

PHI101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY FALL 2020 LECTURE HOURS/CREDITS: 3/3

Instructor: Ian McKeachie Office Hours: By appointment (Zoom) Email: <u>imckeach@rcsj.edu</u> (response within 1 business day)

Course description

This course provides an introduction to philosophical reasoning and major philosophical problems. It will be divided into four main units on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and social philosophy, with specialized topics in each unit. This course will teach you how to engage critically with philosophical ideas, and it will also (hopefully) show you why these ideas matter and how philosophical thinking can relate to the real world.

Textbook and Course Materials:

Cahn, Steven M., editor. *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, 6th edition, Oxford University Press, 2017.

Additional readings will be uploaded to the Materials section on Blackboard.

Please see current textbook prices at <u>www.rcgc.bncollege.com</u>

Rowan College Core Competencies

This course focuses on four of Rowan College's Core Competencies:

- Written and Oral Communication
- Humanistic Perspective
- Ethical Reasoning and Action
- Historical Perspective

Evaluation and Assessment

The final grade for the course is calculated as follows:

- Multiple-Choice Quizzes (5 total): 15%
- Discussion Posts (5 total): 25%
- Close Reading Assignment: 15%
- Philosophy in Media Assignment: 20%
- Final Presentation Topic Proposal: 5%
- Final Presentation: 20%

Online Proctoring

All courses offered at RCSJ, whether they are web-enhanced, hybrid, or fully online, may include assessments that make use of Online Proctoring. To find out more about Online Proctoring, and to learn about the minimum technical requirements, visit <u>rcsj.edu/elearning/online-proctoring</u>.

Grading Scale

B-: 80%-83%	D+: 67%-69%
C+: 77%-79%	D: 64%-66%
C: 74%-76%	D-: 60%-63%
C-: 70%-73%	F: Below 60%
	C+: 77%-79% C: 74%-76%

Assignment Details

1. Multiple-Choice Quizzes

In weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, and 13, you will have online multiple-choice quizzes covering factual information from the reading and lectures, to be completed by **midnight on Friday**. Each quiz will cover all of the course material that has not yet been quizzed; that is to say, the first quiz will cover the first three weeks' worth of material, the second one will cover the material from weeks 4 and 5, and so on. These quizzes are designed to be easy if you've been keeping up with the course. There won't be any "gotcha" questions. The quizzes are collectively worth 15% of your final grade.

2. Discussion Posts

In weeks 4, 6, 8, 10, and 14, you will be asked to post a critical response to the week's assigned material in the Discussion section on Blackboard. Your response should be no less than 250 words, and should take a stance on a subject discussed in the assigned materials, arguing for or against a position taken by one of that week's authors. The goal in these posts is not just to say whether *you* agree with the author's argument, but also to convince your reader that *they* have a good reason to think the same thing you do; take care to show why you think the author's argument.

ment works or doesn't work, rather than just saying "I agree" or "I disagree". Your discussion posts are due by **midnight on Friday** each week. Then, no later than **midnight of that Sunday** (i.e. two days later), you must reply to at least **two** posts from your fellow classmates. There is no minimum word count for these replies, but try to engage constructively with what your classmates have said—building on their ideas, offering counterarguments, or helping to answer questions they posed. Your discussion posts during the semester are collectively worth 25% of your final grade for the course.

3. Close Reading Assignment (Due Week 2)

This assignment will teach you how to critically read a philosophical text. You will take notes on one of the assigned readings from the first two weeks of class (the *Defence of Socrates* or the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*). In your own words, answer the following questions:

- What is the *subject* of this work? What sort of question or problem is it posing?
- What is the author's *thesis*? What position is the author trying to convince you of?
- What is the author's *argument*? Break it down, step-by-step. What are the initial premises that the author wants you to accept, and how are these premises supposed to lead to the conclusion?
- What *examples* or *analogies* does the author use?
- What is a potential *objection* to this argument? What problem(s) do you see that might make it not work? Is there a way those problems could be fixed to make the argument run better?

Do not use any outside resources for this assignment. The purpose of the assignment is for you to take your own notes and learn how to answer these questions when reading a piece of philoso-phy—these are the questions you will want to ask yourself for every work we read in this class. This is **not** a formal essay assignment, and you don't need to write in full paragraphs or give a thesis, introduction, or conclusion. Bullet points are fine. This assignment counts for 15% of your grade for the class.

