

# PHIL 1001: Foundations in Philosophy

Spring 2020

Marquette University

**Section 108:** Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, 10:00 am - 10:50 am (Johnston Hall 025)

**Instructor:** Kyle Whitaker

**Office Hours:** MWF: 9:00 am - 9:50 am, and 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm; or by appointment (MH 424)

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## Course Description

This course aims to help students critically engage their own experience as it relates to fundamental philosophical questions about the human condition, focusing on moral value and the meaning and purpose of human life. It aims to help students articulate their own deepest questions about these issues, and to increase their understanding of, organize, and befriend these questions in light of a variety of classical and contemporary philosophical approaches.

## Texts

§ There is no required textbook for this class. All required and recommended readings will be posted as PDF files on D2L.

## Core Learning Outcomes

This course is part of the Marquette University Core. This course introduces the following Core learning outcomes:

### **Responsible and Ethical Communicators**

Marquette students will be able to consider a variety of modes and techniques to choose a form of communication best suited to a particular situation and explain their choice.

### **Moral and Ethical Actors**

Marquette students will be able to recognize the ways in which the Catholic, Jesuit tradition, as well as other religious and ethical traditions, can contribute to ethical deliberation, in both the private and public spheres, especially as regards matters of social justice.

### **Citizens with Purpose**

Marquette students will be able to recognize and articulate their own values and personal commitments.

This course advances the aims of the foundational courses and of the Core Curriculum at Marquette. Central questions and topics in Philosophy ask that students consider their roles as responsible and ethical communicators, ethical actors, and citizens with purpose. The course learning objectives, related activities, and assignments are designed to help students realize their own philosophical questions, understand how

historical and contemporary philosophers ask and answer central philosophical issues, and discern different approaches and methodologies for philosophical exploration.

## Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) **Articulate their own deepest philosophical questions:** Articulate their own fundamental questions about the nature of the human condition, moral value, and the meaning and purpose of human life in relation to a variety of philosophical approaches to these questions. Students should be able to express in writing and orally how their own experiences have made these questions relevant for them and may influence their preliminary answers to these questions.
- (2) **Explain how past and present philosophers have asked and attempted to answer these and related questions:** Explain how a variety of philosophical approaches ask and attempt to answer questions about the nature of the human condition, moral value, and the meaning and purpose of human life and the logical connections philosophical approaches make among these ideas (e.g., how a philosopher's understanding of human nature or the human condition bears on their understanding of morality and meaning/purpose of human existence).
- (3) **Demonstrate facility with a variety of critically reflective philosophical processes of discernment:** Demonstrate facility with a variety of critically reflective processes of discernment philosophers use to address fundamental questions about the human condition, moral value, and the meaning and purpose of human life.

Objective 1 will be assessed via the Curiosity Assignment. Objective 2 will be assessed via the Perspectives Assignment. Objective 3 will be assessed via the Methodologies Assignment. See below for details.

## Course Requirements

### Course Composition:

Midterm Exam	20%
Methodologies Assignment (Included in Midterm Exam)	10%
Final Exam	20%
Curiosity Assignment	20%
Perspectives Assignment	10%
Video Responses	5%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Participation	5%

## Grading Scale:

A	94 – 100	C	73 – 76.9
A-	90 – 93.9	C-	70 – 72.9
B+	87 – 89.9	D+	67 – 69.9
B	83 – 86.9	D	60 – 66.9
B-	80 – 82.9	F	0 – 59.9
C+	77 – 79.9		

**Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam will be on **March 6**. The exam will include 40 multiple choice and short answer questions covering the content of the readings and lectures from the first half of the semester, plus another 20 questions covering philosophical methodologies (there will be a mini-lecture on this during week one). A study guide will be provided. In total, this exam is worth **30%** of the final course grade.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be on **Tuesday, May 5, from 8:00 - 10:00 am**. The exam will include 40 multiple choice and short answer questions covering the content of the readings and lectures from the second half of the semester. This exam is worth **20%** of the final course grade.

