**\*SAMPLE SYLLABUS 1\***

**PHI 101: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

Spring, MWF 8:30-9:20, Professor X, Local Community College

<Personal website address>

***Office Hours*: MWF 11:00 - 12 p.m., TR 11:45- 2:45, or by appointment.**

You are encouraged to drop by my office to talk about the course, especially if you have difficulties with the course. If you are unable to come to my office during my office hours, please set up another time for us to meet. I will check email during the week and possibly during the weekend; if you have an emergency, it is best to leave a message on my voicemail. When you send an email to me or leave a voicemail, please be sure to write "PHI 101 MWF 8:30" in the subject line or somewhere in the email (so I can know which section you're in), or mention it in the voicemail. *Please note that if you have any problems or concerns about this course, College policy states that you must try to work the problem out with me first -- the Chair cannot get involved until that point. Also, the Chair cannot change your grade on any assignment or for the course.*

***Note: No part of this course will be on Canvas Learning Management System.***

**REQUIRED TEXT**: [***Western Philosophy: An Anthology***](http://www.amazon.com/Western-Philosophy-Anthology-Blackwell-Anthologies/dp/1405124784/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1306855111&sr=1-1)**. John Cottingham, ed. Second edition (2008).**

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**: [***A Rulebook for Arguments***](http://www.amazon.com/Rulebook-Arguments-Anthony-Weston/dp/0872209547/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1306855157&sr=1-1)**. Anthony Weston. Fourth edition.**  
[***The Elements of Style***](https://smile.amazon.com/Elements-Style-Fourth-William-Strunk/dp/020530902X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1516129001&sr=8-1&keywords=the+elements+of+style+4th+edition)**. William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. Fourth edition;** **Any dictionary.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

In this course we shall examine and assess many different philosophical theories, comparing and contrasting them as we apply their views to different philosophical questions.  After a brief introduction to what philosophy is, what an argument is, and the importance of philosophy, we will examine the views of many famous philosophers, including (but by no means limited to) the following: Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, George Berkeley, Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, and others (see Reading List below, and see the Presentation Schedule for the precise readings and schedule).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**:

General consideration of human nature and the nature of the universe. Knowledge, perception, freedom and determinism, and the existence of God. Prerequisites: None. The Course Competencies are linked here.

**COURSE GOALS:**

* To provide you with a general introduction to and understanding of philosophical views, issues, and arguments. It should also help you to appreciate what philosophy is and the way in which it is relevant to practical issues.
* To help you develop your critical thinking, critical reading, and writing skills.  In order to develop your views on these issues, it is important to understand the difference between good and bad arguments, and to have the ability to critically and carefully analyze the arguments of others. This course should help you to write more sharply organized, focused and effective argumentative essays.
* This course does *not* aim to provide simple answers to questions such as, "Does God exist?"  Although I have my own views on these issues, I shall not be concerned to "convert" anybody. This course will not preach a set of "correct" views; it will, however, assume rationality (consistency and having plausible reasons for one's view) and free will. What is important is that you attempt to carefully consider and examine the arguments with intellectual honesty and reconcile them with your convictions. This course should open your mind to many, as of yet unforeseen, possibilities and options that may be true of everything that exists or may exist.

*By the end of the semester, I wish for you to know the following general things about philosophy:*

1.     Philosophy is useful and valuable.

2.     Philosophy is diverse.

3.     There is such a thing as a good and a bad argument, whether or not you agree with its conclusion.

4.     Your argument is only as sound and/or cogent as your consideration of and/or answers to good objections against it.

5.     There are many answers that have been given to the major philosophical questions, and every such answer is not equally as plausible as every other. Your "job" is to seek the most plausible answer.

**COURSE PHILOSOPHY, PROMISES, AND EXPECTATIONS**:

**COURSE PHILOSOPHY**: Philosophy is a difficult but rewarding discipline. Like life, which at times can be frustrating and hard to figure out (e.g., what should I do with my life, what happens when I die, is there a God, etc.) but which at times can also be exhilarating and fun, philosophizing can have these qualities. The only way to get better at living or philosophizing is to actively deal with the relevant issues and put an honest effort into attempting to understand them. I look at philosophy as a skill that one cannot learn without actively participating. I do not want you to memorize names and dates and definitions and leave the class forgetting what material we covered. In an attempt to engage you in the class, I will require that you present an article to the class (see below). I will be available to help you, and you are free to search the Internet to see if someone else has written something on the article you're reading, etc. I want us to create an atmosphere where we are a team (even though I might know more about philosophy, I do not know everything), trying to sort out what the best view on these issues is, and where you're an essential part of the team. We need open and honest dialogue that includes respect (i.e., no name calling, accusations, verbal attacks, keeping the discussion and comments on the topic and not on the individual), keeping in mind that it is OK to disagree with each other.