4. Philosophy in Media Assignment (Due Week 11)

Submit a short (500 words) written assignment where you select one philosophical idea from the course and show how that idea connects to a book, movie, TV show, or other piece of media of your choosing. You should use your selected artwork as a tool to explain a particular philosophical problem and demonstrate your understanding of it. The purpose of this assignment is to take philosophy beyond the textbook and show how philosophical ideas influence art and culture. It is worth 20% of your final grade. Your paper should include:

- A clear introduction and thesis statement
- A one-paragraph summary of the artwork you are analyzing, or of the piece of it that is philosophically relevant
- A brief explanation of the philosophical problem being discussed
- An interpretation of the artwork that shows its relevance to the philosophical problem
- Quotes from assigned readings (cited in MLA format) to support your argument

Example (you **may not** use this for your assignment):

"Neo's discovery of the Matrix illustrates the uncertainty of external world skepticism. He realizes, just as Descartes did, that it is difficult to know for sure that the world we live in is real, and not just a sensory illusion."

5. Final Presentation - Topic Proposal (Due Week 12)

The final assignment is a 10-15 minute presentation about a reading from the textbook, to be delivered at the end of the semester. This presentation may be on a philosophical work we have read together, or if you choose, you may select another work out of the textbook. For the first part of this assignment, you will choose the philosophical work you wish to present on, and you will submit a 250-word proposal explaining what you've chosen and why you think this work is interesting. Your topic proposal is worth 5% of your final grade.

6. Final Presentation (Due Week 15)

At the end of the course, you will record a 10-15 minute presentation about your chosen philosophical work. This should be uploaded to the course OneDrive folder (link available on Blackboard) as a video or a narrated Powerpoint. **If you don't have access to the technological resources needed to record your presentation, please contact me at least two weeks before the presentation is due**. We can find a workaround on an *ad hoc* basis, but you must give me a heads-up in advance.

Your presentation should answer all the questions you learned to ask in the Close Reading Assignment: Identify the work's *subject, thesis, argument, examples,* and at least one *objection.* You are not required or expected to use outside resources, but you may do so if you choose; if you do, make sure you provide a slide at the end of your Powerpoint with MLA citations for all the sources you used in your presentation (**including** the lectures and interactions with other students' discussion posts). Please also provide MLA citations for any visual aids you use.

Some tips for making a strong Powerpoint presentation:

- Visual aids are your friend! You're explaining difficult philosophical concepts, and if you can help illustrate your point with photos, cartoons, or gifs, it'll be easier for your viewer to connect to the ideas in your presentation.
- Try not to just read information word-for-word off your slides. Think of the slides as a jumping-off point to clue your audience in to what you're about to say, rather than a script for you to read verbatim.
- Follow the 5x7 rule: Each slide should have no more than five bullet points with seven words per line, or seven bullet points with five words per line. You want your audience paying attention to what you're saying, not just reading what you've written.
- Don't go overboard with animated transitions on your slides. I know it's tempting.
- Not everyone is comfortable with public speaking, and that's okay. What I'm looking for in this presentation has to do with its content, not with how smoothly you speak.

The final presentation counts for 20% of your grade for the class.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and apply major ideas and arguments in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and social philosophy
- Critically read a philosophical text
- Identify potential objections to an argument
- Explain philosophical ideas to others

Online Etiquette

This course is taught online. Each week, you will have assigned readings from the textbook or from additional sources that will be distributed to you electronically, as well as one assigned video resource. All materials listed in the syllabus are required. I will post video lectures at the beginning of the week for you to watch on your own time, and I will also share the lecture slides I use in each video. Questions about the content of the assigned materials should be posted in the Discussion section on Blackboard—if you have a question about something, chances are good that someone else has that question, too! For more individual subjects (disability accommodation, requesting deadline extensions, etc.), you should email me directly or set up a Zoom appointment for office hours. I will respond to emails within **one business day**, which means that if you email me on a Friday night, you might not get a response until the following Monday.

