

**Bergen Community College**  
Division of Arts & Humanities  
Department of Philosophy & Religion

**Course Syllabus**

**PHR-101 Introduction to Philosophy**

**Basic Information about Course and Instructor**

Semester and year:  
Course and Section Number:  
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Departmental Secretary: [optional]  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**Course Description**

**PHR-101 Introduction to Philosophy** is a study of the basic problems and methods of philosophical inquiry, concentrating on the work of such major thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Sartre. Topics of discussion include the nature of philosophy; the nature and limits of human knowledge; the nature and existence of God; the scope and limits of human freedom; the differences between right and wrong conduct; the nature of the good life; and the meaning and value of human existence.

3 lectures, 3 credits

General Education Course – Humanities Elective

**Student Learning Objectives:** As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. identify the major periods and the major figures in the history of Western philosophy;
2. identify and analyze the basic problems of philosophy in the fields of metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology;
3. interpret, summarize, and paraphrase the views of philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of philosophy;
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on philosophical issues; and
7. participate actively in discussions of philosophical ideas and issues (re: SLOs 1-4).

In pursuit of the foregoing goals, the course is based on the reading and discussion of philosophical writings (i.e., primary sources, not text books) in the fields of metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology; the basic principles and methods of logical reasoning are introduced; the techniques of philosophical research and writing are reviewed; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

### Learning Assessment

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. identify the major periods and the major figures in the history of Western philosophy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> </ul>
2. identify and analyze the basic problems of philosophy in the fields of metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
3. interpret, summarize, and paraphrase the views of philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which philosophers attempt to solve the problems of philosophy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Quizzes and objective tests</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing assignments*</li> <li>• Graded class presentations</li> </ul>
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on philosophical issues; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay examinations</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> </ul>
7. participate actively in discussions of philosophical ideas and issues (re: SLOs 1-4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graded class discussions</li> </ul>

\*Writing assignments for the purpose of assessing student success on SLO 5 will include research and writing projects, possibly including term papers, in which a student identifies an information need, accesses and evaluates appropriate resources, and uses the information effectively and ethically for a specific purpose.

### Course Content

The course is intended to introduce students to the (at least general) history of philosophy, to the basic problems and methods of philosophy, and to the writings and ideas of at least two major pre-19th century philosophers. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

1. A review of the (at least general) history of philosophy.
2. A discussion of the major problems and methods of philosophy.

3. The study of the work of at least one philosopher from each of the following two groups:
  - a. Plato, Aristotle.
  - b. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant.

Furthermore, not more than one major work in ethics (e.g., the *Nicomachean Ethics*) should be included in PHR-101 Introduction to Philosophy, since the course should not overlap substantially with PHR-110 Introduction to Ethics and/or PHR-102 Contemporary Moral Issues. Issues in general normative ethics and metaethics are considered in depth in PHR-110; and major contemporary controversies in applied ethics are covered in PHR-102. The primary emphasis in PHR-101 should be on issues in metaphysics and epistemology. Inclusion of issues and/or works in aesthetics and social and political philosophy is also permissible, but discussions of moral philosophy should comprise no more than approximately 25% of the course.

In addition to the foregoing mandatory components, the course may include (in the discretion of the instructor) the study of 19th and 20th century philosophers and/or the study of contemporary writings on major philosophical problems.

The course may be presented as an historically-ordered study of the writings of major philosophers, or as a topically-ordered study of the ways in which ancient, modern, and contemporary philosophers have approached the major problems of philosophy.

**Special Features of the Course** (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, web enhancement via a parallel course website, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy learning in the course; etc.

**Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials**

The preferred text for this course is *Readings in Philosophy: Eastern & Western Sources*. Ed. George Cronk, Toby De Marco, Peter Dlugos, and Paul Eckstein. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil Publishing, Inc., 2nd ed., 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0738007816.

