

PHIL 1101 Syllabus – Spring 2022 (Waterbury Campus)

Syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Problems of Philosophy

Credits: 3

Meeting Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 pm- 3:15 pm

Format: In-person (first two weeks asynchronous)

Meeting Location: WREC 202

Prerequisites: None

Professor: Cody Turner

Email: cody.turner@uconn.edu

Office Hours: by Zoom appointment

All required readings for the class will be posted on Huskyct in the form of PDF files. I plan to have the majority of readings for the course posted onto Huskyct prior to the start of the semester

Course Description

PHIL 1101 is an introduction to philosophy course which focuses on western, analytic philosophical thinking (“Western” and “analytic” refer to one of the styles or traditions of academic philosophy that is widely practiced today). The course does not presuppose any prior exposure to philosophy and is intended for those making a first approach to the subject, either to gain an idea of its scope or in order to lay a foundation for further study. Traditional topics in ethics, logic, philosophy of religion, existentialism, philosophy of mind and epistemology will be covered. Moreover, the course will engage with both historical philosophical figures and contemporary authors. Some questions that will be explored in the course include: What does philosophical argumentation consist of? Are there objective moral truths or is morality relative to cultural norms? What is the meaning of life? Does God exist? Can we be justified in believing that the external world and other minds exist? What is the relationship between the mind and the body? Is it possible for machines to have a mind? Is abortion morally justified? What ethical problems are raised by a global pandemic? By the end of the course, students should be familiar with many classic and contemporary philosophical problems as well as have the ability to critically analyze philosophical texts and write formal philosophical essays.

Audio Lectures, Handouts, and Discussion Boards

There will be a content folder on our Huskyct page for each class meeting. Each content folder will include the required and optional readings for that day, a discussion board, an audio lecture, a handout, and links to relevant educational videos. Listening to the audio lecture and contributing to the discussion board will be mandatory the first two weeks of class but will become optional once the class returns to in-person status (see below for further information).

Course Schedule

Module 1- Introduction to Philosophy and Meta-Ethics

Week 1: Introduction to Philosophy

- 1/18: Introduction to philosophy
 - *Required Readings:* ‘The Value of Philosophy’ (Bertrand Russell)

- 1/20: Introduction to philosophical argumentation
 - *Required Readings:* 'Guidelines on Reading Philosophy' (Jim Pryor)

Week 2: Meta-Ethics

- 1/25: Moral relativism and Divine Command Theory
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism' (James Rachels), 'The Euthyphro' (Plato)
 - *Optional Reading:* 'What if God Commanded Something Terrible? A Worry for Divine Command Meta-Ethics' (Wes Morriston), 'Does Ethical Objectivity Require God?' (Russ Shafer-Landau)
 - **READING QUIZ #1 (covers required readings)**
- 1/27: Moral realism
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Is-Ought Problem, the Open Question Argument, and the New Science of Morality' (Radim Belohrad)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Evolutionary Debunking of Moral Realism' (Katia Vavova)

Module 2- Philosophy of Religion

Week 3: The Nature of God, The Problem of Evil, and the Cosmological Argument

- 2/1: The Problem of Evil, Divine Omnipotence, and Divine Hiddenness
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism' (William Rowe)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'What is the Problem of the Hiddenness of God?' (Peter van Inwagen), 'The Best of All Possible Worlds' (Campbell Brown and Yujin Nagasawa)
- 2/3: The Cosmological Argument
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Cosmological Argument' (William Rowe)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'The Cosmological Argument Without the Principle of Sufficient Reason' (Bernard Katz and Elmar Kremer)

Week 4: The Argument from Design, Pascal's Wager, and Eternal Hell

- 2/8: The Argument from Design
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Fine-Tuning Argument' (Neil Manson)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'The Argument from Design: A Guided Tour of William Paley's *Natural Theology*' (T. Ryan Gregory)
 - **READING QUIZ #2 (covers 'The Fine-Tuning Argument')**
- 2/10: Pascal's Wager and Eternal Hell
 - *Required Reading:* 'The Wager' (Blaise Pascal),
 - *Optional Reading:* 'Is There a Hell? Universalism, Hell, and the Fate of the Ignorant' (Stephen Davis)

Week 5: Miracles and Absurdism

- 2/15: Miracles
 - *Required Reading:* 'Of 'Of Miracles'' (Peter van Inwagen)
 - *Optional Reading:* 'Of Miracles' (David Hume)
 - **FIRST PAPER PROMPT DISTRIBUTED**

- 2/17: Absurdism
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Absurd' (Thomas Nagel)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Existentialism is a Humanism' (Jean Paul Sartre), 'Existential Nihilism: The Only Really Serious Philosophical Problem' (Walter Veit)