A significant portion of this course requires you to interact with your classmates online, in the Discussion section of Blackboard. Here are some tips for maintaining respectful, productive discussion:

- 1. Critique ideas, not people. You will disagree with each other about the various ideas presented in this class. That's normal and encouraged. But when you voice disagreement, make sure to focus on the ideas and arguments you object to. Don't ever resort to insults or personal jabs.
- 2. Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say in person. Treat each other with the same level of respect that you would offer in a physical classroom. Be nice.
- **3.** Avoid sarcasm. Tone is hard to convey in writing, and attempts at sarcasm come across much harsher than they're intended.
- 4. Write in full sentences, do your best to use proper spelling and grammar, and avoid writing in all caps. This is not an English class, and you are graded on your ideas more than on the conventions of writing, but these conventions help your ideas come across properly.
- **5.** Stay on topic. Keep Blackboard discussions relevant to the material we're discussing in class.

6. Read through other students' contributions and try to make sure you are not just repeating what someone else has already said.

Late Work and Disability Accommodation

Assignments turned in late will be penalized by one third of a letter grade $(A \rightarrow A^-, A^- \rightarrow B^+)$ for **each business day** past the deadline. I will make accommodations in case of emergency, but you **must** notify me in advance and provide some documentation showing the reason you are unable to turn your work in on time.

If you require disability accommodation, be sure to contact the Office of Special Services and obtain all the necessary paperwork.

Academic Integrity

Don't plagiarize. Seriously, don't do it. If I catch even the faintest whiff of plagiarism for an assignment, intentional or unintentional, **you will automatically fail the assignment**. If there are two academic integrity violations during the semester, **you will automatically fail the course**.

What is plagiarism? In short, it's taking credit for someone else's work. This can mean, but is not limited to:

- Using someone's exact words without quoting and citing them
- Using a close paraphrase of someone else's words without citing them or framing what they say within the context of your own ideas
- Copying someone's answers on an exam or homework assignment
- Presenting someone else's idea as your own
- Using someone's idea without mentioning where it came from

Why does plagiarism matter? Setting aside moral considerations about lying and stealing, the point of the assignments in this class is for me to see *your* work and *your* ideas. In philosophy especially, what I'm looking to see is not whether you give a particular answer, but rather how you think and how you apply philosophical ideas to specific problems. When you plagiarize, you are showing me how someone else thinks, and that doesn't tell me anything about what you have learned in the course.

Collaboration is good, as is taking inspiration from things you have seen or heard elsewhere. It's okay—and even encouraged—to mention and reply to things other people have thought and said, but you have to be explicit in drawing the line where their ideas end and your ideas begin. Show me what other people say, and then show me what you think on the matter and how your ideas are different from theirs.

All citations provided should be in MLA format. For further discussion of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see <u>https://www.plagiarism.org/article/preventing-plagiarism-when-writing</u>.

Schedule

Week 1 9/1-9/4	 What is Philosophical Investigation? -Cahn, Kitcher, & Sher, <i>The Elements of Argument</i> (pp. 45-53) -Cahn, <i>Necessary and Sufficient Conditions</i> (pp. 58-60) -Plato, <i>Defence of Socrates</i> (pp. 16-22) -Video: "What is Philosophy? Crash Course Philosophy #1" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY</u> Introduce Yourself on the Blackboard Discussion Board 		
Week 2 9/7-9/11	Metaphysics I: Personal Identity -Perry, <i>The Problem of Personal Identity</i> (pp. 231-233) -Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> (pp. 238-241) -Parfit, <i>The Unimportance of Identity</i> (pp. 233-237) -Video: "The Philosophy of Personal Identity - Who Are You?" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CLun4FpqR8</u> Close Reading Assignment Due 9/11		
Week 3 9/14-9/18	Metaphysics II: The Mind-Body Problem -Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (pp. 173-178) -Churchland, <i>The Mind-Body Problem</i> (pp. 140-152) -Video: "Are you a body with a mind or a mind with a body? Maryam Alimardani" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILDy6kYU-xQ</u> Online Quiz 1 Due 9/18		
Week 4 9/21-9/25	Metaphysics III: Free Will -Nagel, <i>Free Will</i> (pp. 181-186) -Stace, <i>Free Will and Determinism</i> (pp. 186-188) -Frankfurt, <i>The Principle of Alternate Possibilities</i> (pp. 199-201) -Video: "The physics that suggests we have no free will" <u>https://www.bbc.com/reel/video/p086tg3k/the-physics-that-suggests-we-have-no-free-will</u> Discussion Post 1 Due 9/25 Responses Due 9/27		
Week 5 9/28-10/2	Epistemology I: Knowledge -Zagzebski, <i>Caring and Epistemic Demands</i> (pp. 69-72) -Ayer, <i>What is Knowledge</i> ? (pp. 72-74) -Gettier, <i>Is Justified True Belief Knowledge</i> ? (pp. 74-75) -Nozick, <i>Conditions for Knowledge</i> (pp. 76-78) -Video: "What is the 'Gettier Problem'? [Illustrated]" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uni8SeioCcM</u> Online Quiz 2 Due 10/2		

