

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Philosophy**

Syllabus

Winter Term 2020

Course: PHIL 100J - INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: Section 001

Instructor: Professor Nikolaj Zunic

Class Times: 10:00 am – 11:20 am on Mondays and Wednesdays

Class Location: SJ2 2007

Office: SH 2003 [Sweeney Hall on the St. Jerome's campus]

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:30 am – 10:00 am and 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm;
and by appointment: please e-mail the instructor.

Required Texts

The following 4 books are required for this course. They may be purchased at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, second edition, translated by G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002.

Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, translated by Richard J. Regan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, third edition, translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.

James V. Schall, *The Life of the Mind: The Joys and Travails of Thinking*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2006.

Course Description

What is philosophy? It is precisely this question which we will be endeavouring to answer in this course. The origins of philosophy can be traced back to ancient Greek civilization (c. 5th to 3rd centuries B. C.) when a new way of living and thinking was developed. But over time this initial conception of philosophy went through many transformations as each new epoch in human history grappled with the fundamental questions of reality in different ways. Philosophy, therefore, has many voices, but throughout these changes there is nonetheless a line of continuity that joins these myriad manifestations into a discernible tradition.

Our approach to the investigation of the nature of philosophy will be historical, in the sense that we will study the conceptions of philosophy by prominent thinkers in the tradition of Western philosophy. We will cover four main epochs: ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary. This historical approach will enable us to understand how philosophy began more than two millennia ago and to chart the development of philosophy through time leading to the present. This methodological framework will expose the complex nature of philosophy by illustrating how philosophy can change and yet preserve its essential identity, and furthermore, why only an historical perspective can properly grasp what philosophy is.

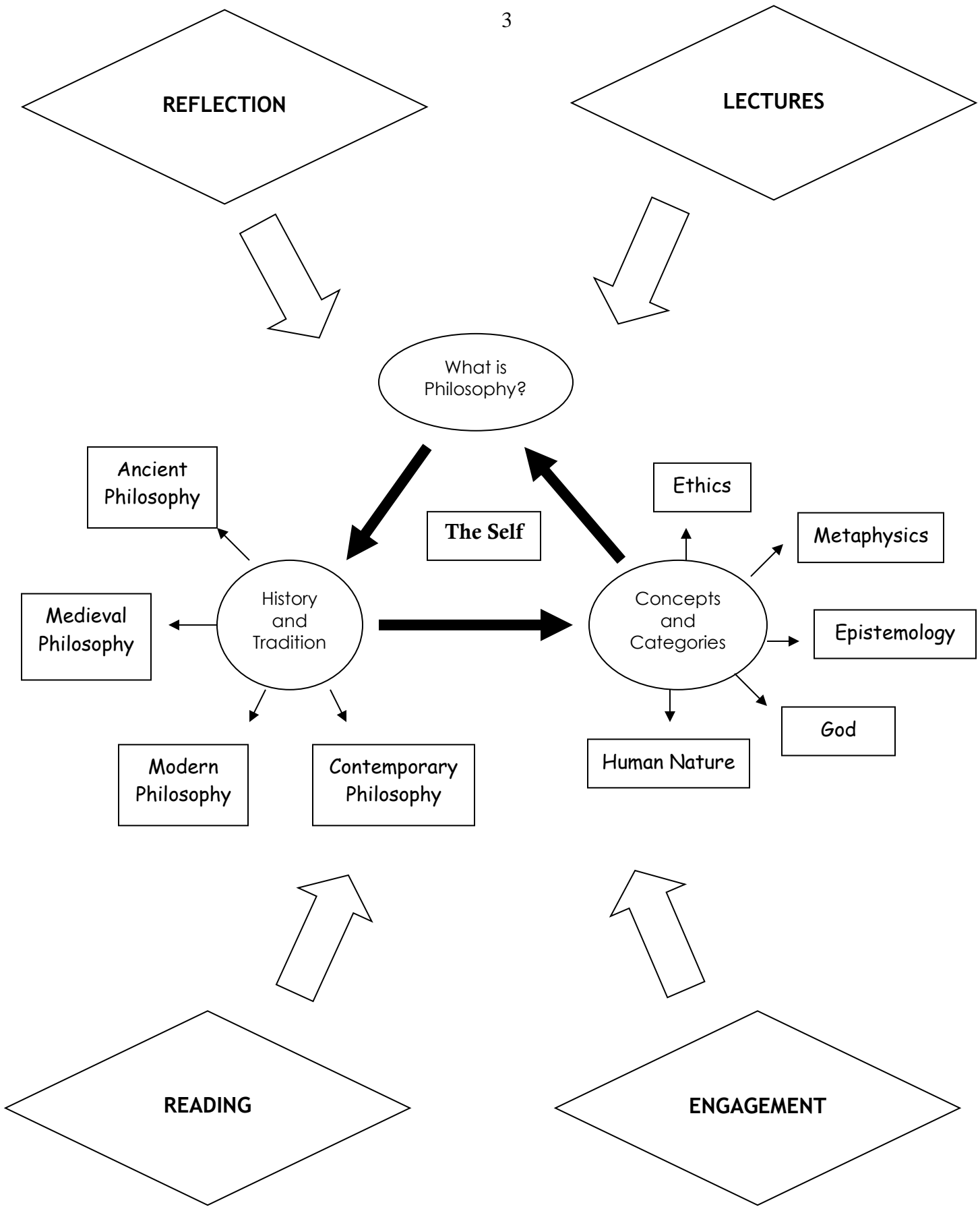
In the school of ancient philosophy we will read some early Socratic dialogues by Plato, who is universally considered to be the founder of philosophy. Plato's dialogues are an excellent guide to the ancient world's understanding and practice of philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas will represent medieval philosophy, the period which spans c. 300 – 1400 A.D. What is unique about the Middle Ages is the prominence of Christianity which influenced philosophy tremendously. A new kind of philosophizing was inaugurated with the spread and appropriation of the Christian faith. In this regard we will study some excerpts from Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* in which he discusses topics such as the existence and attributes of God, the human soul, happiness, and the virtues.

