

University of Central Oklahoma
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Humanities & Philosophy
Fall 2022

PHIL 1113: Introduction to Philosophy

CRN: 15814

MWF: 11:00AM-11:50 AM

LAS 264

Instructor: Dr. Jerry Green

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Office: Liberal Arts 204C

Office Hours: M,W 1:00 PM -2:00 PM; T,Th 10:00 AM -12:00 PM (and by appt.)

Course Description:

"This course is a general introduction to the major areas of philosophical study. Students will be provided with the opportunity to begin their own critical analysis of their philosophical beliefs."

What does this mean? In this course we will focus on (i) our ability to think, and the various factors that impede or distort that ability, (ii) what steps we can take to avoid these impediments and distortions, and so cultivate our ability to think better, and (iii) some of the values which support and direct good thinking. Hence the main goal of this course is practical: how can we transform ourselves into clearer, more careful, and more cogent thinkers and actors?

The content of this course will include:

- The nature and value of truth, and its relationship to judgement, belief, and opinion
- The composition of the human mind, and the complex relationships between its parts
- The standards and habits which distinguish good reasoning and use of evidence from bad
- The nature, source, and variety of epistemic values, and the case for epistemic responsibility
- The structure of epistemic virtues, and how to cultivate them

Finally, we will focus on developing the following more practical philosophical skills:

- Reading and understanding conceptually difficult texts
- Critically evaluating arguments and assumptions (yours and others')
- Communicating complex ideas clearly and efficiently

Core Curriculum Course:

This course is a Critical Inquiry Core Course and fulfills one of the core curriculum requirements of the university. It emphasizes ethical and critical thinking skills necessary for interpreting the self in relation to culture and society. This course will introduce students to philosophic inquiry into many of the seminal ideas in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics that have shaped our world. This course stresses the teaching of philosophic inquiry as a significant way of knowing. The course addresses many of the major topics in the history of philosophy and includes the study of both inductive and deductive reasoning as well as logical fallacies.

Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives: In this course students will read classical and contemporary writings on such matters as ethics and the quest for the good life, truth and the problem of knowledge, the concept of self, the idea of freedom and the concept of human nature. Students will seek to answer, using critical reasoning, a series of questions about these issues as raised by the course readings. In addition, students will engage each other in sustained discussion of these issues. The following are the outcomes a successful student will attain by the end of this course: (1) identify and define key philosophical terms studied in the course, (2) distinguish among the philosophic views studied in the course, (3) identify major points and arguments of various philosophic essays, (4) critically analyze and evaluate philosophic arguments, and (5) provide rationally persuasive arguments in defense of their own beliefs about a variety of controversial issues in philosophy.

In addition, students will reflect on their character as a socially-situated epistemic agent, and being the process of trying to become a better person by developing habits and perspectives that improve their character and their relationships with others.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will begin the process of developing ethical and critical thinking skills necessary for interpreting the self in relation to culture and society.
- 2) Students will read, analyze, and synthesize major texts from the history of philosophy and communicate about them in writing.
- 3) Students will analyze, appraise, and formally symbolize arguments.

Transformational Learning Outcomes: The University of Central Oklahoma is a learning-centered organization committed to Transformative education through active engagement in the teaching-learning interchange, scholarly and creative pursuits, leadership, global competency, healthy lifestyles, and service to others. Transformative learning goals (the “Central Six”) have been identified as: *Discipline Knowledge*, *Leadership*, *Research*, *Scholarly and Creative Activities*, *Service Learning and Civic Engagement*, *Global and Cultural Competencies*, and *Health and Wellness*.

This course addresses four of the University’s transformative learning goals:

- *Discipline Knowledge*, by investigating some core questions and subfields of philosophy
- *Leadership*, by developing self-awareness, decision-making skills, and ethical fluency
- *Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities*, by applying course content to personal interests
- *Health and Wellness*, by focusing on mental health and practical/academic success

