



**Framingham**  
State University

## **PHIL 101 - Invitation to Philosophy**

### COURSE INFORMATION

Semester	: Summer 2021 (June 28, 2021 – July 30, 2021)
Credit	: 4
Teaching Hours	: 50 Hours
Location	: Online
Professor Name	: TBD
E-mail	: TBD

### Course Description:

Invitation to Philosophy: 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.

### Text:

The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy (Eighth Ed., by Norman Melchert and David Morrow), and the ISBN number is 9780190670610.

### On-line Issues

This course is completely on-line. You will be responsible for “learning” the material and demonstrating that learning in a digital environment. It is completely asynchronous, which means that we will not meet at any specific times. Office hours will be conducted on Zoom, but they are completely optional. This course ***is NOT*** self-paced however. You will be required to meet deadlines and follow the structure of the course throughout the five-week term. While you may read ahead and think about your assignments, you will not be allowed to “go ahead” and submit assignments ahead of time. The discussion board aspect stands in place for in-class participation and discussion. My contact with you will be limited to online comments and office meetings on Zoom (if you choose). You must be an independent, self-motivated learner to do well in this course. It can be fun, but it will definitely be a lot of work on your part. The pace may seem extremely fast but we would be examining the same amount of material in a face to face class. This format demand lots of thoughtful reading and “keeping up” by



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using good time management skills.

### Instructor Communication Feedback on Assignments:

I will conduct office hours on Zoom twice a week. They are completely optional.

You can meet me here on Tuesdays at 8pm, Eastern Time,  
USA: <https://zoom.us/j/91843387228>

You can meet me here on Wednesdays at 8am, Eastern Time,  
USA: <https://zoom.us/j/96973279838>

I will attempt to communicate as often as possible with each of you through the Announcement function and e-mail functions on Blackboard. If a number of you send a “common concern” or issue, I will send a group e-mail to clarify information. I will post grades in blackboard. I will send group comments on most assignments and *individual* feedback on specific assignments for the course.

### Technological Help:

It is important to realize that computer glitches, failures and just unexplained events occur throughout the term. When a “malfunction” occurs, please do not panic. We can usually correct the issue. I strongly encourage you not to wait until a deadline before beginning assignments. I am here for content support, however if you need Blackboard support please contact the following:

Self-service 24-7 <http://myit.framingham.edu/>

Email [it@framingham.edu](mailto:it@framingham.edu) to ask a general question

Call: 508 215-5906 (8:30-4:30 Eastern Time in the United States)

### Content:

The textbook and the weekly power point presentations will be the primary source of content for this course. You will need to go through the weekly power point presentations and read the chapters of the textbook carefully in order to complete assignments. The information for the text is [The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy](#) (Eighth Ed., by Norman Melchert and David Morrow), and the ISBN number is 9780190670610. We will cover the following chapters: Four, Six, part of Seven (the *Apology*), Eight, Nine, Sixteen, and Eighteen.



### Power Point Presentations and Weekly Announcements:

Each Monday you will receive an announcement from me that will review the assignments for the upcoming week and comment generally on the assignments from the week past. I will also post a power point presentation on Blackboard that will give you an overarching view of the material covered in the text. The power point presentation should help you understand the content in the textbook, and it will focus on the points from the chapter that I consider most important. You should read my announcement and go through the power point presentation each week.

### Timetable of All Due Dates:

Below is a handy table with all due dates.