Week 6 10/5-10/9	Epistemology II: The Problem of Induction -Hume, <i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> (pp.115-124) -Russell, <i>The Problem of Induction</i> (pp. 87-89) -Strawson, <i>Induction Without a Problem</i> (pp. 89-91) -Video: "58. The Problem of Induction THUNK" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xu6kkLJ58Z0</u> Discussion Post 2 Due 10/9 Responses Due 10/11
Week 7 10/12-10/16	Epistemology III: External World Skepticism -Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (pp. 94-98) -Russell, <i>Appearance and Reality</i> (pp. 78-81) -Phillips, <i>What Can I Know</i> ? (pp. 82-86) -Video: "PHILOSOPHY - Epistemology: The Problem of Skepticism [HD]" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqjdRAERWLc</u> Online Quiz 3 Due 10/16
Week 8 10/19-10/23	Ethics I: Utilitarianism -Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (pp. 383-390) -Pojman, <i>Assessing Utilitarianism</i> (pp. 342-349) -Video: "Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI</u> Discussion Post 3 Due 10/23 Responses Due 10/25
Week 9 10/26-10/30	Ethics II: Deontology -Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> (pp. 378-383) -O'Neill, <i>Kant's Ethics</i> (pp. 340-342) -Video: "Beginner's Guide to Kant's Moral Philosophy" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ2fvTvtzBM</u> Online Quiz 4 Due 10/30
Week 10 11/2-11/6	Ethics III: Virtue Ethics -Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (pp. 373-378) -Driver, <i>Virtue Ethics</i> (pp. 349-351) -Video: "Aristotle & Virtue Theory: Crash Course Philosophy #38" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvtOWEXDIQ</u> Discussion Post 4 Due 11/6 Responses Due 11/8

Week 11 11/9-11/13	Social Philosophy I: Building a Just Society -Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (pp. 541-545) -Nozick, <i>Distributive Justice</i> (pp. 545-549) -Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> (pp. 583-586) -Video: "Rawls vs Nozick" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49-hUPHXRbk</u> Philosophy in Media Assignment Due 11/13
Week 12 11/16-11/20	Social Philosophy II: Gender -Haslanger, Gender and Social Construction: Who? What? When? Where? How?* -Butler, Gender Trouble* -Video: "What is Gender? Philosophy Tube" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seUVb7gbrTY Final Presentation Topic Proposal Due 11/20
Week 13 11/23-11/25	Social Philosophy III: Race -Appiah, <i>Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections</i> * -Loury, <i>The Anatomy of Racial Inequality: The Author's Account</i> * -Video: "James Baldwin v. William F. Buckley Jr. Debate" (warning: contains a slur) <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbkObXxSUus</u> Online Quiz 5 Due 11/27
Week 14 11/30-12/4	Aesthetics -Weitz, <i>The Role of Theory in Aesthetics</i> (pp. 589-595) -Sibley, <i>Aesthetic Concepts</i> (pp. 595-599) -Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> (pp. 620-625) -Video: "Intro to Aesthetics Philosophy Tube" <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nLa-jF6hHY</u> Discussion Post 5 Due 12/4 Responses Due 12/6
Week 15 12/7-12/11	 What's the Point of Philosophy? -Russell, <i>The Value of Philosophy</i> (pp. 13-15) -Hook, <i>What is a Liberal Education</i>? (pp. 488-495) -Nussbaum, <i>Cultivating Humanity</i> (pp. 496-498) -Video: "Why We Need Philosophy" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nywz473cmp4 Final Presentation Due 12/11

*Readings marked with an asterisk are not in the textbook. They are uploaded as PDFs to the Materials section on Blackboard. Links to the video homework and the lectures for each week are also available in the Materials section. All assignments are due by **midnight** on the day specified.