Modern philosophy (c. 1500 – 1900 A.D.) marks a break with the past and the beginning of a new phase for philosophy in which pure reason, also called *rationalism*, becomes the foundation. René Descartes' major work *Meditations on First Philosophy* shows us how philosophy underwent a radical alteration in modern times and what the issues were that defined this new era. We will read this entire work since it concisely sums up the spirit of the modern age.

In the last part of the course we will read sections from the contemporary philosopher James V. Schall's book *The Life of the Mind: The Joys and Travails of Thinking* which highlight some key themes in philosophy, such as the need to be exposed to good books, how to preserve one's wisdom in the world, and the need for philosophy.

As we journey through these readings and discussions we will be exposed to the various disciplines of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, God, and human nature.



Format of the Course

This is a lecture course and as such the professor will discuss the material contained in the readings and will expand on the subject-matter in his lectures. However, students are strongly encouraged to ask questions and to participate in class.

***Students are responsible for both the readings and the lecture material.**

Objectives

- To come to know the nature and purpose of philosophy.
- To identify the names of significant philosophers and their works.
- To explain prominent philosophical doctrines and theories.
- To classify historical periods in philosophy and to describe their main characteristics.
- To appraise the validity and rectitude of the historical approach to the study of philosophy.
- To develop and to communicate clearly one's own personal understanding of the nature and purpose of philosophy.
- To develop skills in good judgement.
- To apply philosophical thinking to other domains of learning and life.
- To value the importance of philosophy in today's world.

Schedule

The following is a schedule of the classes for this course. The readings which will be discussed in each class are listed. Students are strongly advised to read the prescribed material before each class so that the lectures are more readily understood and pertinent questions may be posed.

Note: This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change.