<b>Module:</b>	<b>Assigned Reading:</b>	<b>Discussion Board Posts Due:</b>	<b>Questions from the Text Due:</b>	<b>Discussion Board Responses Due:</b>	<b>Weekly Papers Due:</b>
One	Chapt. 4 (pp.55-74), Chapt. 6 (pp.91-101), Apology (pp.116-134).	July 1 at 11:59pm.	July 4 at 11:59pm.	July 4 at 11:59pm.	July 4 at 11:59pm.
Two	Chapt. 8 (pp.148-181).	July 8 at 11:59pm.	July 11 at 11:59pm.	July 11 at 11:59pm.	July 11 at 11:59pm.
Three	Chapt. 9 (pp.182-219).	July 15 at 11:59pm.	July 18 at 11:59pm.	July 18 at 11:59pm.	July 18 at 11:59pm.
Four	Chapt. 16 (pp.340-359).	July 22 at 11:59pm.	July 25 at 11:59pm.	July 25 at 11:59pm.	July 25 at 11:59pm.
Five	Chapt. 18 (pp.404-427)	X	August 1 at 11:59pm.	X	August 1 at 11:59pm.



## Modules by Week:

Below are the readings and assignments due each week. We will complete one module each week. If for some reason the due dates below become an issue, I will consider alternatives.

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### **Module One: Influences on Plato** (June 28 – July 4).

**Readings:** Chapter 4 (pp. 55-74), Chapter 6 (pp. 91-101), *Apology* (pp. 116-134).

**Questions from the text:** Written answers due July 4 on Blackboard.

1. What do the Sophists claim to teach? How do they understand “arête”? (*page 62 from the text*)
2. Explain Protagoras’ saying, “Man is the measure of all things.” (*page 67 from the text*)
3. Contrast *physis* with *nomos*. (*page 67 from the text*)
4. Would a Sophist say that it is more important to be just or to appear just? Why? (*page 67 from the text*)
5. In what way is Socrates like the Sophists? (*page 101 from the text*)
6. In what way is Socrates different from the Sophists? (*page 101 from the text*)
7. How does Socrates proceed in his “examination” of his fellow citizens? (*page 101 from the text*)
8. What is the connection between dialectic and truth? (*page 101 from the text*)
9. What kind of person do you have to be to profit from a conversation with Socrates? (*page 101 from the text*)
10. A number of things seem to have “stood fast” for Socrates in the course of his examinations, things that in some sense we can say he “knows”. What are they? (*page 101 from the text*)

**Discussion Board:** Posts due July 3 on Blackboard.

1. In the opening paragraph of the *Apology* Socrates sets up a contrast or conflict between two ideas. Explain this contrast.
2. “Socratic wisdom” is a particular kind of wisdom. Reading 21a – 21d of the *Apology*, develop a definition for “Socratic wisdom.”

**Respond to posts made by two of your peers by July 4.**

### **Written Assignment Module 1:**

**Paper One:** Due July 4



Plato was deeply influenced by his friend, Socrates. After Socrates was put to death, Plato wrote several dialogs that show what a great man Socrates was. Write a paragraph about a teacher that you admire. It can be a teacher who is famous in your country, or that you have met as a student, or from a book, a movie...anywhere. Explain why this person is a great teacher. (one paragraph: due July 4).

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## **Module Two: Plato** (July 5 – July 11).

**Readings:** Chapter 8 (pp. 148-181).

**Questions from the text:** Written answers due July 11 on Blackboard.

1. In what way does Plato agree with Parmenides? With Heraclitus? (*page 155 from the text*)
2. Why does Plato think that the Form of Bicycle is more real than the bicycle I ride to work? (*page 155 from the text*)
3. What two relationships exist between a Form and some visible thing that “participates” in it? (*page 162 from the text*)
4. What are the parts of the soul? What are their functions? (*page 171 from the text*)
5. What questions does the Ring of Gyges pose? (*page 177 from the text*)
6. What is the psychology of the just person? Of the unjust person? (*page 177 from the text*)
7. How is justice in the soul related to moral behavior in the community? Relate this to the image of the man, the lion, and the monster? (*page 177 from the text*)
8. Who should rule the state? And why? (*page 179 from the text*)
9. Explain the analogy of the navigator. (*page 179 from the text*)
10. How will the “many” be “educated” in Plato’s ideal Republic? (*page 179 from the text*)

**Discussion Board:** Posts due July 8 on Blackboard.

1. Consider someone you know whom you regard as an exceptionally good person. How much does the person resemble Plato’s portrait of the just person? How is he/she different?
2. Would you characterize Plato’s views about a good state as elitist or just? Explain your answer.

