



# PHIL 1301 – Introduction to Philosophy

Course Syllabus: Fall 2024

*“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed.”*

**Instructor:** Donnie Featherston

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Office	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
Hours	by appointment	by appointment	by appointment	by appointment	by appointment	by appointment

***This syllabus serves as the documentation for all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.***

*Information relative to the delivery of the content contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Should that happen, the student will be notified.*

**Course Description: (3 credits)** A study of major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications.

**Prerequisite(s):** none

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.

**Evaluation/Grading Policy:**

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|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Online Course Journal.    | 35% |
| 2. Quizzes and Tests.        | 35% |
| 3. Final Essay.              | 10% |
| 4. Graded Discussion Boards. | 20% |

**Numerical grading scale breakdown:** At the end of this semester, I will assign you a letter grade based upon the percentage of the total points available for the semester that you have earned. My grading scale is as follows. A: 100%-90; B: 89.9-80; C: 79.9-70; D: 69.9-60; F: 59 or below.

**Required Instructional Materials:** All readings are available on Blackboard in .pdf format.

**Optional Instructional Materials:** All recommended readings are available on Blackboard in .pdf format.

- Julia Annas, “Virtue, in me and in my society”
- Peter Wagner, “Autonomy in History”

**Minimum Technology Requirements:** All students must have access to a computer, internet, and Blackboard, and should be comfortable using Blackboard for all course materials.

**Required Computer Literacy Skills:** Basic proficiency with Blackboard

**Course Structure and Overview:**

**Modules:**

	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
<b><u>Module 1:</u></b>		
• Graded Discussion: <i>Course Introductions</i>	Sept 2	15
• Graded Discussion: <i>What is Wisdom?</i>	Sept 2	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 2	5
<b><u>Module 2:</u></b>		
• Quiz #1	Sept 2	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>Meno: Opening Discussion</i>	Sept 2	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 2	5
<b><u>Module 3:</u></b>		
• Quiz #2	Sept 9	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>What does it mean to be alive?</i>	Sept 9	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 9	5
<b><u>Module 4:</u></b>		
• Quiz #3	Sept 16	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>What is Happiness? What is Living Well?</i>	Sept 16	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 16	5
<b><u>Module 5:</u></b>		
• Quiz #4	sept 23	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>How We Know</i>	Sept 23	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 23	5
<b><u>Module 6:</u></b>		
• Quiz #5	Sept 30	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>What is Enlightenment?</i>	Sept 30	15
• Graded Discussion: <i>Free Thinking?</i>	Sept 30	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Sept 30	5
<b><u>Module 7:</u></b>		
• Quiz #6	Oct 7	5
• Graded Discussion: <i>On Alienation</i>	Oct 7	15
• Test: Knowledge Check	Oct 7	5

## **Module 8:**

Quiz #7	Oct 11	5
Test: Knowledge Check	Oct 11	5
<b><u>Course Journal</u></b>	<b>Oct 11</b>	<b>42</b>
<b><u>Final Essay</u></b>	<b>Oct 11</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><u>Module 9</u></b>	Oct 11	

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## **Readings:**

Each module has an associated reading. These readings are assigned at the beginning of each module, and you will find the file (in .pdf format) for that reading within the module itself. (A copy of each reading can also be found in the “Course Readings” link on the course page.) You will need to read the reading in order to complete the activities within each module. Furthermore, each module will contain a series of written and video “lectures,” along with some helpful handouts and articles; you should read all of this material as you work your way through the course.

## **Quizzes:**

After you have read the assigned reading for each module, you will take a short reading quiz. Each reading quiz will be 5 questions, multiple choice; its purpose is simply to check that you’ve done the reading. **Quizzes must be completed in one sitting, and quizzes will not be restarted for any reason**—so be sure to have a stable Internet connection when you begin the quiz. Because I know that problems can and do occur, **I will drop your lowest quiz score** at the end of the semester—so a bad grade on one quiz due to technical errors will not hurt your grade. **Submitting the reading quiz will unlock the rest of the module**; you must take the reading quiz before you go through the rest of the module activities.

## **Graded Discussions:**

The course modules contain a series of discussion boards. The open question threads at the end of each module are optional and ungraded, but the other discussion boards are graded activities. Each graded discussion will require you to make at least two posts: Your first post will be an answer to the question prompt for the thread. **You must make your initial post before you can see the posts your classmates have made.** Your initial post will be graded out of 15 points. **Each discussion thread has a due date; late posts will receive no credit.**

## **Tests:**

Each module will end with a 5-question, multiple-choice “knowledge check.” The questions in these tests will draw upon the material presented within the module; if you pay attention as you work your way through the module, you should be able to answer all five questions easily. However, **you will be allowed two attempts at the knowledge check tests.** After you take the test the first time, you will see which questions you have gotten right and wrong (but the correct answers will not be displayed for the questions you have missed). This will give you a chance to go back through the module, if you wish, in order to rediscover the information you’ll need. You may take the knowledge check up to twice, and your final score will be whichever attempt is better. Just like the quizzes, then, you should make sure that you have a stable internet connection when you sit down to start a test.

### **Final Essay:**

The essay will be due at the end of the course. For a full description of the assignment, see the “Final Essay Assignment” link on the course page. The essay assignment will be your opportunity to apply what you’ve learned and to critically engage with some of the assigned readings. Your essay will be submitted through Blackboard and TurnItIn. **Late essays will not be accepted.**

### **Course Journal:**

The course journal will be kept all semester long, due at the end of the semester. For each module, I will give you a few response question(s); a few paragraphs should be sufficient in each case, but journals will be graded on relevance, completeness, and use of course material (your journal responses should show that you have read, and are applying, the assigned reading). **You will keep your journal in Blackboard**, and you can find it by following the “Course Journal” link on the course page. Journals will be due at the end of the semester, and should be complete by the final day of class. **All unanswered questions will receive no credit.**

**Communications:** During the semester, I will check my NTCC email at least once per day; you should expect a response to any emails within 24 hours. NTCC email is the best way to get in touch with me; however, phone calls to my office will also be returned as soon as possible.

### **Course Policies:**

1. Academic honesty is taken very seriously. In a philosophy class, this means that sources used in papers or journals should be cited somehow (MLA style, Chicago style, etc.), and quotations from any text clearly indicated. It also, more importantly, means not taking credit for the work of another. Plagiarism, handing in papers downloaded off of the internet, or any other case of a student handing in something he or she has not written will be grounds for immediate failure of the class, no exceptions. If you have any questions at all, please consult the university’s policy, and/or see me directly: “I didn’t know this wasn’t okay” is not an excuse.
2. **No outside sources are allowed for the essay!** The essay packet, primary texts from the course, class notes, and your thoughts are the only allowable sources. Use of outside sources will result in a zero for the assignment.
3. **The use of AI to generate content for assignments is strictly prohibited.** Because this technology is still new, there is a fair amount of grey area here. However, any questionable cases will be fed to an AI-detection program, which will estimate the likelihood of AI usage. **Any text that is determined to be 70% or more likely to contain AI-generated content will receive a zero**, and there will be no possibility of redoing the assignment. This applies to all discussion board posts, the course journal, and the final essay assignment. Any course journal using AI-generated text will receive a zero for the complete assignment, even if some posts were not composed using AI text generation. Any final essay utilizing AI-generated content will receive a 0, even if some paragraphs are written by the student.

### **NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement:**

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach using their intellect and resources designate'd as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies stated in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

### **ADA Statement:**

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are

students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special population's page on the NTCC website.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.