Affirmative Action Statement

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing a work and academic environment that maintains and promotes affirmative action and equal opportunity for all employees and students without discrimination on the basis of certain enumerated and protected categories. These categories are race, creed (religion), color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), marital status, domestic partnership or civil union status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, liability for military service, or mental or physical disability, including AIDS and HIV related illnesses.

For questions concerning discrimination, contact Almarie J. Jones, Special Assistant to the President, Diversity and Equity/Title IX and Compliance, 856-415-2154 or **ajones@rcsj.edu** or (Cumberland) Nathaniel Alridge, Jr., Director, Diversity and Equity/Title IX and Judicial Affairs, 856-691-8600, ext. 1414 or **nalridge@rcsj.edu**. For disability issues or any barriers in the learning or physical environment related to a documented condition/disability please contact: Gloucester Campus - Dennis M. Cook, Director, Department of Special Services, ADAAA/504 Officer at 856-415-2265 or **dcook@rcsj.edu**; or Cumberland Campus - Meredith Vicente, Senior Director, Physical & Learning Disabilities, Center for Academic & Student Success (CASS) at 856-691-6900 ext. 1282 or **mvicent1@rcsj.edu**.

Department of Special Services

The Department of Special Services is located in the Instructional Center, room 425A. The Special Services Department is committed to providing support services and ensural equal access to eligible students with documented disabilities as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act with Amendments. If you are an eligible student with a documented disability please visit our website at <u>RCSJ.edu/SpecialServices</u> or call the office at 856-415-2265 or 856-415-2247 to speak to the Assistant Director Carol Weinhardt, <u>cweinhar@rcsj.edu</u>.

Reporting Allegations of Sexual Assault and Resource Referrals (8/2020) Gloucester Campus

There are multiple safe places for students to report allegations of sexual assault, both on and off campus. Reports of sexual assault can be made to any of the following offices listed in the chart below.

All students are encouraged to report alleged crimes on campus. Crimes that pose a threat to the campus community must be reported to 9-1-1, Security, the Sheriff's Office or the Deptford Township Police Department. All employees, including Security staff, must report incidents of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct to the Title IX Officer.

Service	Resource	Phone Number/Location/Website
Non-Confi- dential Reporting Local Law Enforcement	Gloucester County Sheriff's Office Deptford Township Police Dept. Gloucester Co. Prosecutor's Office Sexual Assault Response Team	856-681-2200 856-845-2220 856-384-5500 856-384-5555
Non-Confi- dential Reporting 9-1-1 and Campus Security	 9-1-1 Gloucester County Emergency Management Dispatch Campus Security Blue Light Emergency Phones <u>OR</u>ext. 4444 from any campus desk phone 	9-1-1 or push RED button on Campus Blue Light Emergency Phones 856-681-6287
Non-Confi- dential On- Campus Reporting Support Ser- vices	Almarie J. Jones Special Assistant to the President Diversity and Equity/Title IX and Compliance John F. Ryder Director Student and Veteran Affairs	856-415-2154 College Center, Room 116 <u>ajones@rcsj.edu</u> 856-468-5000, ext. 6456 College Center, room 202 <u>jryder@rcsj.edu</u>
Confidential On-Campus Counseling and Support Ser- vices	Lois Y. Lawson-Briddell, Ph.D. MSW, LSW, Director Counseling & Wellness Services Center William Leonard, Ph.D. Intervention Teams Consultant Crystal Noboa, LSW, MSW Director, The Center for People in Transition (PIT) Diane Mussoline, EdS, LMFT Director of Behavioral Services	856-464-5236 <u>llawsonb@rcsj.edu</u> College Center, Room 206 <u>856-415-2119 wleonard@rcsj.edu</u> College Center, STEM Office C-168 856-415-2264 cnoboa@rcsj.edu Workforce Development Bldg., room 809 856-494-5665 dmussoli@rcsj.edu College Center, Room 200A
Confidential Off-Campus Full-Service Support	Center for Family Services/ Services Empowering Rights of Victims (SERV)	1-866-295-7378 Camden and Gloucester counties <u>centerffs.org/serv</u>
Hospitals with Sexual As- sault Nurse Examiners	Inspira Medical Center Jefferson Washington Township Hospital	700 Mullica Hill Rd. Mullica Hill, NJ · 856-508-1000 435 Hurffville-Crosskeys Rd., Turnersville, NJ · 856-582-2500