**Curiosity Assignment:** This assignment has two parts:

- (1) **Personal Reflection/Argument:** Choose one of the following question sets, and write a one page, double-spaced reflection that *explains* and *supports* your own views.
  - What, in the most general sense, do you think a human being is? Given your definition of a human being, how are humans limited, and how do those limitations affect the experience of living as a human being? Considering your own life experiences, explain *why* you think your definition of humanity is the right one, and *why* the limitations you chose are important. Give an example that illustrates how thinking about those limitations has affected you personally.
  - What do you think it means to say that something is morally “right” or “wrong”? What makes an action right or wrong, or a person good or bad? Do you think most people are basically good? Why or why not? Do you think *you* are a good person? Why or why not? In what ways might you become a better person? Considering your own life experiences, explain *why* you think your definition of morality is the right one. Give an example that illustrates how thinking about morality has affected you personally.
  - What do you think the purpose of human life is? Does it have a purpose? If so, how can we know what it is? Do you experience your own life as being purposeful? Considering your own life experiences, explain *why* you think your view of human purpose is the right one. Give an example that illustrates how thinking about the purpose of human life has affected you personally.

This part of the Curiosity Assignment is **due in the D2L dropbox on January 24**, and is worth **10 points**.

- (2) **Critique of Part 1:** Write a one page, double-spaced reflection that *critiques* your previous response from the first part of the assignment. Pretend you are a philosopher who is skeptical of the views you expressed in your first reflection, and make an argument against those views. If you wish, you may use the arguments of a particular philosopher that we have discussed in class to

help you critique your own views, but this is not necessary. The point is to show that you can think about these topics from multiple perspectives, and *give reasons* for opposing positions on these questions. This part of the Curiosity Assignment is **due in the D2L dropbox on April 17**, and is worth **10 points**.

In total, the Curiosity Assignment is worth **20%** of the final course grade.

**Perspectives Assignment:** You will turn in a worksheet comparing the views of two philosophers from the schedule (I will provide a list of eligible authors), addressing the following questions for each philosopher you choose: (1) What is most central to defining humanity? (2) What does it mean to say that something is good or bad? (3) What is the point of human life? If a philosopher does not discuss all of these issues in the assigned text (this is likely), speculate about what their answers might be based on what they do say. I will provide a table to help you organize your thoughts here, and we will discuss some examples in class. The Perspectives Assignment is due on **May 1**. It is worth **10%** of your grade.

**Video Responses:** Five times during the semester, we will watch a video in class for the purposes of facilitating class discussion (see places in the schedule marked with a “V”). The videos will feature some thought-provoking content relevant to the unit we are in at that time. After viewing the video together in class, I will provide a list of questions, and we will split into groups to discuss and formulate responses to these questions. You will write down your responses to these questions on a sheet of paper (please keep responses brief, no more than a single page total). You will turn in your responses at the end of class. **To receive credit, you must be present for the whole class on the day you turn in a response (unless you have a valid excuse).** You will receive **one point** for each of these responses, which together constitutes **5%** of the final course grade.

**Reading Quizzes:** There will be regular, short **D2L quizzes** covering the readings assigned for most class periods. There will be approximately 20 of these quizzes throughout the semester (one for most classes). You will have until class begins to complete the quiz for the reading assigned that day. The quizzes can be accessed on D2L under the “Assessments” → “Quizzes” tab. Each quiz is timed at 30 minutes once opened. They are very short: two questions each (one multiple choice and one True/False), so this should be plenty of time if you have completed the reading beforehand. The quizzes will focus on the main idea/takeaway from the day’s reading. Collectively, these quizzes constitute **10%** of the final course grade.

**Participation:** Participation involves two things: (1) class involvement, and (2) at least one 1-on-1 meeting with me outside of class. **(1) Class involvement:** your involvement is essential to the success of this class and to your success in this class. This means that (a) active listening and note-taking, (b) open questioning, and (c) creative discussion are expected of you. Note that all of these things require attendance; thus, if your attendance drops below the required minimum, your participation grade will suffer. Class involvement constitutes **4%** of your grade (though excessive absences will result in a greater than 4% grade reduction—see below under “Attendance”). **(2) Individual meeting:** you are responsible for meeting with me at least once during office hours or by appointment **on or before May 1**. This meeting may be in relation to a class assignment, but this is not necessary. A 10-15 minute chat about questions you might have had in class or anything philosophical fulfills this requirement. Please do not delay in scheduling this meeting, as I cannot guarantee extra appointments towards the end of the semester. The individual meeting constitutes **1%** of your grade. Collectively, participation is worth **5%** of the final course grade.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. From the University Attendance Policy:

“Students are responsible for attending all class meetings for courses in which they are registered. Any absence, regardless of the reason, prevents students from getting the full benefit of the course and as such, no distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences, with the following exceptions:

1. Absences resulting from legal obligations (such as jury duty).
2. Absences due to religious observances.
3. Absences resulting from university sanctioned activities and related travel.”

