

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

**PHIL 2173: Medieval Philosophy**

CRN: 25209

T, Th - 12:30 - 1:45 PM

LAN 226

Instructor: Dr. Jerry Green

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Office: Liberal Arts North, 204C

Office Hours: T 10:00AM-12:00 PM, W 9:00AM-10:00 AM, Th 10:00AM-12:00 PM (and by appt.)

**Course Description:**

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“Medieval Philosophy is a survey of the history of philosophy in the West from the end of the ancient period until the Renaissance.” (from UCO Course Catalog)

This course focuses on a long period in the history of philosophy, which extended from the decline of the Roman Empire to the development of the Renaissance (c. 200 CE to 1400 CE). Philosophers in this period operated across a vast geographical range, from Spain to Afghanistan and Scandinavia to Africa. Their discussions took place under the twin influences of pagan Greek philosophy and Abrahamic religion, and much of their work deals with issues that arise when these two influences intersected.

Our primary focus will be to try to grasp the breadth and diversity of this long period of philosophical history. We will survey as many of the important figures in Medieval Philosophy as we can, at a fairly rapid pace. Some of these figures are well-known, and could merit an entire course on their own. Others are under-appreciated and often ignored, a mistake we will try to avoid.

This class will focus on metaphysics and epistemology in the Medieval Period. We will continually revisit a key set of topics, including:

- Whether faith and reason are independent, compatible or in competition
- Whether knowledge can be achieved through scripture, mystical experiences, or revelation
- Whether it is possible to know that deities exist, or what properties they have
- Whether the world was created or is eternal
- Whether free will is compatible with divine providence and/or divine foreknowledge

In addition to mastering course content, we will focus on developing the following philosophical skills:

- Reading and understanding conceptually difficult texts
- Uncovering and identifying assumptions and presuppositions (yours and others')
- Communicating complex ideas clearly and efficiently
- Drawing subtle conceptual and definitional distinctions
- Constructing and critically evaluating logical arguments

**Prerequisites:** ENG 1113 and 3 hours of Philosophy

## Course Materials

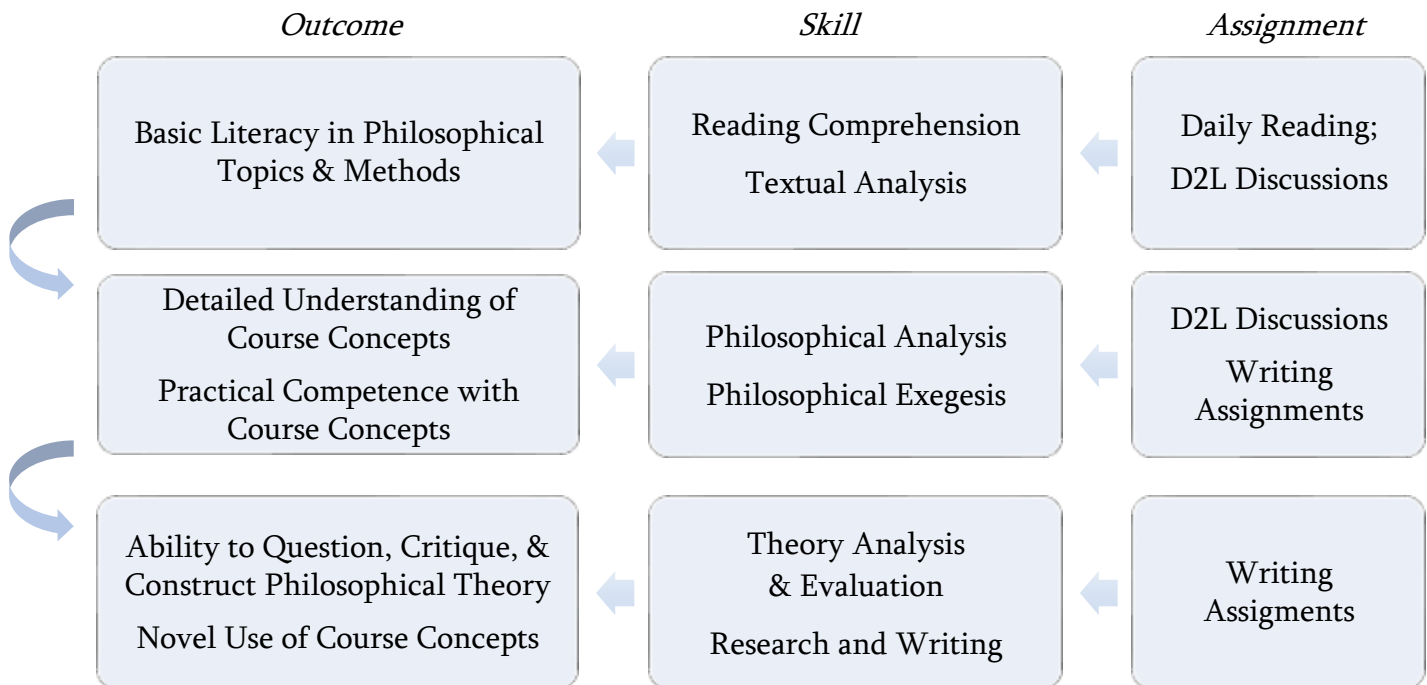
The required course material for this class is collected in a coursepack available for purchase at [APMOK](#) on 500 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St (right across from campus). This is a **required text** for class: you must bring your hard copy of the reading to class *every* session. It will cost about \$30.