Module 3- Epistemology and Philosophy of Mind

Week 6: External World Skepticism

- 2/22: Descartes and Cartesian Doubt
 - *Required Readings:* *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Descartes, read the first and second meditation)
 - *Optional Reading:* *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (John Locke, excerpts)
- 2/24: Responses to Skepticism- Idealism, Direct Realism, and the Moorean Shift
 - *Required Readings:* 'Proof of an External World' (G.E. Moore, select passages), 'What Does It All Mean?' (Thomas Nagel, select passages)
 - *Optional Readings:* *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (George Berkeley, excerpts), *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Thomas Reid, excerpts), 'Direct Realism and the Brain-in-a-Vat Argument' (Michael Huemer)
 - 'The Matrix as Metaphysics' (David Chalmers), 'Moore's Proof of an External World and the Problem of Skepticism' (Charles Landesman), 'The Abductivist Reply to Skepticism' (James Beebe)

Week 7: The Simulation Hypothesis and the Hard Problem of Consciousness

- 3/1: The Simulation Hypothesis
 - *Required Readings:* 'Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?' (Nick Bostrom),
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Natural Evil and the Simulation Hypothesis' (David Johnson), 'The Fine-Tuning Argument and the Simulation Hypothesis' (Moti Mizrahi)
 - **READING QUIZ #3 (covers 'Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?')**
 - **FIRST PAPER DUE**
- 3/3: The Hard Problem of Consciousness
 - *Required Reading:* 'What is it Like to be a Bat?' (Thomas Nagel)
 - *Optional Readings:* *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Descartes, sixth meditation), 'Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness' (David Chalmers), 'Descartes' Myth' (Gilbert Ryle), 'What Mary Didn't Know' (Frank Jackson)

Week 8: Machine Consciousness and Mind Uploading

- 3/8: Machine Consciousness
 - *Required Readings:* 'Minds, Brains, and Programs' (John Searle, selected passage), 'Functionalism, Behaviorism, and Physicalism' (Ned Block, selected passage)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence' (Alan Turing), 'Could a Machine Think?' (Patricia Churchland),
- 3/10: Mind Uploading and Personal Identity
 - *Required Reading:* 'The Singularity- A Philosophical Analysis' (David Chalmers, sections 9 and 10)

- *Optional Readings:* 'The Ship of Theseus' (Dupre), 'A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality' (John Perry), 'Mind Uploading: A Philosophical Counter-Analysis' (Massimo Pigliucci)

Module 4- Normative Ethics

Week 9: Consequentialism

- 3/22: Utilitarianism Part 1
 - *Required Reading:* 'The Debate Over Utilitarianism' (James Rachels)
 - *Optional Readings:* *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (selected sections, Jeremy Bentham) 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality' (Peter Railton)
- 3/24: Utilitarianism Part 2
 - *Required Readings:* 'Utilitarianism' (J.S. Mill, selected passage),
 - *Optional Readings:* 'The Experience Machine' (Ben Bramble)
 - **SECOND PAPER PROMPT DISTRIBUTED**

Week 10: Deontology

- 3/29: Kantian Ethics
 - *Required Reading:* *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals* (selected sections, Immanuel Kant)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil' (Christine Korsgaard), 'Unifying the Categorical Imperative' (Marcus Arvan)
- 3/31: Applied Deontology
 - *Required Reading:* 'War and Massacre' (Thomas Nagel)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Suicide, Euthanasia, and Human Dignity' (Friderik Klampfer), 'A Direct Kantian Duty to Animals' (Michael Cholbi)
 - **READING QUIZ #4 (covers 'War and Massacre')**

Week 11: Virtue Ethics

- 4/5: Aristotle and Eudaimonia
 - *Required Reading:* *Nichomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, books I-II)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Identifying and Defending the Hard Core of Virtue Ethics' (Mark Alfano)
- 4/7: The Doctrine of the Mean and the Fundamental Attribution Error
 - *Required Reading:* 'Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error' (Gilbert Harman,)
 - *Optional Reading:* 'Confucianism, Buddhism, and Virtue Ethics' (Bradford Cokelet)
 - **SECOND PAPER DUE**

Module 5- Applied Ethics

Week 12: Abortion

- 4/12: The Question of Personhood
 - *Required Readings:* 'An Almost Absolute Value in History' (John Noonan),
 - *Optional Readings:* 'On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion' (Mary Anne Warren),

- 4/14: Beyond Personhood
 - *Required Reading:* 'A Defense of Abortion' (Judith Jarvis Thomson)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect' (Philippa Foot)
 - **READING QUIZ #5 (covers 'A Defense of Abortion')**

