



PHIL 101 – Invitation to Philosophy

Course Information

Semester	: Summer 2020 (June 29 th , 2020 – July 31 st , 2020)
Credit	: 4
Teaching Hours	: 50 Hours
Time	: 2 hours/day, Mon-Fri
Professor Name	: Dr. Ryan Brown
E-mail	: rbrown12@framingham.edu

Course Description

A critical inquiry into life, death, and the meaning of human existence. Issues such as the nature of reality, knowledge, the problem of truth, the existence of God, free will, and justice are examined from varying perspectives and sources: Western, global, classical, or modern.

Course Expectations

For our accreditation, it is essential that all Framingham State University credit courses follow the Federal Definition of credit hour: for every one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction, a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work is required. Since the summer courses meet for two contact hours daily (10 contact hours of classroom time weekly), the expectation is that students spend 20 hours per week doing out-of-class work. For the five week 4-credit course, this reflects 50 hours of classroom time and 100 hours of out-of-class time since the credit hour is defined as 50 minutes.

Course Introduction

Welcome to philosophy! This course is designed to introduce students to what philosophers do and how philosophy has been practiced historically. Special weight will be given to the classic texts that have been preserved in the Western tradition. Though philosophy has been practiced in isolation in the past, ideas can only ever be tested by being submitted to the crucible of dialogue. Thus, we will endeavor to get everyone in class participating in and contributing to philosophical discussions.

In its original definition, philosophy means love (philein) of wisdom (sophia). In philosophy, we seek to ask questions about the most fundamental aspects of our human experience—in broadest terms, questions about the Divine, the Human Person, the World, and Society—and in asking and answering these questions, strive to know ourselves. Our way in to philosophy this semester will be asking about the being who does philosophy—namely, the human being. Thus we want to ask questions concerning what it is to be a human being in this world—the kinds of questions people ask every day, and the kinds of questions people might want to ask more frequently. Most fundamentally, we will ask: What is the human good, and how can we live the best lives? Does philosophy lead us to the human good and the best life?



Learning Objectives:

Students will be expected to:

- Gain an introductory understanding both of philosophy as a discipline and practice
- Learn to read (philosophical) texts deeply and honestly, to write (philosophical) essays clearly and persuasively, and to discuss (in philosophical conversation) cogently and sensitively.
- Build a solid foundation in the classical tradition of Western philosophy so as to continue to study and discuss philosophy from other epochs and regions.
- Understand and be able to articulate claims about the human good. Be able to discriminate philosophical and non-philosophical claims. Be able to argue for and against philosophical theses.
- Be able to articulate the defense of philosophy against its detractors

Finally, all of us will be asked to come to know ourselves—to struggle with our own (perhaps unrealized) philosophical positions as they come against those of brilliant thinkers of the past.

Class Hours:

Note: Federal regulations dictate that students are required to engage in two hours of work outside of class for each credit hour. So, for a 4-credit course, students are expected to work 8 hours per week outside the regular classroom meeting times. In summary, for 4-credit classes, including online and hybrid classes, students are expected to engage with the course material for a total of 12 hours per week.

Required Text

1. Plato, Five Dialogues, 2nd edition, trans. G.M.A. Grube. ISBN: 978-0872206335
2. E. F. Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed. ISBN: 978-0062414816
3. Josef Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, trans. Lothar Krauth. ISBN: 978-0898703979
4. Josef Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston. ISBN: 978-1890318314

The rest of the texts will be made available as PDFs on Blackboard. Please print these PDFs and read them before the assigned date. See the attached reading schedule for more information.

Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading

A	100-93	B ⁺	89-87	C ⁺	79-77	D	69-60
A ⁻	92-90	B	86-83	C	76-73	F	59-0
		B ⁻	82-80	C ⁻	72-70		

Participation	10%
Reading Guides	20% (1% each)
Exams/In-Class Essays	40% (10% each)



Final Exam	20%
Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Participation: Being an active listener and participant is essential for the success of the class. Therefore, students will be expected to arrive on time, having brought a **printed** copy of the reading, which has been critically read before class. Take notes on the reading itself, as well as in your notebooks. Students will also be expected to contribute to the discussion at least twice per week. Failure to do so will result in “cold-calling”.