Alternative text: *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Perry, Bratman, and Fischer. Oxford, 6th ed., 2012. ISBN-13: 9780199812998.

**Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)**

Because PHR-101 is a General Education course, it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

**Grading Policy**

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall

mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least fifty percent (50%) of the final grade.

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **BCC Attendance Policy:**

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

#### **Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified in the course syllabus.

#### **Attendance Policy in this Course:**

[To be designated by the instructor]

### **Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]**

<p><u>Examples:</u> Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. ADA statement. Sexual Harassment statement. Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology. Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.</p>
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### **Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]**

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

**Student and Faculty Support Services**

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 <a href="mailto:psimms@bergen.edu">psimms@bergen.edu</a>
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	<a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx</a>
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx</a>
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx">http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx</a>
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-131	201-612-5270 <a href="http://www.bergen.edu/oss">http://www.bergen.edu/oss</a>
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

**Special Note on the Tutoring Center**

**The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center** encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance Center is located at [www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp](http://www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp). Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. I strongly recommend that you make use of those services as we progress through the course. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

**Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club**

**Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club**

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, but sometimes also on different days and at different times. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the Philosophy & Religion club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Professor Jennifer Lyden (L-326, 201-493-3540, [jlyden@bergen.edu](mailto:jlyden@bergen.edu)). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

**Include a Course Outline and Calendar** [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

**Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar**

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

<b>Week(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Topics &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

**See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.**

**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR**

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

**Note to Students:** The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity/Assignments	Student Learning Objectives
1-2	Sep 6, 8, 13, 15	<b>Introduction: The Nature of Philosophy</b> Read "Notes on the Nature of Philosophy" (handout)	1, 2, 5, 6, 7
3-4	Sep 20, 22, 27, 29 Sep 20 Sep 29	<b>Philosophy on Trial: The Socrates Case</b> Course Text:* Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> and <i>Apology</i> <b>Socrates Paper assigned</b> (due by 10/10) Deadline for submission of Student Information & Syllabus Comprehension Surveys	1-7
5-6	Oct 4, 6, 11, 13 Oct 6 Oct 13	<b>Ethics: Aristotle on How to be Happy</b> Course Text: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Short Essay on Euthyphro/Apology due <b>Socrates Paper Due</b>	1-7
7-8	Oct 18, 20, 25, 27 Oct 18 Oct 20	<b>Philosophy and Logic: The Process of Correct Reasoning</b> Read "Philosophy & Logic" article (handout) <b>Research Paper assigned</b> (due by 11/17) Short Essay on Aristotle due	4-7
9-10	Nov 1, 3, 8, 10	<b>Issues in Metaphysics and Epistemology – I</b> <b>Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas on the Nature and Existence of God</b> Course Text: Anselm's <i>Proslogion</i> & Aquinas's <i>Summa Theologica</i> (in that order)	1-7
11-12	Nov 15, 17, 22, 24 Nov 15 Nov 22  Nov 25-28	<b>Issues in Metaphysics and Epistemology – II</b> <b>René Descartes on Knowledge and Reality</b> Course Text: Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> <b>Research Paper due</b> Short Essay on Anselm/Aquinas due  <b>Thanksgiving Weekend</b>	1-7
13-14	Nov 29, Dec 1, 6, 8 Nov 29 Dec 8  Dec 13	<b>Issues in Metaphysics and Epistemology – III</b> <b>Jean-Paul Sartre and the Idea of Freedom</b> Course Text: Sartre, "What is Existentialism?" Short Essay on Descartes due <b>Final deadline for late work – no late work accepted after this date</b> Short Essay on Sartre & Freedom due	2-7
15	Dec 13, 15	<b>Final Review</b>	1-7

\*All page references to "Course Text" are to *Readings in Philosophy: Eastern & Western Sources*. Ed. George Cronk, Tobyn De Marco, Peter Dlugos, and Paul Eckstein. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil Publishing, Inc., 2nd ed., 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0738007816.