Week 13: Pandemic Ethics and Effective Altruism

- 4/19: Pandemic Ethics
 - *Required Reading:* 'Pandemic Ethics: The Case for Risky Research' (Richard Yetter Chappell and Peter Singer)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Pandemic Prioritarianism' (Lasse Nielsen), 'Capitalism After COVID: How the Pandemic Might Inspire A More Virtuous Economy' (Julian Friedland)
- 4/21: Effective Altruism
 - *Required Reading:* 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality' (Peter Singer)
 - *Optional Reading:* 'Effective Altruism and its Critics' (Iason Gabriel)

Week 14: Population Ethics

- 4/26: Population Axiology
 - *Required Reading:* 'Overpopulation and the Quality of Life' (Derek Parfit, you can skip section 4)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'In Defense of Repugnance' (Michael Huemer), 'Totalism Without Repugnance' (Jacob Nebel)
- 4/28: Antinatalism and Reproductive Ethics
 - *Required Readings:* 'The Immorality of Procreation' (Jimmy Alfonso Licon)
 - *Optional Readings:* 'Antinatalism, Asymmetry, and an Ethic of Prima Facie Duties' (Gerald Harrison)

FINAL EXAM (scheduled exam date)

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
Final Exam	30%
Participation	15%
Paper #1	20%
Paper #2	25%
Reading Quizzes	10%

Grades in the C+ to B- range represent performance that *meets expectations*; Grades in the B+ to A- range represent performance that is significantly *better than the expectations*; Grades in the A range represent

work that is *excellent*. You may contact me for information about your current grade or your expected grade in the course.

Final Exam

The final exam will be administered in-person on our scheduled exam date and will feature a combination of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The exam will be *cumulative* and *closed notebook*. However, the exam will include more material from the second half of the class than the first half and I will distribute a detailed study guide near the end of the semester specifying which content is fair game for the exam. The exam will also be timed; once started, students will have three hours to complete it.

Participation

First Two Weeks of Online Instruction: The first two weeks of the course will be asynchronous, meaning that we will not all meet at the same time for a group video call. Instead, I will release audio lectures and handouts on the course content. Students are expected to complete the required reading(s), listen to the audio lecture, look over the handout and then contribute to the discussion board in order to receive full participation credit during the initial period of online instruction. There will be four discussion boards in total that students are required to contribute to over the first two weeks (one for each scheduled class meeting). Each discussion board will be available on Huskyct in the relevant content folder and will include discussion questions that are based upon the required readings for that module and/or on content delivered in my audio lecture/online handout. Each student is *required* to contribute one response to each discussion board in order to meet the minimum requirement for participation. These responses should answer, problematize, or analyze one of the discussion questions. Each response should be at least a paragraph or two long (around 200-400 words) and demonstrate that the student has actively engaged with the relevant course content. Students are encouraged to contribute more than one post per discussion board, but it is not required. Students are also encouraged to comment upon each other's posts and use the discussion forum as a platform for lively interaction on the week's topic. Commenting on another student's post is another way to earn participation marks. If you do comment upon another student's post, the comment should be respectful and professional. Harmful or abusive writing will not be tolerated. The goal is to promote an inclusive learning environment that is hospitable to all students. Be charitable. Give your peers the benefit of the doubt. Try to understand what they intend to say, be respectful of your peers, their points of view and their desire to learn. Disagreeing with a point is good. If you disagree with a point, give a reason for why you disagree. Attacking the person who made the point is not allowed. I will make sure to read and record every discussion board post. Here is the schedule for discussion board posts over the first two weeks:

- Discussion Board #1: due 1/19 by midnight
- Discussion Board #2: due 1/21 by midnight
- Discussion Board #3: due 1/26 by midnight
- Discussion Board #4: due 1/28 by midnight

The first reading quiz of the semester will also be held online on Huskyct via Webcam and Lockdown browser (see below). The quiz will be located in the folder <1/25: Moral Relativism and Divine Command Theory> and will cover the readings 'The Challenges of Cultural Relativism' and 'The Euthyphro.' *The first reading quiz will be made available online at 2pm 1/25 and is due by midnight 1/25.*

Rest of the Semester (In-Person): I will continue to include discussion boards on Huskyct for each class meeting even after the course returns to in-person status. However, contributing to the discussion board (as well as listening to the audio lecture) will at this point become optional instead of mandatory. Students are expected to attend class in-person each week in order to meet the minimal threshold for participation. To receive an A grade for participation, students must also be actively engaged with the course content and contribute to course discussions. There are two ways to actively contribute in this manner: (1) by vocally participating in class discussion during our in-person meetings, and/or (2) by contributing a post to the discussion board onto Huskyct each week. You do not need to do both (1) and (2) in order to receive an A grade for participation, although it is encouraged. As long as you either consistently attend class and vocally

contribute to in-person discussions, OR consistently attend class and contribute to the discussion board each week, you will receive an A grade for participation.