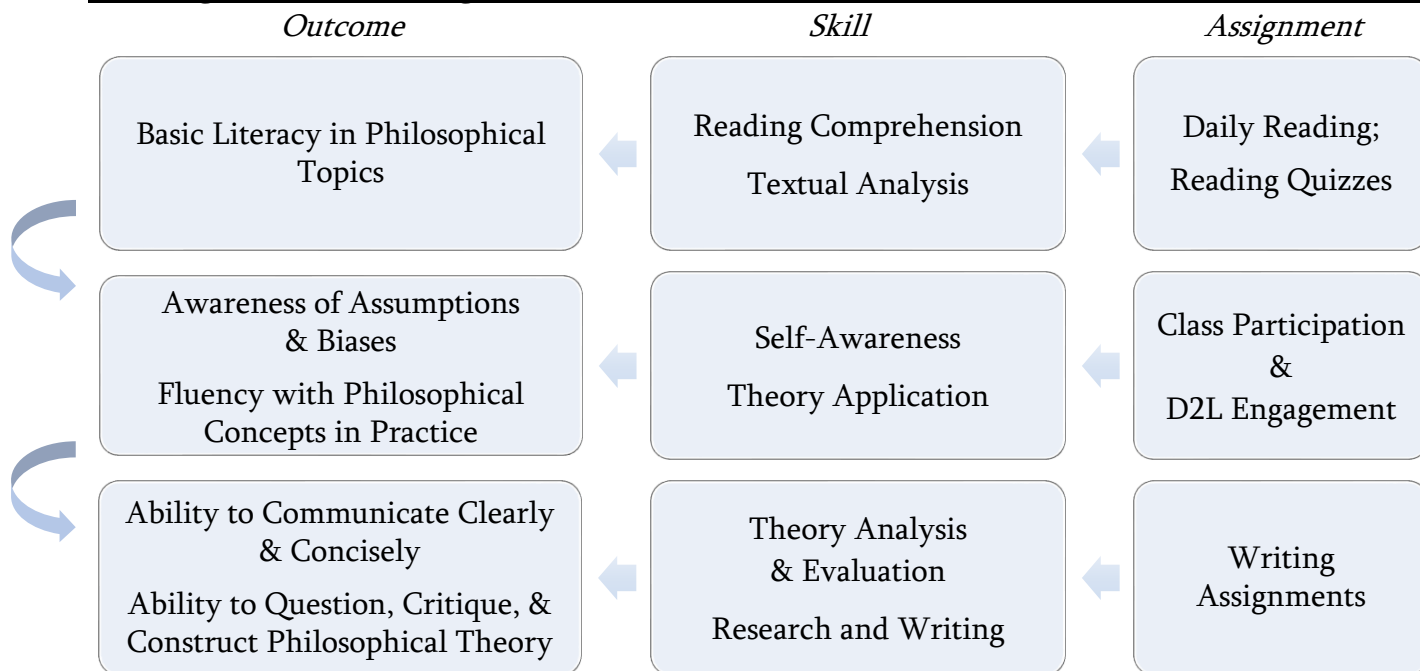
Course Materials

We will not use a textbook for this course, because books are expensive. Instead, I have carefully (and laboriously!) selected a range of relevant free- and fair-use materials, from academic journal articles and book chapters to blog posts and interviews.

This material will be available in a course pack, available at [APMOK](#) on 500 E. 2nd St (right across from campus). This is a **required text** for class: you must bring your hard copy of the reading to class *every* session (and I recommend you use it for studying as well). It will cost about \$30. [There will also be an online version of this material for students with accessibility needs (e.g. e-readers)].

In addition to this primary course material, I will also post a number of handouts and other material to D2L. Most important are the *Daily Reading Guides*, one-page supplements to each day’s reading that give background context, highlight key points, and suggest study questions. Daily Reading Guides are also **required texts**: material introduced there are fair game for quizzes and papers. My advice is to read the Daily Reading Guides *first*, then the day’s material, then the Handouts again.

Learning Outcomes & Assignments



Reading

You'll have 30-60 pages of reading per week in this course; the average is about 14 pages per class session. This material can be very difficult, and you will usually have to read it more than once. I've done everything I can to keep the assignments short, accessible and wholly relevant, and I will tell you when you can occasionally skim or skip passages, so you won't waste your time reading pages that don't matter. But this also means that anything included is important, so you have to read it carefully. You will also have one page Reading Guides (see above) to help guide you through the material.