**Respond to posts made by two of your peers by July 11.**

**Written Assignment Module 2:**

**Paper Two:** Due July 11.



After reading Chapters 4 and 6 in your textbook, think of the many ways that Socrates is different from the Sophists. Write a story in which the differences like the ones that exist between Socrates and the Sophists comes to life. Show me that you understand the major differences between Socrates and the Sophists in a fictitious story that you create (2 - 3 pages: due July 11).

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### **Module Three: Aristotle** (July 12 – July 18).

**Readings:** Chapter 9 (pp. 182-219).

**Questions from the text:** Written answers due July 18 on Blackboard.

1. What kind of thing is most real for Aristotle? Contrast with Plato. *(page 187 from the text)*
2. Explain each of the four causes that Aristotle talks about. *(page 197 from the text)*
3. How are Aristotle's forms both like and unlike Plato's Forms? *(page 197 from the text)*
4. In what way is substance the primary category of being, according to Aristotle? *(page 203 from the text)*
5. What is God like, according to Aristotle? What kind of cause is God? *(page 203 from the text)*
6. Characterize the three levels of soul. *(page 208 from the text)*
7. Why does Aristotle think happiness is the highest good? *(page 212 from the text)*
8. Why cannot pleasure be the essence of happiness? Why not honor or fame? *(page 212 from the text)*
9. Why does Aristotle say that ethics cannot be an exact science? *(page 212 from the text)*
10. What is practical wisdom? *(page 218 from the text)*

**Discussion Board:** Posts due July 15 on Blackboard.

1. Aristotle recommends the life of virtue because it is the only way for a human being to be happy. Do you think that a life can be happy without being virtuous? Explain your answer.
2. For Aristotle, the highest good for each human being is living the happy life. Do you think Aristotle is correct? Or do you think that there might be something more important than happiness?

**Respond to posts made by two of your peers by July 18.**

**Written Assignment Module 3:**



**Paper Three:** Due July 18.

In the *Myth of the Cave*, Plato has Socrates depict the human condition in allegory form (pp 162 – 165 in the textbook). After listening to Socrates, Glaucon says, “This is a strange picture you’re painting, with strange prisoners.” Socrates responds, “They’re no different from us.” Write a story – either real or invented – in which the message of this story is portrayed. Show me the major message of Plato’s allegory in a story of your own. (2 - 3 pages: due July 18).

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## **Module Four: Historical Transition to Modern Thinking** (July 19– July 25).

**Readings:** Chapter 16 (pp. 340-359).

**Questions from the text:** Written answers due July 25 on Blackboard.

1. Describe the medieval European picture of the physical universe. (*page 344 from the text*)
2. What do the levels in hell and purgatory show us about medieval views of virtue and vice? (*page 344 from the text*)
3. Describe the ideal human life, as pictured by the humanists. (*page 350 from the text*)
4. How does Copernicus resolve the puzzle about the apparent irregularity in the motion of the planets? (*page 358 from the text*)
5. What is the impact of a moving earth on Dante’s picture of the world? (*page 358 from the text*)
6. What does Kepler add to the Copernican picture? (*page 358 from the text*)
7. Contrast Aristotelian explanations of motion with those of Galileo. (*page 358 from the text*)
8. What impact does giving up final causes have on values? (*page 358 from the text*)
9. What happens to the qualities we think we experience in objects? Explain the difference between primary and secondary qualities. (*page 358 from the text*)
10. What questions does the new science pose to the philosophical quest for wisdom? (*page 358 from the text*)

**Discussion Board:** Posts due July 22 on Blackboard.

1. Galileo’s worldview does away with *telos* (purposes in nature). If nature has no inherent purposes, what should we live for? What is the point of life? Answer this question as though a friend were to ask it of you.
2. Copernicus presents a picture of the world that was revolutionary. Tell me about someone you know, from your knowledge of history, or your family, or from a movie...from anywhere in the world...that has made a contribution as revolutionary as the one that Copernicus made.