For more info, see: <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

For a 3 day/week course such as this, **any unexcused absences beyond three will result in a lowering of your grade** (regardless of how well you’ve performed on course assignments). 4 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 2 final percentage points; 5 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 4 final percentage points. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the loss of 4 final percentage points, plus a further 3 final percentage points per absence over 5. Please discuss any planned absences with me as much in advance as possible. Additionally, punctuality is expected; if you come to class late, it is your responsibility to make sure I know you are there, preferably by seeing me at the end of class so I can mark you on the attendance sheet.

**Late Work/Make-Up Work Policy:** Five percentage points will be deducted from the student’s assignment grade for each late day (including weekends). For example, a student who has earned an 85% (B) on an assignment but who has turned it in a day late may receive a maximum grade of 80% (B-). There will be no make-up opportunity for missed exams, except in extraordinary circumstances.

**Extra Credit:** I have included several **recommended readings** in the schedule. These are clearly marked as “Recommended” and appear in a slightly smaller font size. You are not required to read these for class, but if you choose, you may read one and write a short (**2-3 paragraphs, double-spaced**) response **summarizing the main argument of the reading**. The goal is not to critique the reading, but simply to restate in your own words the central argument that the author is making. Each of these responses will be worth a maximum of **1 final percentage point**. You may write a maximum of **two** responses during the semester. These may be turned in (hard copy please) any time up to and including the last day of class (**May 1**).

**Reading Incentive:** To further incentivize reading, you will have the following opportunity: for each day of class, you may bring in a **single note card (3x5 or 4x6)** with notes you have taken from the required reading for that day, **completed prior to the class for which the reading is assigned**. You are allowed **one note card per day (not per reading)**. These may be turned in at the beginning of class. **Please print your name clearly at the top of each note card**. On exam days, I will return to you any note cards you have turned in, and you may use them on the exam. If you don’t turn them in, you don’t get any help on the exams.

**Grading:** A word on rounding grades: I will not round assignment grades. For final course grades, my policy is that a student must meet four conditions to have a grade rounded up: 1. The grade is within a half percentage point of the next higher letter grade, 2. The student completed all of the course assignments, including extra credit, 3. The student lost no points for attendance, and 4. The student was engaged and applied serious effort throughout the semester.

**Writing:** Good writing is a basic skill in any professional field, and I expect you to put in the necessary

effort to make sure that all written assignments are lucid and well organized. I highly recommend using the Ott Memorial Writing Center, located on the second floor of Raynor Library, which offers comprehensive guidance in writing for the entire Marquette community. In one-on-one sessions, tutors assist writers in identifying topics, revising, and creating final drafts. Appointments can be made by calling (414) 288-5542 or visiting <https://marquette.mywconline.com/>.

**Reading:** The reading for this course is difficult. It is crucial that you keep up with the reading schedule and engage the material (especially since the lectures and all assignments are based on the readings). This means setting aside adequate time to engage the material *before class*. I have tried to keep the assigned readings to a length that allows you to wrestle with the material without getting overwhelmed. If something from the reading is unclear, you may always bring it up in class, or in a meeting with me. Remember that reading philosophy is a skill like any other, and you will get better at it with practice.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The College of Arts and Sciences and the Philosophy Department policies on academic dishonesty will be enforced. *Ignorance is not an excuse*. Please refer to these policies for more details or contact me with particular questions in order to avoid any problems. The College's policies can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin and online here: <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/>.

More information on what counts as academic dishonesty as well as tips on how to avoid it can be found here: <http://libguides.marquette.edu/plagiarism>, and here: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/>.

\*A useful, but not foolproof, rule of thumb: When in doubt, err on the side of over-citing.

You will be required to submit your written assignments in electronic form to a plagiarism detection website called Turnitin (this is done automatically via the D2L dropbox). Your assignments become a permanent part of the Turnitin database, but will not be used for any purpose other than checking for plagiarism.