Daily Reading Quizzes

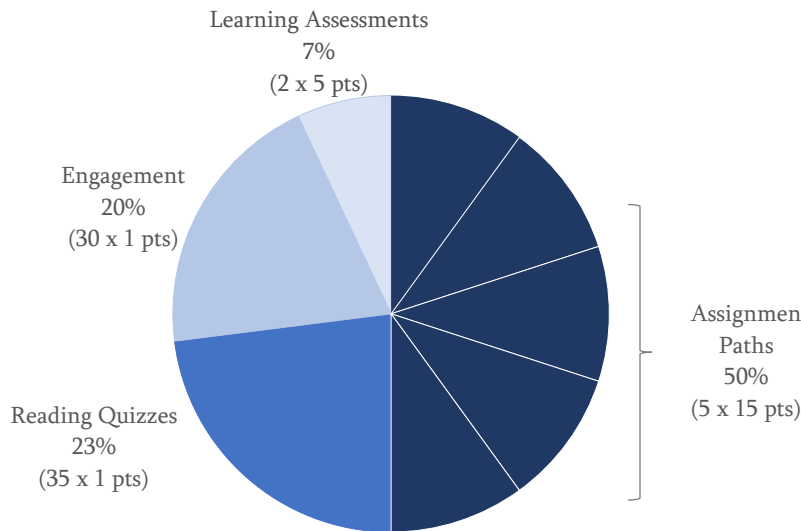
We will have low-stakes reading comprehension quizzes for each reading starting in the third week of the class (35 total). These short quizzes (5 questions each) will use a variety of short-answer questions (multiple choice, True/False, etc.), to diagnose how well you are getting the important points from each reading. These should be easy points that you earn simply by doing the minimal required work. Conversely, if you are doing poorly on these quizzes, you may need to change your study habits: come talk to me to discuss study strategies.

Engagement

A second way of helping you work through course material is through social engagement, both with the professor and with your classmates. You will have a variety of ways to do this, depending on your schedule, learning preferences, etc., including things like discussion boards, chats, office hours, presentations, etc. You'll get a separate handout with more details on this.

Writing Assignments

Finally, you will have a set of short papers throughout the class. Each paper will ask you to do two things: (a) show that you understand and can explain relevant course concepts, and (b) show how you can apply the concepts and themes from the course to real-life issues outside the classroom. Each paper is roughly the same in size and structure, but there will be variety of paper topics throughout the semester. I will give you a separate handout later with more specific instructions and advice on these papers.



Grade Scale:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| A | = 150.0-135.0 |
| B | = 134.9-120.0 |
| C | = 119.9-105.0 |
| D | = 104.9-90.0 |
| E | = 89.9 – 0.0 |

Quizzes: There will be roughly 38 reading quizzes during the semester, essentially one every day starting in the third week of class. Each quiz will be worth 1 point total. However, there is a 35 point cap in this category: once you hit 35 points, you cannot earn any more. The extra quizzes give you more attempts to continue raising your grade until you hit the 35 point cap. This means that you can miss a few questions (either by getting answers wrong or by skipping it entirely), and still get 100% in this category. This is like a curve but better, because it rewards you for making an effort every day, and makes it possible to get a 100% in this category without acing every quiz.

Engagement: This category is worth 30 points, with each individual contribution will be worth 1 point. You should expect to do one per week, submitted on themed discussion boards on D2L.

Learning Assessment: Your first writing assignment will be a learning self-assessment, which you'll revisit at the end of the course. This will have two components: (i) take a series of learning self-assessment quizzes, and (ii) report the results and reflect on how accurate you think they are, and how you can use that information to succeed in this class. Each half is 5 pts.

Assignments Paths: There will be Assignment Path assignments spread throughout the semester. They will be worth 15 points each, for a total of 75 points (half of the final grade). You will have a new topic approximately every three weeks, and options for how exactly to write about it (more detail on that in a separate handout).

Extra Credit: I do not typically offer extra credit assignments, though I will occasionally give extra quiz points for things like taking evaluation surveys. Don't bug me about this: focus instead on doing well on the work you already have.

Rounding: The letter grade cut-off for each grade is 90.0, 80.0, etc. I may round up in exceptional cases, if (i) I feel you've done better than your score suggests, and (ii) your grade is not due to excessive incomplete or missing assignments. This is a courtesy, not an entitlement.

Appeals: I am more than happy to talk to you about low grades, and regrade your assignment if merited. I do make mistakes, and I have changed grades upon reflection before (raised or lowered, depending on the circumstances). However, I consider asking for a grade increase for non-performance reasons (e.g. to keep a scholarship or prevent your parents from being mad) to be academic misconduct, because you are asking me to give you a grade you did not earn on the merits. Don't ask.

Attendance

This class will operate on a 'Flipped Classroom' model. What this means is that most course content will be covered outside of class, through reading material, handouts, videos and podcasts, and other supplemental material. Likewise, all assignments will be done online. We will use class time for questions and discussion, to help you solidify and expand what you learned on your own.