In addition, supplementary reading material will be posted on D2L, with the relevant date in the file name. These files are posted for your convenience and accessibility. They are not a substitute for the course pack! It is very difficult to read/process this material when reading from a screen (Seriously: [the research is consistent](#) on this point).

## Learning Objectives & Outcomes

### Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will learn about the major figures and topics in Medieval Philosophy.
- 2) Students will read, analyze, and synthesize key philosophical texts and communicate about them in writing.
- 3) Students will develop their ability to express difficult ideas in writing clearly and in a professional style.
- 4) 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 three of the University’s transformative learning goals:

- *Discipline Knowledge*, by investigating some core questions and subfields of philosophy
- *Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities*, by developing original ideas through a variety of genres of academic writing

## Assignments

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All students in the course will have the following assignments:

### ***Reading***

This will be a reading-intensive course, in both quality and quantity. You will have an average of 20 pp. of reading per class session, with a range of 10-27 pp for a single class. This material will be very difficult, and you will undoubtedly have to read it slowly and carefully more than once.

### ***D2L Discussions***

We will have a number of themed discussion boards on D2L, that allow you to engage with the texts and ideas from class (and each other) in various ways. You should do 30 of these discussion posts over the course of the semester (roughly two per week). Each post is worth 1 pt. (= 1% of the final grade), 30 pts total.

In addition, each student will choose one of four Assignment Tracks, with different sets of assignments that utilize different skills and aim at different goals (I will give you more details about these assignments in separate handouts later in the semester). Each Track's assignments are worth 70 points total.

### **Exam Track:**

This track focuses on basic skills in explanation and interpretation. You will have a series of short essays where you explain the fundamental ideas of each theory (something like what you would expect from standard blue book midterm essay exam questions).

### **Genre Writing Track:**

The assignments for this track involve a combination of philosophical and creative writing, with you writing your own versions of several genres of writing we will encounter over the semester.

### **Phil Skills Track:**

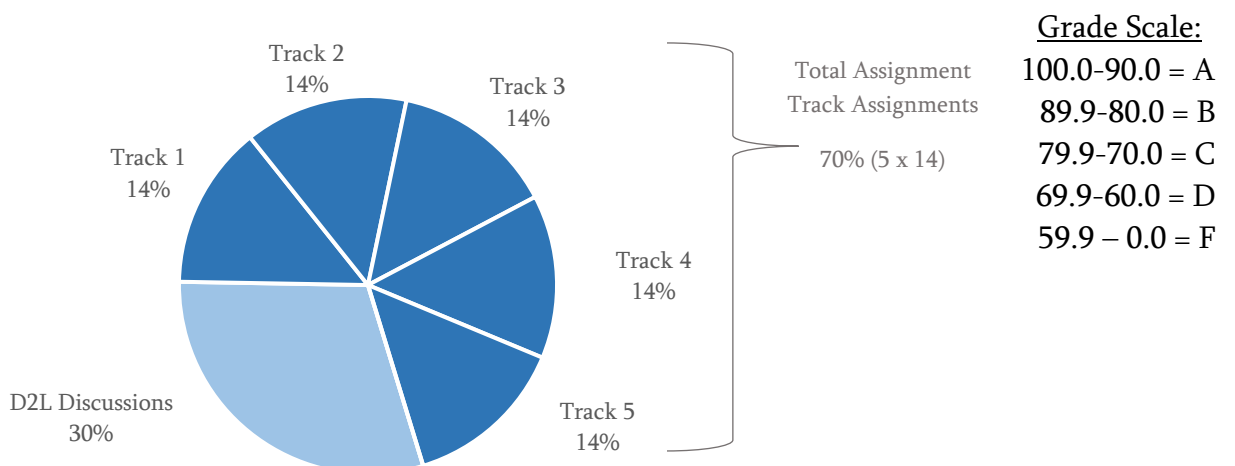
The goal of this track is to practice the reading and writing skills that a successful philosophy major ought to have. You will be given a menu of different kinds of essays to write, each one focusing on a different philosophical writing strategy, method, or goal.

### **Research Track:**

This track is for students who want to dive deep into a specific issue in one theory, or to practice writing the kind of work you might use for a grad school writing sample. You will focus on a single project all semester, involving an proposal, annotated bibliography, and abstract, culminating in a writing-sample caliber final paper (c. 4000 words).

## Grades

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## Late Work & Make-Ups

All assignments for this class will be submitted online, through D2L. Instructions and deadlines for all assignments will be circulated well in advance, so there should be no need for make-ups. But if you find yourself in an emergency situation that prevents you from submitting your work on time, it is your responsibility to get in contact with me ASAP to work something out. Otherwise, a 1-point late penalty will be deducted once every 24 hours after the submission deadline.