**Disabilities:** Students with documented physical or learning disabilities wishing to have special accommodations should contact me as soon as possible. Note that the Office of Disability Services is available to assist you. They can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or online here: <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services/>. The University policy on accommodation of disabilities can be found here: <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/personalresourcesandfacilities/#disabilityservices>.

**Phones and Computers:** The use of devices of any kind (laptops, phones, tablets, video game consoles, VR headsets, etc.) in class is strictly prohibited, and will lower your grade if it persists.

**Conduct:** Disagreement is a basic feature of philosophy and all other academic discourse. In this class, we will be discussing important and controversial issues. We may be engaging in discussions which challenge some of our most deeply held beliefs, and disagreement is sure to arise. For this reason, it is vital for each student, and myself, to always conduct ourselves with the utmost generosity and sensitivity toward one another and our authors. I reserve the right to steer discussions in whatever way I deem most appropriate to the day's lesson, and I will not tolerate rude, disrespectful, or offensive comments. If you are unsure whether something you plan to say or do could possibly be offensive, always talk to me before sharing it with the class.

# Tentative Schedule

**\*All readings should be completed by the date assigned.\***

“V” indicates a Video Response assignment

Date	Text	Page #
<b>Course Intro / What Is Philosophy?</b>		
<b>Week 1</b> (1/13 - 1/17)	Intro to Course (No Reading)	
	What Is an Argument? (No Reading)	
	Arguments (Cont.) / Philosophical Methodologies Lecture (No Reading)	
<b>What Is Philosophy? (Continued) / Death &amp; the Soul</b>		
<b>Week 2</b> (1/20 - 1/24)	NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	
	Bertrand Russell: <i>Philosophy for Laymen</i>	1-10
	Plato: <i>Apology</i>	1-17
<b>*Curiosity Assignment Part 1 Due*</b>		
<b>Death &amp; the Soul (Continued)</b>		
<b>Week 3</b> (1/27 - 1/31)	Plato: <i>Apology</i> (Continued)	
	Plato: <i>Phaedo</i> <i>Recommended:</i> Plato: “The Allegory of the Cave”	127-133 63-70
	Plato (Continued)	V
<b>Mind &amp; Body / The Self</b>		
<b>Week 4</b> (2/3 - 2/7)	Peter van Inwagen: “Dualism and Physicalism” <i>Recommended:</i> David Armstrong: “The Nature of Mind”	224-240 270-277
	van Inwagen: “Dualism and Physicalism” (Continued)	
	Peter Harvey: “Theravāda Philosophy of Mind and the Person” Fazang: “The Rafter Dialogue” & “Essay on the Golden Lion”	265-274 80-91
<b>Free Will</b>		
<b>Week 5</b> (2/10 - 2/14)	Peter van Inwagen: “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will” <i>Recommended:</i> G.E. Moore: “Free Will”	267-285 396-401
	van Inwagen: “The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will” (Continued) <i>Recommended:</i> “Life Is a Coin With One Side” from <i>This American Life</i> Podcast	
	Harry Frankfurt: “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”	408-414
<b>God</b>		
<b>Week 6</b>	William Rowe: “The Idea of God”	V 4-15