Reading Guides: For each class (aside from exam days), I will give you a short reading guide. You must fill out the reading guide while you read the text. Doing so will help you better understand the text, which will allow you to get more out of class. I will check reading guides daily.

Weekly Exams/In-Class Essays: Each Friday, I will give you an exam or an in-class essay—you will be notified in advance what kind of assignment you will have.

- For exams, you should study the week’s material and be prepared to answer short-answer questions about definitions, arguments, comparisons, images, etc. Multiple choice and other such exam questions may or may not appear.
- For an in-class essay, I will give you a topic and prompt in advance, and you should spend the week preparing to answer the prompt using the texts we have read so far. You will be permitted a single sheet of paper, on which you can write down relevant quotes, textual evidence, and an outline, but this sheet must be turned in the day before the essay, so that I can check that it is appropriate.

Final Exam: The final exam will be given on the last day of class. It will cover all of the readings from the semester. Students will be expected to articulate definitions, themes, and central arguments and images from these texts, as well as make comparisons and arguments about the texts.

Policies

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and constitutes a substantial portion of the final grade. If something serious comes up (and some kind of documentation is provided), or if you clear an absence with me beforehand, it will be excused. If not, it will be unexcused. If you miss more than one classes, two points will be deducted from your final grade for each additional unexcused absence. I don’t want this, and neither do you, so come to class! Additionally, one point will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused late arrival.

Technology: Absolutely no electronics (computers, phones, etc.) are to be used in class without special permission solicited from me. Accommodations will be given for documented disabilities and temporary injuries. Any readings provided online must be printed out and brought to class on the day for which they are assigned. You are strongly encouraged to write in and highlight your books and printouts. Unsolicited use of technology (this includes being on your phone) during class will count as an absence.

US Copyright Law (Concerning Blackboard)



“This course website may contain copyrighted materials that are used in compliance with the U.S. Copyright Law. Under that law, materials may not be saved to your computer, revised, copied, or distributed without permission. They are to be used in support of instructional activity as part of this course only and shall be limited to the duration of the course, unless otherwise specified by the instructor or owner of the material. You may only download or print materials at the direction of your instructor who knows which materials are copyrighted and which are not.”

Food, Drink, and Other Potential Distractions: These kind of things are okay, but please just don't be distracting. Please do NOT order food or drinks into the classroom.

Academic Integrity: Cheating, plagiarism, and “contract cheating” (submitting someone else's work in your name; i.e., buying an essay) of any kind are strictly forbidden. Violations of academic integrity will result in a failed assignment, perhaps even a failure of the class itself, or worse.

Note that in addition to plagiarism and cheating, what has come to be known as “contract cheating” (soliciting someone else to write an essay for you, which you turn in as your own work) is a major violation of academic integrity. These companies that promise to write a decent essay for you only want your money, despite all their rhetoric specifically designed to make you think what they are doing is totally legal, moral, and praiseworthy. It's not. They are scamming you, and there's a good chance that you won't get your desired grade anyway. If you have any questions as to whether something counts as plagiarism, ask me, or refer to the school's policy, which is reproduced below.

UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY

“Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State University agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the published policies and procedures regarding academic honesty. In addition to the required statement, faculty members shall, at their discretion, include in the course syllabus additional statements relating the definition of academic honesty to their courses. Infractions of the Policy on Academic Honesty include, but are not limited to: 1. Plagiarism: claiming as one's own work the published or unpublished literal or paraphrased work of another. It should be recognized that plagiarism is not only academically dishonest but also illegal; 2. Cheating on exams, tests, quizzes, assignments, and papers, including the giving or acceptance of these materials and other sources of information without the permission of the instructor(s); 3. Unauthorized collaboration with other individuals in the preparation of course assignments; 4. Submitting without authorization the same assignment for credit in more than one course; 5. Use of dishonest procedures in computer, laboratory, studio, or field work; 6. Misuse of the University's technical facilities (computer machinery, laboratories, media equipment, etc.), either maliciously or for personal gain; 7. Falsification of forms used to document the academic record and to conduct the academic business of the University.”