**PROMISES (WHAT I PROMISE YOU)**: I promise you that I will (1) Be on time; (2) Teach the course unless I am very ill; (3) Be enthused about philosophy and the class material every class session; (4) Help you understand the material to the best of my ability; (5) Be available outside of class in the form of phone, e-mail, and office hours; (6) Treat you with respect; (7) Grade fairly and promptly (I will have grades on papers returned no later than one week from when they were turned in, pending unforeseen circumstances); (8) Lay out course expectations and requirements clearly; (9) Be organized and use class time well; and (10) Inject as much humor as philosophically possible so that we can have fun!

**EXPECTATIONS (WHAT I EXPECT YOU TO DO)**: I expect you to (1) Do the work (e.g., the reading, summaries, test, and papers) honestly and promptly; (2) Come to class; (3) Be on time; (4) Participate actively; (5) Ask a question whenever something is confusing or unclear; (6) Respect each other; (7) Support/share with each other; (8) Learn a lot; and (9) Have fun!

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS:** For every hour you spend in class, you should spend at least two (2) hours outside of class studying the material and completing your assignments. For instance, in this class, that comes to 5.5 hours of work a week outside of class. Students do not fail at the end of the semester. If a student is failing in the last week, it is because of what he or she has done throughout the semester. Keep up with the work. Keep track of your summaries and grades on your presentation and papers.

**WRITING CENTER:**The Writing Center provides one-on-one appointments to help students during any phase of the writing process: brainstorming, prewriting, researching, drafting, and revising. The Writing Center is located<…>, Web address<…>. This College has a Learning Center, but there is not a tutor specifically for philosophy, but I will be happy to help you at any time I’m available. Just ask; I cannot help you with any problems if you do not let me know about it.

**F-1 STUDENTS:** If you are an F-1 student, I am happy that you are in our class! You bring diversity and a world perspective to the classroom, and that helps me fulfill one of the College's student outcomes: Cultural and Global Engagement. Please know that you must adhere to the attendance policy (and other policies, such as the "no plagiarism" policy) that is listed in this syllabus. If you are withdrawn by me for the class for non-attendance (or plagiarism), I will not place you back into the class. If you earn a W for non-attendance, for instance, and this brings you below the required 12 credits that you need to maintain your F-1 status in the USA, I will not change your grade to an F. You are given the grade that you earn. If you fall out of status, you can go through a process called "F-1 Reinstatement" with the International Education (IE) Office, located <…>. IE regularly sends you messages to your College email regarding immigration matters. Be sure to check your email regularly. They also check attendance reports for all F-1 students on a weekly basis. You are here in the USA to be a student on your F-1 full-time study visa, and IE will help you maintain that status.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Due dates and requirements are subject to change):**

1.     **ATTENDANCE (Please see "Attendance" and "Tardiness" under Class Policies below).**

2.     **PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION**: (**10% of course grade**).

To grade the discussion portion of the course, if you either ask one question or make one comment on that day that relates to the course lectures, presentations, or articles, then you will earn participation credit for that day. Your participation grade is calculated based on how often you talk during discussion times. To earn an A in participation, you must make one comment or ask one question at least half of the semester. From there, participation will be graded on a standard scale: Talking in half of the class meetings or more (90% -100% of half of the class meetings) earns an A for this portion of the course; 80% - 89% (of half the class meetings) earns a B; 70 - 79%, a C; 60 - 69%, a D; 59% or lower, a failing grade. BONUS: YOU WILL EARN AN A IN PARTICIPATION IF YOU HAVE NO (ZERO) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FOR THE SEMESTER (See Attendance in the Class Policy Section below, for more information)!

3.    **PRESENTATION(S)**: (**10% of course grade**).

During the semester, you will need to present at least one (and perhaps more, depending on the size of the class) article to the class, giving relevant information about the reading (See my Presentation Guidelines on my Website for material that is to be covered during the presentation). I will assign the articles near the beginning of the semester. I will present at least one article as an example before we continue with your presentations. Here are three possible grades on the presentation: (1) If you are on time, are well-prepared and present the material in an organized way (according to my Presentation Guidelines on my Website), then you will earn an A on it; (2) if you are tardy (more than 2 minutes late by my watch), mainly read straight out of the book and/or not from your own notes, have not prepared well in general (e.g., skipping large parts of an article), or have no notes ready and you wing it, you will earn a C; and (3) If you attend class but do not give a presentation, or if you have an unexcused absence on the day of your presentation, you will earn an F for that presentation. [I reserve the right to give any grade between an "A" and an "F" (including "mid-grades" such as AB - see below) should I deem it necessary.]

