: - Excerpts from Mill, J.S., (1863), *Utilitarianism* (Chapter 2).

- [Short video introduction to utilitarianism.](#)

Hypothesis #3

Monday, September 27 - *Iroquoian Ethics*

Activity #2

Reading #9: - [Excerpts from video with Lyons, O., \(2016\).](#)

Reading Response #2

Tuesday, September 28 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, September 29 - *Kantianism*

Reading #10: - Excerpts from Kant, I., (1785), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

- [Short video introduction to Kantianism.](#)

Hypothesis #4

Monday, October 4 - *Objectivity of Ethics*

Reading #11: - Excerpts from Rachels, J., & Rachels, S., (2012), *Problems from Philosophy*, 3rd edition (Chapter 11).

Quiz #3

Tuesday, October 5 -
Student Hours

Module 3: Free Will

Wednesday, October 6 - *Determinism*
Reading #12: - Excerpts from *Problems from Philosophy* (Chapter 8).
Hypothesis #5

-- Expository Paper due Friday, October 8 at 11:59 PM --

Monday, October 11 - *Incompatibilism*
Video #4
Reading #13: - Excerpts from Van Inwagen, P., (1975), "The
 Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism."
Reading Response #3

Tuesday, October 12 -
Student Hours

Wednesday, October 13 - *Compatibilism*
Activity #3
Reading #14: - Excerpts from Hume, D., (1748), *An Enquiry
 Concerning Human Understanding*.
Hypothesis #6

-- Mid-Term Feedback Survey due Friday, October 15 at 11:59 PM --

Monday, October 18 - *Reflections on the Debate over Free Will*
Reading #15: - Excerpts from *Problems from Philosophy* (Chapter 9).
Quiz #4

Tuesday, October 19 -
Student Hours

Wednesday, October 20 - *Reflections on the Debate over Free Will*
Reading #16: - Excerpts from Vihvelin, K., (2007),
 "Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, and
 Impossibilism."
Hypothesis #7

Module 4: Personal Identity

Monday, October 25 -

The Consciousness View

Video #5

Reading #17: - Excerpts from Locke, J., (1700), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Reading Response #4

Tuesday, October 26 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, October 27 -

The Bundle View

Reading #18: - Excerpts from Hume, D., (1738), *A Treatise Concerning Human Nature*.

Hypothesis #8

Monday, November 1 -

The Human Animal View

Reading #19: - Excerpts from DeGrazia, D., (2005), "Human Persons" and Olson, E., (1999), "The Biological Approach."

Quiz #5

Tuesday, November 2 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, November 3 -

The Dualist View

Activity #4

Reading #20: - Excerpts from Swinburne, R., (1984), "Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory."

Hypothesis #9

-- Critical Paper due Friday, November 5 at 11:59 PM --

Module 5: Theism & Science

Monday, November 8 -

The Cosmological Argument

Video #6

Reading #21: - Excerpts from Leibniz, G.W., (1697) *On the Ultimate Origination of Things*; excerpts from Leibniz, G.W., (1710), *Theodicy*; and excerpts from Leibniz, G.W., (1714), *Monadology*.

Reading Response #5

Tuesday, November 9 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, November 10 -

The Principle of Sufficient Reason

Reading #22:

- Excerpts from du Châtelet, E., (1740), *Foundations*, and excerpts from Hume, D., (1738), *A Treatise of Human Nature*.

Hypothesis #10

Monday, November 15 -

The Design Argument

Reading #23:

- Excerpts from Leibniz, G.W., (1695), *A Specimen of Dynamics* and excerpts from Hume, D., (1779), *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

Quiz #6

Tuesday, November 16 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, November 17 -

Pascal's Wager

Activity #5

Reading #24:

- Excerpts from Pascal, B., (1670), *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets*.

Hypothesis #11

Monday, November 22 -

FALL BREAK

Wednesday, November 24 -

FALL BREAK

Friday, November 26 -

FALL BREAK

Monday, November 29 -

The Problem of Evil and Leibniz's Solution

Video #7

Reading #25:

- Excerpts from Hume, D., (1779), *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.
 - Excerpts from Leibniz, G.W., (1710), *Theodicy*.
 - [Short video on the problem of evil](#).

Reading Response #6

Tuesday, November 30 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, December 1 -

The Problem of Evil and Van Inwagen's Solution

Reading #26: - Excerpts from Van Inwagen, P., (2008), *The Problem of Evil*.

Hypothesis #12

-- Meet with Dr. Clay by Friday, December 3 at 11:59 PM --

Monday, December 6 -

Reading #27:

The Relationship between Religion and Science
 - Excerpts from Plantinga, A., (2010), "Religion and Science."
 - Excerpts from LaPier, R.R., (2017), "[Why Native Americans do not Separate out Religion from Science.](#)"

Quiz #7

Tuesday, December 7 -

Student Hours

Wednesday, December 8 -

Reading #28:

The Relationship between Religion and Science
 - Excerpts from Cajete, G., (1999), *Ignite the Sparkle: An Indigenous Science Education Model*.

Hypothesis #13

-- Persuasive Project due Thursday, December 16 at 11:59 PM --