



Course Number, Title and Credits

PHLU 101 - Introduction to Philosophy - 3 credits

Course Description

This course explores philosophical inquiry, Western traditions, and key debates (metaphysical, existential, ethical). Students will analyze historical and contemporary methodologies, develop critical thinking, and apply ideas to personal and societal contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Develop critical thinking skills.
2. Identify the key concepts of primary thinkers in philosophy.
3. Articulate their own philosophical ethos, and to communicate such ethos effectively in written and verbal form.
4. Develop working definitions of philosophy as well as an appreciation of the cross-cultural dimension of philosophical thinking and the role this thinking plays in self-development.
5. Apply philosophical ideas to the socio-political world in which they live so as to understand it more deeply and to challenge it more effectively.
6. Apply philosophical ideas to their everyday lives to help make more meaning out of their experiences.

Required Textbooks

Reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

Letter Grade/Percentage Equivalents

Grades are determined on a straight-scale basis using the following scales.

A	94%-100%	A-	90%-93%	B+	87%-89%
B	84%-86%	B-	80%-83%	C+	77%-79%
C	74%-76%	C-	70%-73%	D+	67%-69%
D	64%-66%	D-	60% - 63%	F	59% and below

Methods of Evaluation for Determining Grades

Assignment Detail for Course:

Assignments	Possible Points
weekly written reflections	600
Weekly discussions	200
Final Exam	200
Total Points Possible in Course	1000

Week by Week Outline for Course (Tentative):

Week	Topics & Assignments
Week 1	<p>Introduction to Philosophical concepts and thinking / Theories of Epistemology and Metaphysics</p> <p>Our lectures, assignments and discussions in this section will focus on theories of Epistemology and Metaphysics. This includes examining ideas related to acquiring knowledge, what counts as knowledge, and questioning notions of reality.</p> <p>We will cover the following readings and theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bertrand Russel “The Value of Philosophy” (Selected Excerpt)● Plato “The Republic” (Selected Excerpts)● Rene’ Descartes “Meditations I and II” (1641)● John Locke “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (Selected Excerpts) (1689)● George Berkeley “Principles of Human Knowledge” (Selected Excerpts) <p><u>Discussion 1</u> <u>Weekly reflection 1</u></p>
Week 2	<p>Theories of Personhood, personal identity, and consciousness</p> <p>Our lectures, assignments and discussions in this section will focus on theories of personhood and personal identity. This includes important questions such as determining the criteria for personhood, understanding the importance of personhood as it pertains to legality, and examining the role of consciousness in our notions of ‘self’ or existence.</p> <p>We will cover the following readings and theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● David Hume “A Treatise of Human Nature” Book I, Part IV, Section VI (1739 -1740)● John Locke “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (Selected Excerpts)● Marya Schechtman “Personal Identity and the Past” (Selected Excerpts)● Descartes “Meditations” (Selected Excerpts)● Daniel Dennett “Where Am I?”● Ifeanyi Menkiti “African Personhood” <p><u>Discussion 2</u> <u>Weekly reflection 2</u></p>

Week 3	<p>Theories of Ethics and God</p> <p>Our lectures, assignments and discussions in this section will focus on various theories of ethics from the Western Canon that are considered essential works. We will also discuss ideas related to God as it pertains to questions of ethics and notions of good and evil in our world.</p> <p>We will cover the following readings and theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immanuel Kant "Critique of Pure Reason" (Selected Excerpts or an overview) (1781) ● Jeremy Bentham "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" ● John Stuart Mill "Utilitarianism" ● Aristotle "Nicomachean Ethics" ● Nietzsche "Genealogy of Morals" ● John Leslie (J.L) Mackie "Problem of Evil" ● Blaise Pascal "The Wager" ● James and Stuart Rachels "Critique of Cultural Relativism" <p><u>Discussion 3</u></p> <p><u>Weekly reflection 3</u></p>
Week 4	<p>Theories of Free Will and Socio-political philosophy</p> <p>Our lectures, assignments and discussions in this section will focus on free will and socio-political philosophy. This includes topics of freedom beyond the philosophical notion of free will, government structures, notions of economic and distributive justice, and we will explore questions of civil disobedience and human rights.</p> <p>We will cover the following readings and theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baron d'holbach "Systems of Nature" ● Walter Terence Stace "The Problem of Free Will" ● Thomas Hobbes "Leviathan" (Selected Excerpts) (1651) ● John Locke "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (Selected Excerpts) ● John Rawls "A theory of Justice" (Selected Excerpts) ● Garrett Hardin "Lifeboat Ethics" ● Richard Rorty "Justice as Loyalty" ● Martin Luther King, Jr., from "Letter from Birmingham Jail" ● Malcolm X Speech on civil rights/human rights <p><u>Discussion 4</u></p> <p><u>Weekly reflection 4</u></p>

Week 5	<p>Applied Philosophy, Critical Thinking, and Thought Experiments</p> <p>Note: Content for this week will be open early, so that students have a jump start for final exam</p> <p>Our lectures, assignments and discussions in this section will focus on various issues of applied philosophy, which is loosely defined as philosophy as it relates directly to issues and questions in our daily lives. This week will also cover various questions and thought experiments to push critical thought related to applied philosophical theories but also to ideas we have covered earlier in this semester.</p> <p>We will cover the following readings and theorist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Judith Jarvis on Abortion and David Benetar on Anti-natalism (Personhood, ethics, existence, rights) ● Thought experiment on theft of unclaimed items (ethics, ownership, socio-political) ● Wertheimer on Societies without police ● Beccaria on Criminal Justice and Capital Punishment ● Michael Sandel on Human Enhancements <p><u>Discussion 5</u></p> <p><u>Final Exam</u></p>
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Attendance Policy