4.     **ARTICLE SUMMARIES (30% of course grade)**

For each article that is presented, *including my first sample(s)*, you will need to turn in a handwritten or typewritten summary of the reading(s) for that class period including at least one question you have about the reading. These summaries are due at the beginning of the class period and are NOT to be completed during class! See my Article Summary Guidelines on my website for more details. Your grade for the summaries will be based on how many you turn in: If you turn in 90-100% of them, you'll earn an A; if you turn in 80-89%, B; 70-79%, C; 60-69%, D; and 0-59%, F.   Also, the deadline  for turning in any summaries for excused absences are due (unless specifically arranged otherwise with me) on or before the last day of class (i.e., not the final exam day).

5.     **FIRST AND ONLY TEST** (**10% of course grade**).  This is a test on the material covered in the class (Lectures, Skill Sheets, reading), up to and including the "God and Religion" section of the textbook. If you cannot take the test on the test day **(See the Presentation Schedule on the PHI 101 page for the Test Day)**, you must have an excused absence in order to take it, and make arrangements as soon as possible, and optimally before the test day.

6.     **FIRST PAPER** (4 - 6 pages, **15% of course grade**). **The paper topic(s) will be posted on my Website and announced when they become available for printing; your papers must be a response to the questions on the Website**. Note that, besides the standard grades of A, B, C, D, and F, I may issue a grade on papers of an AB, BC, CD, or DF, which are mid-grades, halfway between the two grades (see the chart below). I reserve the right to assign other mid-grades. These grades will be factored in at the end of the course to give an overall grade of A, B, C, D, or F (in accordance with College policy). For much further information on all papers [including, e.g., how the papers are graded (more specifically), good and bad paper examples, etc.], see my Web page. In this paper, you will be expected to raise at least one good objection to your position and reply to that objection. **Due date: See Presentation Schedule.**

7.     **SECOND PAPER** (4 - 6 pages, **25% of course grade**).  In this paper, you will be expected to raise at least two good objections to your position and reply to those objections. **Due date: See Presentation Schedule.**

**GRADING SCALE FOR PAPERS:**(edited out for length consideration)

Your *final grade* will be based on all assignments receiving a 0 – 4; your assignments will then be weighted (10%, 15%, etc.) and added; you will end up with a number between 0 and 4, where:

3.45 – 4.0 will earn an A, 2.45 – 3.44 will earn a B, 1.45 – 2.44 will earn a C, 0.45 – 1.44 will earn a D, 0.0 –  0.44 will earn an F

**CLASS POLICIES:**

**Absences**: If you have THREE (3) or more UNexcused absences over the course of the semester, I reserve the right to withdraw you from this course. Excused absences will *only* be given in cases of medical emergencies, jury duty, funerals, participation in school activities, religious observances, etc. (or at my discretion). I will require a physical copy of a physician's slip, a court order or summons, a funeral prayer card, etc., or the absence will not be excused. Also, I require advanced notice for excused absences, except in the case of medical emergencies, or your absence will not be excused. Examples of typical *unexcused* absences include: My car won't start, my windshield wipers don't work and it's raining, I have a bad cold or feel ill (unless you get a physician's slip for it), I overslept, I had to study for another class, I went home for a long weekend, I'm going skiing, etc. As noted in the Student Handbook, if you have a religious observance for which you want to have an excused absence, you need to notify me of that at least one (1) week prior to the absence, so we can arrange what needs to be done. ***You will receive a W for excessive absences (as defined in the first sentence), unless you have extended excused absence (e.g., prolonged illness), in which case you need to make other arrangements with me, which may include withdrawing you from the course. Keep in mind that you may have so many absences (excused or unexcused), that I reserve the right to withdraw you from having excessive absences. If you come to class more than 20 minutes late, it will be considered an unexcused absence, unless you can prove otherwise. On the other hand, I would still urge you to come to class, to get whatever you can out of that day's reading, lecture, etc. You also cannot leave class with more than 5 minutes left without providing a reason for that, and I will be happy to excuse your absence if you can talk to me before class (or prove afterwards) why you need(ed) to leave. Lastly, it is the student's responsibility to ask for any information or work missed due to absences.***

**Tardiness**: I reserve the right to withdraw you from the class if you are consistently late to class (e.g. 5 or 10 minutes). If you are late to class more than 3 times, I reserve the right to withdraw you from this course. What's the problem with being late? It disrespects the whole class - the teacher and your classmates - if you are habitually late. It breaks the concentration of most everyone in the room, and if you come in and start asking questions of those next to you, they will only miss more of the class as well. In the student handbook, it says that an instructor can withdraw a student from a class for disrupting the class, and being continually late falls under this category, as interpreted by me.