**Respond to posts made by two of your peers by** July 25.



**Written Assignment Module 4:**

**Paper Four:** Due July 25.

Aristotle was Plato's student and admired his teacher. Despite this, he disagreed with Plato on many points in his philosophy, including his metaphysics. Imagine that these two engaged in a debate about metaphysics. Write out the debate as you imagine it would be. Be sure to have each of these philosophers explain his argument for the true description of reality. Make sure each gives the best defense for his position in your imaginary debate. (2 – 3 pages: due July 25).

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**Module Five: Thomas Hobbes and John Locke** (July 26 – July 30).

**Readings:** Chapter 18 (pp. 404-427).

**Questions from the text:** Written answers due July 30 on Blackboard.

1. Contrast the world-picture we get from Galileo and Hobbes with that of Aristotle and medieval thinkers with respect to a description of the universe. *(page 415 from the text)*
2. Contrast the world-picture we get from Galileo and Hobbes with that of Aristotle and medieval thinkers with respect to the place of values in the world. *(page 415 from the text)*
3. Describe what Hobbes calls "the state of nature" and explain why it has the character it does have. *(page 416 from the text)*
4. How does Hobbes think we can have gotten, or can get, beyond the state of nature? *(page 416 from the text)*
5. What makes Hobbes think that a "social contract" will require the "coercive power" of a state? *(page 416 from the text)*
6. How does Locke's notion of a state of nature differ from Hobbes' notion? *(page 427 from the text)*
7. What are the "inconveniences" in a state of nature that lead to the formation of a government? *(page 427 from the text)*
8. Why can't Locke adopt Hobbes' view of an absolute sovereignty as the solution for these problems? *(page 427 from the text)*
9. What is the origin of private property, according to Locke? *(page 427 from the text)*
10. What sort of government does Locke recommend? *(page 427 from the text)*

**Written Assignment Module 5:**

**Paper Five:** Due July 30.





John Locke, like Thomas Hobbes, speaks of the “state of nature”. Locke’s description, however, differs in many respects from that of Hobbes. Imagine these two philosophers had lunch together, and that each was trying to persuade the other that his own view was the correct one. Write a story about this imaginary discussion. Be sure to include the account each gives for why people in a state of nature benefit from leaving it behind. (2-3 pages: due July 30).

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### Methods of Assessment:

There are four methods I will use to assess your work. They are described below.

#### 1. Questions from the Text:

After reading the relevant chapter in the text, answer the ten questions that I have specified for you above (in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus). You will also find all the questions in the *Assignments* section of Blackboard, and there is where you will submit your answers. Due dates can be found both in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus and in the Timetable of all Due Dates (both found above). These questions come from the textbook, and I have indicated the pages on which the questions can be found. The answers for the questions are found in the reading that has been assigned, and typically you will find the answer to a question in the pages just before the page on which the question is found. You should answer with one to five sentences for each question. An answer that is correct, complete, and has no significant grammatical errors will earn three points. For the entire course, you can earn 150 points for answering these questions. Due dates are specified in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus (above).

By answering these questions you will familiarize yourself with metaphysical, ethical, and political concepts that will prepare you to do well on the discussion board posts and papers.

#### 2. Discussion Board:

After doing the reading for each module, create two posts on the Discussion Board for that module. These posts will reflect your knowledge based on applying the material from the text in some creative way, and the directions for each post are found in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus (above). Due dates can also be found in the Timetable of all Due Dates (which is also above). Each post should run from three to ten sentences. As the fifth week of this course is a short one, there will be no Discussion



Board assignment for Module Five. Original posts are due by 11:59pm of Thursday each week. A post that is correct, complete, and has no significant grammatical errors will earn three points. For the entire course, you can earn 24 points for Discussion Board posts.