## 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.

Consequently, physical attendance is not a part of your grade. Moreover, all students will have access to the Extended Classroom webcam for the course, so you participate in class without attending physically.

## 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.*

## 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.

## 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>.

## **Title IX**

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## **COVID Mask Policy (from Office of Academic Affairs)**

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Consistent with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission as of August 1, 2021, the University of Central Oklahoma recommends that all individuals wear a mask covering the mouth and nose when in public indoor spaces such as classrooms, laboratories, studio spaces, the library, the Nigh University Center, enclosed athletic facilities, and other shared indoor spaces on campus. While mask wearing is not required, the university encourages all members of the university community to follow the guidelines issued by the CDC based on conditions in Oklahoma County. This guidance may be revised at any point during the semester.

As detailed in the Student Code of Conduct, students are expected to be familiar with the UCO Coronavirus webpage, [www.uco.edu/coronavirus](http://www.uco.edu/coronavirus) and are expected to follow the recommendations and guidance published on that page. Because the recommendations and guidance are subject to change, students should check back often for updated information and requirements.

Students who follow these guidelines will not be penalized for class absences provided they follow their instructor’s directions for making up missed assignments in a timely fashion, in conformity with the requirements and expectations outline in the class’s syllabus. Instructors shall provide reasonable opportunities, consistent with the structure and objectives of the class, for students who are following these guidelines to participate in and to keep up with the work of the class.

As the conditions on campus and in the community evolve, events may occur that necessitate a change in the procedures, course schedule or modes of delivery. The information provided on [www.uco.edu/coronavirus](http://www.uco.edu/coronavirus) will be updated throughout the academic year. Procedure changes on this webpage and communicated via official correspondence from the university will supersede any prior guidance.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have had direct exposure to someone with COVID-19, file a report with the COVID-19 Response Team at:

[https://uco.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_39Omw83BStDpw1L](https://uco.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_39Omw83BStDpw1L).

## **Recording Policy**

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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**

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

## Reading Schedule

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Figure</u>	<u>Text</u>
1.11	-----	[Syllabus, Class Overview]

### Greek Background

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1.13	Parmenides & Plato	<i>Truth; Republic, Symposium, Timaeus</i> (excerpts)
1.18	Aristotle	<i>Physics VIII, Metaphysics XII</i> (excerpts); <i>De Interpretatione IX</i>
1.20	Stoics	Stoic fragments
1.25	Plotinus	Enneads V (excerpts)
1.27	“	Enneads I, IV, V (excerpts)

### How are Philosophy and Religion related?

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2.01	Philo (20 BCE -50 CE)	<i>Allegorical Interpretation I</i>
2.03	Tertullian (155-220)	<i>De praescriptione</i> 7-19
2.08	Porphyry (234-305)	<i>Letter to his Wife Marcella</i>
2.10	al-Kindi (801-873) al-Farabi (870-950)	On First Philosophy I; The Book of Letters, 108-113, 141-157
2.15	Saadia Gaon (892-942)	<i>Book of Beliefs and Opinions</i> , Introduction
2.17	ibn Rushd (1126-1198)	<i>Decisive Treatise</i> II.1-3

### Is the Nature of God Knowable?

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2.22	Proclus (412-485)	<i>Elements of Theology &amp; Platonic Theology</i> (excerpts)
2.24	Damascius (458-538)	<i>Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles</i> , I
3.01	Eriugena (800-877)	<i>Periphyseon I</i>
3.03	ibn Sina (980-1037)	<i>Book of Demonstration &amp; The Salvation</i> (excerpts)
3.08	ibn Rushd (1126-1198)	<i>Exposition of the Methods of Proof</i> (excerpts)
3.10	Maimonides (1138-1204)	<i>Guide for the Perplexed</i> (41-42, 51-53, 58-61)
3.15:	-----	[Spring Break - No Class]
3.17:	-----	[Spring Break - No Class]

### Is the World Eternal or Created?

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3.22	John Philoponus (490-570)	<i>Contra Proclum I &amp; III</i>
3.24	al-Razi (864-925)	<i>On the Five Eternals</i>
3.29	al-Ghazali (1058-1111)	<i>Incoherence of the Philosophers</i> , I.i
3.31	ibn Rushd (1126-1198)	<i>Incoherence of the Incoherence</i> . I.i
4.05	ibn Gabirol (1021-1070)	<i>Fons Vita</i> , I
4.07	Aquinas (1225-1274)	<i>Summa Theologica</i> , Q.1, 2, 46

### Is Free Will Compatible with Divine Omniscience?

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4.12	Augustine (254-430)	<i>De Libero Arbitrio</i> , Bk I
4.14	Boethius (477-524)	<i>Consolations of Philosophy</i> V
4.19	Anselm (1033-1109)	<i>On the Freedom of Choice</i>
4.21	Aquinas (1225-1274)	<i>Summa Theologica</i> , Q.22-23,
4.26	Gersonides (1288-1344)	<i>The Wars of the Lord</i>
4.28	William of Ockham (1287-1347)	<i>Ordinatio</i> 38-39

5.04 -----

[Final Exam, 1:00-2:50 PM]