January 6: Introduction to the course: What is philosophy?
 Introduction to Plato and ancient philosophy

Part 1: Ancient Philosophy: Ethics and the Soul

January 8: Plato, *Meno*, pp. 58-77 (70a-85c)

January 13: *Meno*, pp. 77-92 (85d-100b)

January 15: *Euthyphro*, pp. 1-20 (2a-16a)

- January 20: *Apology*, pp. 21-32 (17a-28b)
- January 22: *Apology*, pp. 32-44 (28c-42a)
ESSAY #1 DUE
- January 27: *Crito*, pp. 45-57 (43a-54e)
- January 29: *Phaedo*, pp. 93-106 (57a-69d)
- February 3: *Phaedo*, pp. 106-126 (69e-88c)
- February 5: *Phaedo*, pp. 126-154 (88d-118a)
- February 10: **IN-CLASS TEST ON PLATO**

Part 2: Medieval Philosophy: God and Virtue

- February 12: Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, pp. 1-6.
Topic: The existence of God.
- February 17-21: READING WEEK – No Classes
- February 24: Aquinas, pp. 6-11.
Topic: The attributes of God.
- Aquinas, pp. 11-19.
The knowledge of God.
- February 26: Aquinas, pp. 46-60.
Topic: Creation and governance.
- Aquinas, pp. 61-69.
Topic: The soul.
- March 1: Aquinas, pp. 80-94.
Topic: Knowledge and understanding.
- March 4: Aquinas, pp. 105-112.
Topic: Happiness.

Part 3: Modern Philosophy: Reason and Truth

- March 9: René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Letter of Dedication, Preface, and Synopsis, pp. 1-10.
- Meditation One, pp. 13-17.

- March 11: Meditation Two, pp. 17-24.
- March 16: Meditation Three, pp. 24-35.
- March 18: Meditations Four to Six, pp. 35-59.

March 23: **IN-CLASS TEST ON AQUINAS AND DESCARTES**

Part 4: Contemporary Philosophy: Wisdom and Freedom

- March 25: James V. Schall, *The Life of the Mind*: Chapters I-VI (pp. 1-89)
- March 30: James V. Schall, *The Life of the Mind*: Chapters IX-X (pp. 121-151)
- April 1: **Final class. Discussion about the final exam.**

ESSAY #2 DUE

Assignments

1. **Short Essay:** A philosophical reflection of the role of truth in your life. The focus of this first essay is to have you reflect in a creative, yet serious manner on what you understand by truth and the role that truth plays in your life. This is very much a personal essay, based on your life experiences and your personality and character. The length of this essay should be 3 – 5 double-spaced pages. Detailed instructions will be distributed early in the course.
2. **Quizzes:** There will be five quizzes administered at various times throughout the course. The date of each quiz will not be announced in advance and will be at the discretion of the instructor. The quizzes will be given in the last 15-20 minutes of a particular class and will be based on the material covered during that class. The quizzes have a twofold purpose: first, to assess your grasp of the material discussed in class, and second, to offer an incentive to attend class regularly. Since one of the goals of the quizzes is to encourage regular attendance, there are no make-up quizzes. Each quiz will be assessed out of a maximum of 2 points. If one's answer is generally thoughtful and correct then a grade of 2 will be given. If there is a significant shortcoming in the answer, such as a clearly incorrect idea, but there is evidence that the student is seriously trying to do well, then a grade of 1 will be given – in other words, a point is awarded for the effort. A grade of "0" is given if the quiz is either not written at all or is clearly unacceptable. If you attend class regularly and write all 5 quizzes with a general understanding of what we are doing in this course, then there should be no problem earning the full 10 points allotted for these quizzes.
3. **Tests:** There will be two in-class tests based on the content of the readings and lectures. The tests will deal with the material we cover in our study of Plato, Aquinas, and Descartes respectively. The principal focus of these tests will be your comprehension of the concepts that are discussed in this course. However, you will also be assessed on your ability to think philosophically. The duration of each test will be 70 minutes.
4. **Major Essay:** This will be a rigorous and reflective investigation of a prominent theme or idea from the course. The length of this essay will be 6 – 9 double-spaced pages and will be due on the last day of class. Detailed instructions will be distributed approximately one month before the essay's due date.
5. **Final Examination:** A comprehensive examination that will assess your understanding of the ideas and doctrines studied in the course as well as your ability to think philosophically on a range of issues which will take place during the normal university exam period.