Personal Integrity: Because part of the nature of philosophy is challenging assumptions and beliefs, it is easy for philosophical arguments to get tense. Challenging assumptions and beliefs is good, so long as all the participants are respectful and do not resort to ad hominem attacks, slander, or anything of the sort. Keep your comments on the idea, not on the person, and remember that someone buying into what you consider to be a false idea does not mean that that person is foolish. Additionally, be respectful of religious, sexual, racial, political, and other differences. Religious intolerance, sexism, racism, harassment, and discrimination of any kind



will not be tolerated. That being said, arguing about whether or not a religious, political, or other belief is true is perfectly acceptable and encouraged, so long as it remains respectful. If you feel as if this code is being broken, either by a student or by the instructor, please see me, and we will work towards a resolution.

Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and need special accommodations, please contact me. Reproduced below is the university statement on documented disabilities.

“Framingham State University offers equal opportunities to all qualified students, including those with disabilities and impairments. The University is committed to making reasonable accommodations as are necessary to ensure that its programs and activities do not discriminate, or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability. The Disability/Access Services Office serves students with learning and psychiatric disabilities as well as students with visual, mobility and hearing impairments. For further information about this, please contact Dr. LaDonna Bridges, Associate Dean of Academic Success and Dean of CASA (Center for Academic Success and Achievement) at 508-626-4906 or lbridges@framingham.edu.”

Books: If there are financial issues with purchasing books, please see me outside of class, and we will work together to find an accommodation.

Reading Schedule

Readings marked with a * will be made available on Blackboard or by email. All other readings come from the required texts available from the bookstore. Reading list is subject to change based on weather and/or the needs of the class.

Week 1. Introduction to philosophy. Philosophical thinking. Philosophical problems.	
Monday, 29/06	Wallace, “This is Water”* (in class) Shiffman, “Majoring in Fear”*
Tuesday, 30/06	Plato, Euthyphro (in Five Dialogues)
Wednesday, 01/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 1-2
Thursday, 02/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 3-4
Friday, 03/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 5 First exam/in-class essay
Week 2. Philosophical thinking and philosophical problems continued. The trial of Socrates.	
Monday, 06/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 6-7
Tuesday, 07/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 8-9
Wednesday, 08/07	Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed, Chs. 10, Epilogue
Thursday, 09/07	Plato, Apology (in Five Dialogues); 17a-28d
Friday, 10/07	Plato, Apology, 28d-42a Second exam/in-class essay
Week 3. A defense of philosophy against its critics.	
Monday, 13/07	Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, Chs. 1-2
Tuesday, 14/07	Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, Chs. 3-4
Wednesday, 15/07	Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, Chs. 5-6
Thursday, 16/07	Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, Chs. 7-8



Friday, 17/07	Pieper, In Defense of Philosophy, Chs. 9 Third exam/in-class essay
Week 4. Socrates's imprisonment and death. How to respond to persecution? What happens after death? Is the soul immortal? The notion of form.	
Monday, 20/07	Plato, Crito (in Five Dialogues)
Tuesday, 21/07	Plato, Phaedo (in Five Dialogues), 57a-72e
Wednesday, 22/07	Plato, Phaedo, 72e-88c
Thursday, 23/07	Plato, Phaedo, 88c-102a
Friday, 24/07	Plato, Phaedo, 102a-118a Fourth exam/in class essay
Week 5. The philosopher's goal and the human good. Happiness and Contemplation.	
Monday, 27/07	Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, Chs.1-3
Tuesday, 28/07	Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation Chs. 4-7
Wednesday, 29/07	Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, Chs. 8-10
Thursday, 30/07	Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, Chs. 11-13
Friday, 31/07	Final Exam