Requirements for student attendance and participation will be defined by each instructor based on the following policy:

- Monday of the first week of the session is the first day of class.
- Regular attendance/engagement is expected for student success. Online engagement is evident through posting to a discussion board, blog, completing assignments including journal entries, or taking quizzes and exams. If regular attendance/engagement are not evident, the student's grade may be adversely affected. If a student misses more than one week of engagement in an online class, the student may, at the discretion of the instructor, fail the course.
- Students in courses with required synchronous class sessions are expected to remain for the full duration. If a student misses more than one required synchronous online class, the student may, at the discretion of the instructor, fail the course.
- Students must submit an academically-related assignment through the Learning Management System (LMS) before the end of Week 2 (i.e., a quiz, test, course content-related Discussion Board post, or other course content-related assignment). Introduction posts do not count as an academically-related assignment. If a student does not submit an academically-related assignment, the student will be administratively dropped from the course. Students

administratively dropped for non-attendance/participation will not be reinstated in the course. In infrequent cases, students in certain classes may be exempt from the requirement to submit an academically-related assignment before the end of Week 2; students may consult with their instructor for further information.

- Students should consider withdrawing from a course if they will be unable to participate each week. Instructors may, but are not obligated to, accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances, but the student must request accommodation and provide requested supporting documentation.
- Schools and programs may have different attendance policies. Refer to school and program specific information for additional attendance policies.

Academic Integrity

The University of Massachusetts Global is an academic community based on the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Academic integrity is a core University value, which ensures respect for the academic reputation of the University, its students, faculty and staff, and the degrees it confers. The University expects that students will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner and respect the intellectual work of others.

Submitting to faculty work completed by the use of any artificial intelligence tool without permission and/or when prohibited by class policy. When faculty require the use of technology, including artificial intelligence, as a part of an assignment for the course, there is no violation. Students are reminded to consult syllabi, assignment sheets/rubrics, program documents and their faculty. Use of artificial intelligence, when permitted, must be correctly cited in the assignment.

The UMass Global online library provides resources to support research, proper citation styles, and the safe and responsible use of generative artificial intelligence or Gen AI.

- The [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Avoidance](#) page provides guidance to help students better understand academic integrity and includes tips on how to avoid plagiarism.
- The [Citing Sources](#) page offers guidance on how to properly cite using APA, MLA, and Chicago styles.
- The [Artificial Intelligence Resource Guide for Students](#) provides advice for understanding and appropriately using generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Bard.

UMass Global's Office of Accessible Education

Students who require disability-related services or accommodations to access their educational experience can register with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). The Office of Accessible Education (OAE) is committed to ensuring equal educational access and opportunity for all members of our academic community. Students will be provided equitable and reasonable accommodations and

services that are in compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)/Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAA). Registration with OAE is on a voluntary, self-identifying basis. Please visit the Office of Accessible Education (OAE) website for more information about how to register for services, eligibility requirements, and information about potential academic accommodations and services.

Our university is committed to ensuring equal access for all students. Let us know about any accessibility barriers you encounter using any of our online systems or websites by submitting a [Feedback or Accessibility Concern Submission Form](#). We'll do our best to improve things and get you the information you need.

UMass Global's CARES Team

The CARES team is a campus-wide team of appointed staff and faculty responsible for identifying, assessing, and responding to concerns and/or disruptive behaviors by students, faculty/staff, and community members who struggle academically, emotionally, or psychologically, or who present a risk to the health or safety of the university or its members.

Individuals may refer themselves or other community members of concern by emailing cares@umassglobal.edu or by filling out a referral form [here](#). The CARES Team provides short term assessment, intervention, support, and recommendations of resources to those referred and engaged in the process.

UMass Global's Title IX Statement

The University of Massachusetts Global strives to maintain and foster a climate that promotes respect and human dignity. Sexual misconduct and relationship violence in any form is antithetical to the university's mission and core values, violates university policies, and may also violate federal and state law. The office of Title IX is primarily concerned for students' safety and well-being and is tasked with investigating all reports of sexual misconduct experienced by our community members. Title IX prohibits sex-based and gender-based discrimination and harassment, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related complications, parental status, and marital status. Students expecting or experiencing pregnancy-related complications, that may require educational accommodations, should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Office of Accessible Education.

The University and Title IX's prohibition of sex discrimination also covers sexual harassment, sexual violence, and any other form of sexual misconduct. We offer options and resources to all students affected by these issues and are committed to providing a fair, thorough, and prompt investigation and adjudication process. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexual assault, dating, and domestic violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, please visit the [University's Title IX Resource Page](#) to access additional resources and information.

UMass Global's staff and faculty are tasked with reporting any possible sex or gender-based discrimination or Title IX violations to the University's Title IX Coordinator at civilrightscomplaints@umassglobal.edu.

[Click on this Link to our University Title IX Policy](#)