Grading Scheme

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE – DATE SCHEDULED	VALUE
1. Short Essay	Jan. 22, 2020	10%
2. Quizzes	Throughout the course	5 quizzes X 2% = 10%
3. Tests	(a) Plato: Feb. 10; (b) Aquinas and Descartes: Mar. 23	2 tests X 15% = 30%
4. Major Essay	April 1, 2020	20%
5. Final Examination	Scheduled during university exam period: April 8-25, 2020	30%

Course Policies

1. **ATTENDANCE:** Students are expected to attend class regularly.
2. **CLASS NOTES:** It is crucial to take complete notes in class. It is the student's responsibility to record relevant and important information which is discussed in class. Students will be assessed on the lecture material which may not necessarily be contained in the readings. Furthermore, the professor's lecture notes will not be made available for copying. If you are absent from class please contact a classmate for the lecture notes.
3. **WATERLOO LEARN SITE:** This course has a Learn site. The instructor will post all assignments and instructions to the site. Hard copies will also be provided in class. The instructor will use the Learn site sporadically, usually to give information that is useful and relevant to the course. Moreover, any important announcements will be communicated on the site. Students should check in with Learn regularly to keep abreast of course developments.
4. **DUE DATES:** The essays are due at the beginning of class on the dates given above.
5. **LATENESS PENALTY:** The penalty for late assignments is 3% deducted from the grade of the paper for each weekday that the paper is late.
6. **ABSOLUTE DEADLINE:** The maximum allowable amount of time for submitting essays beyond the due date is one week.
7. **NO MAKE-UPS:** The tests and quizzes must be written when they are originally administered in class. No make-up tests and quizzes will be permitted. An exception to this rule will be made if a student misses a test or quiz because of a medical condition, such as an illness, or because of some other serious reason, such as a death/funeral. In such cases proper documentation must be presented to the instructor which proves that the events in question actually took place (e.g. an official document from a physician or a death certificate or a funeral notice).
8. **EXTRA HELP:** If you are having difficulties in this course and are concerned about your performance, it is your responsibility to communicate these concerns to the professor in a

timely fashion. The professor is willing to meet with students during office hours to discuss course material. Do not wait until the course is over to contact the professor about your final grade!

9. **POLITE BEHAVIOUR:** Students are expected to be courteous and civil in their behavior both in and outside of class. Unruly and rude behavior will not be tolerated.
10. **E-MAILS:** When you communicate with the instructor by means of e-mail be sure to use proper etiquette and a formal style of writing. For example, no e-mails with the salutation “Hey!” (a very popular opening for university students). Moreover, you should write in a legible and grammatically correct manner. Any correspondence which is vulgar, informal, or replete with spelling and grammatical mistakes will not be answered.
11. **LAPTOPS, CELLPHONES, TABLETS:** It is desirable that a proper pedagogical and learning atmosphere be created in the classroom. Therefore, it is requested of all students that various technologies not be used during the lectures. These include laptop computers, cellphones, tablets, and other devices. Any exceptions to this rule will be made on a case by case basis. For example, if you are registered with AccessAbility Services and you require the use of a laptop to take notes, an accommodation can certainly be made for you. But please do see the professor about any such request.

If you habitually and inappropriately use your cell phone or computer in class, be prepared to have the instructor speak to you about this.

Important Information

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

Academic Integrity Office (UW): A resource for students and instructors.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the **St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline:** https://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCApproved.pdf

For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to **University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline:**

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the **St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances:**

https://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCApproved.pdf

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read the **St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals:**

https://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCApproved.pdf

Note for Students with Disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office (<https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/>), located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.