(2/17 - 2/21)	William Lane Craig: "Five Arguments for God" - Cosmological Arguments <i>Recommended:</i> William Rowe: "The Cosmological Argument"	1-10 16-28
	Craig: "Five Arguments for God" (Cont.) - Teleological & Ontological Arguments <i>Recommended:</i> Anselm: "The Ontological Argument"	13-27 709-710
<b>Evil</b>		
Week 7 (2/24 - 2/28)	Augustine: "Evil Is Privation of Good" <i>Recommended:</i> Bruce Russell & Stephen Wykstra: "The 'Inductive' Argument from Evil: A Dialogue"	251-255 495-511
	Fyodor Dostoevsky: "The Problem of Evil" (from <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> ) Ursula LeGuin: "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" <i>Recommended:</i> John Hick: "Soul-Making and Suffering"	3-13 250-253 168-188
	God and Morality / Divine Command Theory (No Reading) <i>Recommended:</i> Harry Gensler: "Divine Command Theory" (from <i>Ethics and Religion</i> )	9-28
<b>Ethics Intro / Midterm Exam</b>		
Week 8 (3/2 - 3/6)	Louis Pojman: "What Is Moral Philosophy" (from <i>Moral Philosophy: A Reader</i> ) Plato: "The Ring of Gyges"	ix-xiv 1-3
	James Rachels: "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" (2.1-2.9) (from <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> )	15-32
	<b>*Midterm Exam*</b>	
<b>Spring Break</b>		
Week 9 (3/9 - 3/13)	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
<b>Utilitarianism / Deontology</b>		
Week 10 (3/16 - 3/20)	Louis Pojman: "Utilitarian Ethics: Introduction" (from <i>Moral Philosophy: A Reader</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> John Stuart Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> , Ch. 2 <i>Recommended:</i> Robert Nozick: "The Experience Machine"	156-157 13-28 42-45
	Mill's Utilitarianism (Continued)	<b>V</b>
	Louis Pojman: "Deontological Ethics: Introduction" (from <i>Moral Philosophy: A Reader</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> Immanuel Kant: from <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> <i>Recommended:</i> Peter Kreeft: "The Single, Simple Purpose and Point"	216-218 186-194 161-171
<b>Deontology (Continued) / Virtue Ethics</b>		
Week 11 (3/23 - 3/27)	Kant's Deontology (Continued)	
	Kant's Deontology (Continued)	
	Rosalind Hursthouse: "Virtue Ethics" (from <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book 1, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	1-9
<b>Virtue Ethics (Continued) / Religious Ethics</b>		
Week 12	Virtue Ethics (Continued)	

<b>(3/30 - 4/3)</b>	James Rachels: "The Theory of Natural Law," Ch. 4 (from <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> )	54-58
	<i>Recommended:</i> Harry Gensler: "Natural Law and Rationality" (from <i>Ethics and Religion</i> )	57-83
	Nietzsche: "The Madman" (from <i>The Gay Science</i> )	
	Westphal: "The Big Lie" (from <i>Suspicion and Faith</i> )	232-237
<b>The Social Contract</b>		
<b>Week 13 (4/6 - 4/10)</b>	Thomas Hobbes: "The Social Contract" <i>Recommended:</i> Jean-Jacques Rousseau: from "Discourse on Inequality" & a Selection from <i>Emile</i>	1-6 6-10 110-113
	James Rachels: "The Social Contract Theory" (6.3-6.5) (from <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> John Stuart Mill: "The Limits of Majority Rule"	89-98 516-522
	NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK	
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Week 14 (4/13 - 4/17)</b>	NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK	
	<i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:</i> "Topics in Feminism," § 2 Hilde Lindemann: "What is Feminist Ethics?" <i>Recommended:</i> Mary Wollstonecraft: "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" <i>Recommended:</i> John Stuart Mill: from <i>The Subjection of Women</i> <i>Recommended:</i> Jean Grimshaw: "The Idea of a Female Ethic"	1-9 663-670 397-408 153-161 221-238
	Gender (Continued)	
	<b>*Curiosity Assignment Part 2 Due*</b>	
<b>Race / Knowledge: Skepticism</b>		
<b>Week 15 (4/20 - 4/24)</b>	Lawrence Blum: "Can Blacks Be Racist?" (from <i>I'm Not a Racist But...</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> George Yancy: "Dear White America" <i>Recommended:</i> Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Letter from Birmingham Jail"	33-52 1-7 1-6
	Sextus Empiricus: "The Five Modes" <span style="float: right;"><b>V</b></span> René Descartes: Meditations 1 & 2 (from <i>Meditations</i> ) <i>Recommended:</i> G.E. Moore: "Proof of an External World"	372-374 513-523 602-605
	Descartes (Continued)	
<b>Knowledge: the A Priori / Applied Epistemology</b>		
<b>Week 16 (4/27 - 5/1)</b>	Immanuel Kant: "The Nature of Knowledge" Bertrand Russell: "How A Priori Knowledge Is Possible" <i>Recommended:</i> Plato: from <i>Meno</i>	27-31 152-156 131-141
	Kant & Russell (Continued)	
	C Thi Nguyen: "Escape the Echo Chamber" <span style="float: right;"><b>V</b></span> <b>*Perspectives Assignment Due*</b>	1-12
<b>Finals Week</b>		

**Week 17**  
**(5/4 - 5/8)**

**\*Final Exam: Tuesday, May 5, 8:00 - 10:00 am\***