Attendance is not part of your grade, strictly speaking. However, there will be in-class quizzes almost every day, and these add up to almost one-fourth of your final grade. So you will have an incentive to come to class every day.

Excused Absences

The exception to the Late/Make-Up policy listed above is excused absences. The University considers absences for the following reasons excused:

- travel considered part of the instructional program of the university
- invited participation in activities directly and officially sponsored by the university
- jury duty or military obligations
- serious illness, medical condition, pregnant and parenting students' rights (as outlined in Title IX), accident, or injury
- death or serious illness in immediate family
- religious observances. *Note: a list of religious observances must be submitted to the instructor sometime in the first two weeks of the semester.*

Late Work

With the exception of in-class Reading Quizzes, all assignments for this class will be posted and submitted online, through D2L. Reading Quizzes are in-class only: no make-ups for missing, unless you have an excused absence (see list above). If you find yourself in a position where you expect to miss a significant number of classes (e.g. for athletic travel), let me know as soon as possible: I can't help unless I know you need it!

Instructions for Writing Assignments will be circulated well in advance, so there should be no need for make-ups, barring exceptional circumstances (e.g. a prolonged illness). If you find yourself in such circumstances, it is your responsibility to get in contact with me ASAP to work something out.

Engagement activities are due throughout the semester. This means you can do them at your convenience, on your own time. But don't put them off until the end of the class: the only way to guarantee you'll get full points in this category is to participate regularly from the beginning of term.

A 1-point late penalty will be deducted once every 24 hours after the submission deadline for Writing Assignments. Any work not turned in by midnight on Sunday, December 18th gets an automatic zero.

Reasonable Accommodations Policy

Any student who needs extra time or resources to do their best work due to a physical, cognitive or emotional condition may qualify for academic accommodations. You should consult Disability Support Services for further information: <https://www.uco.edu/student-resources/dss/>

The University of Central Oklahoma complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services, at (405) 974-2516 (V/TTY). The DSS Office is located in the Nigh University Center, Room 305. Students should also notify the instructor of special accommodation needs as soon as possible.

Title IX

The University of Central Oklahoma complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Disability Support Services, at (405) 974-2516. The DSS Office is located in the Nigh University Center, Room 305. Students should also notify the instructor of special accommodation needs as soon as possible. Per Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), pregnant and parenting students may request adjustments by contacting the Title IX Coordinator, at (405) 974-3377 or TitleIX@uco.edu. The Title IX Office is located in the Lillard Administration Building, Room 114D. For more information about your options, including reporting and confidential resources, please visit: <https://www.uco.edu/student-resources/title-ix-office/>

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism Syllabus Statement: Academic dishonesty includes plagiarizing, cheating, turning in counterfeit papers, stealing academic materials, knowingly falsifying academic documents, accessing confidential academic records without authorization, disclosing confidential academic information without authorization, and turning in the same work to more than one class without the express permission of the instructors involved. Any student deemed to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action up to and/or including expulsion from the University. To help ensure academic integrity, faculty may employ a variety of tools including, but not limited to, university-sanctioned Turnitin.com. More information concerning this policy can be found in Section IV of the UCO Student Code of Conduct located at: <https://www.uco.edu/offices/student-conduct/files/codeofconduct-webfile.pdf>.

Given that much of this course is devoted to intellectual and moral virtues, it should be no surprise that it also has high standards for academic conduct. You are expected to consult and understand the University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy (detailed in the Student Info Sheet linked below); participation in this class constitutes an agreement to follow this policy.

My own policy is this: it is always better to ask for help than to cheat. Always. Cheating takes more work, with worse results, than simply attempting the assignment, even if you phone it in. If you are confused at any point about what constitutes academic dishonesty, just ask: I’m here to help. However, if you are caught engaging in academic misconduct, I will pursue whatever maximum penalties the University may apply, from a 0 to an assignment to an F for the course to expulsion from UCO.