Papers

Writing philosophical essays is crucial to becoming a good philosopher, as the act of writing forces students to clarify their thoughts, structure their ideas, and discern any confusions on the topic at hand. There will be two paper assignments in the class. The required length for each paper is 4-6 pages double spaced, times new roman. Students are expected to number their pages and include a bibliography (either MLA or APA format is acceptable). Avoid citing or quoting my handouts in your paper. Any quotations used should be direct quotations from either the required or optional readings. The prompt for each paper will include a handful of questions. Students are expected to choose one of these questions and write an essay in response to it. Students will have two weeks to write each paper and will submit their assignments on Huskyct via a designated link. I will take time to explain how to write a good philosophical essay and prioritize providing detailed feedback to help students become better writers.

Reading Quizzes

There will be five reading quizzes scattered throughout the semester. Each quiz will cover the required reading(s) for that day and will contain multiple-choice questions and a few short answer questions. The first quiz will be administered on Huskyct via *Respondus Lockdown Browser with Monitor*. Students are expected to have a working webcam and to have downloaded the Lockdown browser software prior to completing the quiz. The remaining quizzes will be administered in-person at the start of class. The dates of the quizzes are already listed on the schedule but may be subject to change.

Grading Scale (per the Registrar):

Grade	Letter Grade
Excellent	A
	A-
Very Good	B+
Good	B
	B-
	C+
Average	C
Fair	C-
Poor	D+
	D
Merely Passing	D-
Failure	F

Due Dates and Late Policy

Assignment deadlines are based on U.S. Eastern Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.*

If you are unable to complete an assignment on time and have a valid reason (unavoidable study disruptions, health issues, family obligations), then send me an email beforehand to let me know and I am happy to grant an extension. I will make every effort to provide feedback on your papers within a week's time span. Generally speaking, please try to arrive at class on time each meeting to avoid disruptions.

Statement on Coronavirus Pandemic: I understand that the Covid-19 pandemic has thrust us into volatile times. If you ever feel sick and need to quarantine, please shoot me an email and do not come to class. I have intentionally designed the class in a hybrid manner so that students can participate and engage with the course content in an online setting.

Student Authentication and Verification

The University of Connecticut is required to verify the identity of students who participate in online courses and to establish that students who register in an online course are the same students who participate in, complete the course activities and assessments, and receive academic credit. Verification and authentication of student identity in this course will include:

1. Secure access to the learning management system using your unique UConn NetID and password.
2. Respondus Lockdown Browser with Monitor

Academic Integrity Policy

The Policy: In addition to skills and knowledge, the University of Connecticut aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard. It is your job to be sure that the instructor has no reason to suspect academic dishonesty. Any perceived dishonesty will be dealt with according to the guidelines of the UConn's Academic Integrity Policy.

Note: Plagiarism implies academic misconduct and is defined as "The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as one's own". Importantly, plagiarism need not be intentional and can be the result of negligence.

Consequences: An instructor may impose a sanction on the student that varies depending upon the instructor's evaluation of the nature and gravity of the offense. Possible sanctions include but are not limited to, the following: (1) Require the student to redo the assignment; (2) Require the student to complete another assignment; (3) Assign a grade of zero to the assignment; (4) Assign a final grade of "F" for the course. A student may appeal these decisions according to UConn's Academic Integrity Policy.

Copyright

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
 - Academic Integrity
 - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Credit Hours and Workload
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

Students with Disabilities and Sexual Harassment Policy

Students with Disabilities: The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>. Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.” (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#)).

Sexual Harassment Policy: It is UCONN policy to maintain a working and learning environment free from sexual harassment and from discrimination. Sexual harassment is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972. UCONN will not tolerate sexual harassment of students or employees and will take action to eliminate such behavior. <https://titleix.uconn.edu/>

Software/Technical Requirements (with Accessibility and Privacy Information)

The University has set minimum [device requirements for all students](#). **NOTE:** Chromebooks do not meet the minimum requirements.

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

- HuskyCT/Blackboard ([HuskyCT/ Blackboard Accessibility Statement](#), [HuskyCT/ Blackboard Privacy Policy](#))
- Microsoft Office (free to UConn students through uconn.onthehub.com) ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](#), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#))
- Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended).
- WebCam

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University's Privacy page](#).

NOTE: This course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices.

Help

This course is facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). The [IT Knowledge Base](#) provides students with support, troubleshooting, and how-to information about HuskyCT. The [IT Knowledge Base](#) includes a video tour of HuskyCT.

For technical help with HuskyCT, you have access to the in-person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the [Help Center](#). You also have [24x7 Course Support](#) outside of business hours, including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

[Technical and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to frequently asked questions for online students.

Study Groups

Are you interested in forming a study group with other students in the class? There is a [study group application](#) in Nexus that can help you get started. View this [video](#) for more information.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Open and access PDF files.
- Competently navigate Huskyct and Respondus Lockdown Browser with Monitor

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.