### 3. Discussion Board Responses to Peers:

After making your original posts on each discussion board, you will see that posts made by your classmates will become visible. You are asked to make a **response** to the posts of **two** of your classmates (in one or two sentences) each week. The responses should extend upon your classmates posts by adding relevant information or by bringing up relevant facts that presents a different point of view. By responding to different people you can broaden your own perspectives. Personal opinions and experiences are only part of the discussion board. Due dates are specified in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus and in the Timetable of all Due Dates (both above). For the entire course, you can earn 16 points for Discussion Board posts.

It will be helpful if you prepare your comments and responses in Word and then cut and paste the information into the forum. If you are working entirely online and posting a great idea, you could lose your work if the internet connection is interrupted or if some kind of glitch occurs with your computer. Saving it in a word document first and then copying and pasting may save some headaches down the road. In addition, editing your thoughts is much easier in Word. You can make use of Grammar Check and Spelling Check in WORD so that your comments are clear and concise. You must enter your text into the discussion board. Simply attaching a file is not acceptable. I will be reading postings and making “general” comments about the nature of postings when needed. **Please plan to spend about 1 hour per week actually posting and responding to comments.**

The total number of points you can earn for your work with *Questions from the Text*, *Discussion Board* posts, and *Responses to Peers* is 190. Your percentage of 190 points will weigh in as 50% of your final grade. Calculate your percentage by multiplying the total number of points you earn by .53.

### 4. Weekly Papers:

You will be asked to write five papers for this course, one for each module. The prompt for each paper, as well as the due date, can be found in the “Modules by Week” section of this syllabus (above). Due dates can be found in the Timetable of all Due Dates as well (also above). The paper for the first module should be one (or two) paragraphs, and it should describe a teacher that has influenced your life. The



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remaining papers should be two to three pages each, and you are being asked in these papers to create and write a story of your own that shows an understanding of relevant philosophical concepts. The rubric I will be using to grade the papers is attached to this syllabus and will also be available on Blackboard. You will receive a grade for each paper, and the average of these five grades will make up 50% of your course grade. You will submit your papers by going to the assignment function in Blackboard in the Module for each week.

### Grading Percentages:

The total number of points you can earn on Discussion Board Posts, Questions from the Text, and Discussion Board Responses is 190. Your score on Discussion Board Posts, Questions from the Text, and Discussion Board Responses will make up 50% of your grade for the course. The average grade for your five papers will make up the remaining 50%.

*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. Academic Support serves students with learning and psychiatric disabilities as well as students with visual, mobility and hearing impairments. For further information about this, please visit the website at <http://www.framingham.edu/center-for-academic-support-and-advising/disability-services/index.html> or contact Ms. LaDonna Bridges, Director of Academic Support/Disability Services, in the Center for Academic Support and Advising (CASA) at 508-626-4906 or [lbridges@framingham.edu](mailto:lbridges@framingham.edu).*



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## RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF WEEKLY PAPERS: SUMMER 2021

		Strong (2 points)	Average (1 point)	Weak (0 points)
<b>Clarity:</b>	Is it clear what is trying to be said?	_____	_____	_____
<b>Accuracy:</b>	Are the statements in the story a true reflection of the principle(s) at hand?	_____	_____	_____
<b>Relevance:</b>	Are the statements the story makes relevant to the principle(s) at hand?	_____	_____	_____
<b>Depth:</b>	Are all important aspects of the principle(s) at hand explained?	_____	_____	_____
<b>Breadth:</b>	Are all important aspects of the principle(s) at hand covered?	_____	_____	_____
<b>Style:</b>	Are the sentences in the paper grammatically correct? Are sentence structures varied? Is word choice appropriate for the audience?	_____	_____	_____

**Numerical total:** \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE:

- A:** Numerical total of 11 – 12.
- B:** Numerical total of 8 – 10.
- C:** Numerical total of 5 – 7.
- D:** Numerical total of 2 – 4.
- F:** Numerical total of 0 – 1.