Recording Policy

Recording Policy: Due to limitations on the disclosure of personally identifiable information under certain federal privacy laws, students are not permitted to record class sessions nor to allow non-students to view online class sessions. Students registered with the UCO office of Disability Support Services may request accommodation

Student Information Sheet

Additional important university policies and information can be found here: <https://www.uco.edu/academic-affairs/files/student-info-sheet.pdf>

Schedule

- 8.22 - Syllabus & Class overview
- 8.24 - Morton, Jennifer (2021) New Books Network Interview
- 8.26 - "What is transformative learning?" "Pedagogy vs. Andragogy"; hooks (1994) "Engaged Pedagogy"
- 8.29 - McQuire (2018) *Teaching Yourself How to Learn*, Ch. 3
- 8.31 - Concepción, David (2004) "Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition"
- 9.02 - Sellars, John (2017) "What is philosophy as a way of life?"
- 9.05 - Labor Day – no class
- 9.07 - Galef (2021) *The Scout Mindset*, Chs. 2, 4
- 9.09 - Kahneman (2011) *Thinking, Fast and Slow* Ch.1.1, 1.3, 1.5
- 9.12 - Dobelli, *The Art of Thinking Clearly*, excerpts
- 9.14 - McRaney, *You Are Not So Smart*, excerpts
- 9.16 - Warren (2018) Replication; Santos (2019) GI Joe; Robson (2019) The Stupidity Trap
- 9.19 - Eurich (2013) *Insight*, Ch. 3
- 9.21 - Imposter Syndrome: Fehlhaber (2017), Weir (2013), Tulshyan & Burey (2021).
- 9.23 - McGonigal (2010) *The Willpower Instinct*, Ch. 3
- 9.26 - Koons & Pickavance (2017) *Atlas of Reality* Ch.2.1-2.2
- 9.28 - Davidson, Matthew (2021) *Knowledge and Reality in Nine Questions*, Ch. 7
- 9.30 - Lynch (2004) *True to Life*, Ch. 1
- 10.03 - Bradley (2015), *A Critical Intro to Formal Epistemology*, Ch. 1
- 10.05 - Clifford (1877) "The Ethics of Belief" §1; Mitova, Veli (2018) "The duty of inquiry, or why Othello was a fool"
- 10.07 - Cassam, Quassim (2018) "Epistemic Insouciance"
- 10.10 - Sullivan & Blaschko (2022) *The Good Life Method*, Ch. 1
- 10.12 - Effron & Helgason (2022) "The moral psychology of misinformation";
- 10.14 - Fall Break – no class
- 10.17 - Annas (2011) *Intelligent Virtue*, Ch. 2; Robertson & Katsunori (2021) "In Praise of Habits";
- 10.19 - Zagzebski (2018) "Intellectual Virtues: Admirable States of Character"
- 10.21 - Baehr (2018) "The Four Dimensions of Intellectual Virtue"
- 10.24 - Yu (2010) "The Mean, the Right, and Archery"
- 10.26 - Watson (2018) "Curiosity and Inquisitiveness"
- 10.28 - Hack (2015) "Credulity and Circumspection"
- 10.31 - Roberts & Wood (2003) "Humility & Epistemic Goods"
- 11.02 - King, Nathan (2021) *The Excellent Mind*, Ch. 12
- 11.04 - Clear, James (2018) *Atomic Habits*, Chs. 2-3
- 11.07 - Social Epistemology: Lenz (2015); Schoenfield (2020); Popescue (2018)
- 11.09 - Nguyen (2018) "Escape the Echo Chamber"
- 11.11 - Grasswick, Heidi (2018) "Epistemic Autonomy in a Social World of Knowing"
- 11.14 - Nichols, Tom (2014) "The Death of Expertise"; Nichols (2017) "The Death of Expertise as a Decline of Trust"
- 11.16 - Ho, Anita (2011) "Trusting Experts and Epistemic Humility in Disability"
- 11.18 - Expertise & COVID: Mazzochi (2021), Špecián (2022)
- 11.21 - Rolin, Kristina (2006) "The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology"
- 11.23/25 - Thanksgiving
- 11.28 - Basu (2019) "What We Epistemically Owe to Each Other"
- 11.30 - Origgi (2012) "Epistemic Injustice and Epistemic Trust"
- 12.02 - Medina (2018) "Misrecognition and Epistemic Injustice"
- 12.05 - Toole (2019) "From Standpoint Epistemology to Epistemic Oppression"
- 12.07 - Anderson, Luvell (2017) "Epistemic Injustice and the Philosophy of Race"
- 12.09 - Táíwò, Olúfémi O. (2020) "Being-in-the-Room Privilege - Elite Capture and Epistemic Deference"
- 12.12 - [Final Exam time, 11:00-12:50 (due date for final writing assignment)]