**Attendance Sheet**: It is completely your responsibility to make sure that I mark you as being present, on the attendance sheet. If you come in after I take roll, it is your responsibility to ask at the end of class if I got you on the roll. If you leave class without making sure I have you on the roll for that day, I may not remember you were there, and will not give you credit for being there.

**Information for Students with Accommodation Needs:** If you have a documented disability (as protected by the Americans with Disability Act) or if you are pregnant or parenting (as protected under Title IX) and would like to discuss possible accommodations, please contact the College Disabilities Resources and Services Office at # or email xx@yy.edu. Access to Course Materials: If you are experiencing difficulty accessing course materials because of a disability, please contact your instructor. All students should have equal access to course materials and technology.

**Mobile Phones & Computers**: (1) You may not use your phone during class (for browsing, social media and/or texting), unless I specifically give you permission to do so. You may use your phones in our classroom *before* class starts, however. Turn your phone off unless you have an important call you're expecting; then please leave the room to take the call, only if it is an emergency. NOTE: IF YOU THINK THAT IT'S GOING TO BE VERY HARD FOR YOU TO BE WITHOUT YOUR PHONE, I WILL ALLOW YOU TO DOODLE IN CLASS (I have read research that doodlers remember more from meetings than non-doodlers; click [Here](https://www.vox.com/ad/16772236/the-benefits-of-doodling) or [Here](http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1882127,00.html) for the study). (2) Please do not use computers because a study shows that neither you nor your classmates will do as well in the course if you use it in class (click [Here](http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/laptop-use-lowers-student-grades-experiment-shows-1.1401860) for the study).

**Video- and/or Audio-Recording the Class**: The content of course lectures, including, but not limited to, verbal, printed, Powerpoint and other electronic communications are the copyrighted property of the professor. Recording class content is **prohibited** *without express written consent*. If you wish to record lectures, you must see me during office hours and sign a Proprietary Information Agreement. (Of course, I will allow a disabled student who is granted this accommodation from Disabilities Resources to record the course content, provided he/she signs the agreement.)

**Sleeping & Doing Homework in Class**: You may not sleep in class. If you are tired, sit near the back of the class and you may stand for a bit to stay awake. You also may not do any homework for any class, including my class, during our class. Our class time is for trying to understand and discuss the philosophers and their philosophies.

**Warnings**: If you do not like thinking, reading, or writing, do *not* take this course. I will be evaluating your critical thinking skills in discussions, in your article summaries, and in your papers, in order to gauge your comprehension of the material. To be a good philosopher (or philosophy student), as I view it, is not essentially to be able to memorize dates and definitions, but is to have the ability to actively engage in argument and critical thinking of one's own views as well as those of one's opponent. Philosophy deals with controversial adult material including human sexuality, the existence of God, principles of justice, etc.  Students must be prepared to engage all material as presented and assigned. Alternate assignments, readings, lectures, etc. will not be provided.

**Paper Deadlines**: I accept no late papers (however, I will accept early papers). At my discretion, I may make other arrangements in advance; however, if any problem arises concerning that arrangement (e.g., not meeting the new agreed-upon deadline), I will revert back to the original "no late papers" policy.

**Academic Integrity:**Academic misconduct and dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, excessive absences, use of abusive or profane language, and disruptive and/or threatening behavior.  All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Chair of the Philosophy Department and other appropriate authorities.  Students displaying acts of academic dishonesty are subject to grade adjustment, course failure, probation, suspension, or expulsion.  See the Student Handbook for more information regarding cases of academic misconduct.

**Plagiarism:**Do not (attempt to) plagiarize in writing your papers. **Plagiarism = taking any idea or writing that is not your own and including it in your paper without citing your source. Refer to this website:**[**Plagiarism 101**](http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism)**.**For example, if you go to a website and take information or sentences from that website and do not cite that website in your paper, you are plagiarizing. You cannot have a roommate write your paper. You also cannot just cite a website and then turn in a whole paper from a website that is not your work. The paper has to be an original work of your own. This also includes using our own textbook, quoting it, or describing a philosopher's view and not citing the page from which you took the information. (See my *Philosophy 101 Paper Policies* on my Website for how to cite sources.)  How serious am I about this? On the first occurrence of plagiarism (this includes drafts with substantial amounts of plagiarism in them), you will receive a failing grade for the course. I will assume that you now realize what plagiarism is, what plagiarizing in my class results in, and that by continuing in my class you're in effect making a commitment not to plagiarize in this class. (NOTE: I will *NOT* be looking for plagiarism in your presentations or article summaries.)

**Other academic misconduct**:  Anyone caught cheating on an exam by text messaging or by other means will automatically fail the test. Mobile phones cannot be answered during tests for any reason, and once the test is administered, no one may leave the room unless he or she has turned the test in for grading.

**Student Handbook**: It is your responsibility to understand the policies listed in this syllabus as these are the guidelines that your instructor will follow for grading, attendance, etc. It is also your responsibility to read and understand the college policies included in the student handbook as they may apply to you in the case of an incomplete grade, withdraw for failure to attend, etc.

**Tuition Charges and Refunds: <information removed for length consideration>**

***TENTATIVE* READING LIST (See Presentation Schedule for *official* reading list, page numbers, and the due dates for the reading):**

**I. What is philosophy and what is an argument?**

Reading(s):

Lecture 1: Introduction to philosophy and arguments (on my Website under Lecture Notes)

Skill Sheets 1 and 2 (on my Website; print these and take them to class with you)

**II. Fallacious Reasoning**

Reading(s):

Lecture 2: Fallacious Reasoning (on my Website)

Professor X, *The Importance of Philosophy or**Why Should I Take Philosophy?* (on my Website)

**III. God and Religion**

Reading(s):

VI.1 St. Anselm of Canterbury, "The Existence of God," pp. 345-347.

VI.2 St. Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Proofs of God," pp.  348-351.

VI.3 Rene Descartes, "God and the Idea of Perfection," pp.  351-356.

VI.4 Blaise Pascal, "The Wager," pp. 356-359.

VI.5 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "The Problem of Evil," pp.  359-364.

VI.6 David Hume, "The Argument from Design," pp. 365-371.

VI.8 Soren Kierkegaard, "Faith and Subjectivity," 376-382.

VI.9 William James, "Reason, Passion and the Religious Hypothesis," pp.  382-387.

**IV.  Knowledge and Certainty**

Reading(s):

I.1 Plato, "Innate Knowledge," pp. 3-12.

I.2 Plato, "Knowledge versus Opinion," pp. 12-18.

I.3 Aristotle, "Demonstrative Knowledge and its Starting-points," pp. 18-21.

I.4 Rene Descartes, "New Foundations for Knowledge," pp. 21-25.

I.5 John Locke, "The Senses as the Basis of Knowledge," pp. 25-31.

I.7 David Hume, "Scepticism versus Human Nature," pp. 35-39.

**V. Being and Reality**

Reading(s):

II.1 Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave," pp. 69-75.

II.2 Aristotle, "Individual Substance," pp. 76-79.

II.4 John Locke, "Qualities and Ideas," pp. 86-90.

II.6 George Berkeley, "Nothing Outside the Mind," pp.  97-102.

II.7 David Hume, "The Limits of Metaphysical Speculation," pp.  102-107.

**VI. Mind and Body**

Reading(s):

IV.2 Aristotle, "Soul and Body, Form and Matter," pp. 210-214.

**VII.  Freedom**

Reading(s):

V(b).8 Pierre Simon de Laplace, "Absolute Determinism," pp. 318-320.

**VIII.  Science and Method**

Reading(s):

VII.5 David Hume, "The Problem of Induction," pp. 433-437.

VII.9 Karl Popper, "Science and Falsifiability," pp. 453-459.

**IX.  Morality and the Good Life**

Reading(s):

VIII.2 Aristotle, "Ethical Virtue," pp. 492-495.

VIII.5 Immanuel Kant, "Duty and Reason as the Ultimate Principle," pp.  506-512.

VIII.6 John Stuart Mill, "Happiness as the Foundation of Morality," pp.  512-517.

VIII.8 Friedrich Nietzsche, "Against Conventional Morality," pp.  524-529.

**X.  Authority & the State**

Reading(s):

X.1 Plato, "Our Obligation to Obey the Laws of the State," pp. 623-626.

X.3 Thomas Hobbes, "Sovereignty and Security," pp. 631-636.

**XI.  Beauty and Art**

Reading(s):

XI.1 Plato, "Art and Imitation," pp. 695-700.

XI.8 Leo Tolstoy, "The Value of Art," pp.734-738.

***On the day of the scheduled final exam, I will return your papers with your final grades on them (see my website at the end of the semester for “exam” times); and, only if you are interested, tell you what I believe about life, the universe, and everything.***