

**PHIL ###: Introduction to Philosophy  
Semester/Year**

Instructor: Dr. Micah Bailey  
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Office Hours: Office hour times Or by Skype  
Meeting times: Time1 – time2 in Building#

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is both an introductory and a general course in philosophy; as such, no previous background in philosophy is required. We will cover an array of philosophical topics primarily from metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. Philosophy, as a discipline, asks deep, difficult and intriguing questions. These questions typically fall out of the scope of the scientific method (or, at least, they have currently evaded the scrutiny of the scientific method), which partly explains their difficulty. Hallmarks of good philosophical investigation include conceptual analysis, consistent and plausible logical argumentation, imagining counterexamples, and using hypotheticals to test intuition, commitments, or general claims. The aim of this class is to assist you in developing your critical faculties by exposing you to examples of good philosophical investigation and by having you practice philosophical investigation. Other goals include developing your reading comprehension, developing your writing skills, and putting you in a position to critically evaluate your own views.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

The only text needed is the sixteenth edition of *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There will be three non-comprehensive tests you are required to take. The first two tests will be given a week after their respective unit has been covered. The last test will be given on the final date. Each test will be worth 100pts. The ability to make up a missed exam is at my discretion, and the make-up exam will incur a penalty. Excused make-up exams should be taken within a week of the excusing condition being remedied.

You will be required to write a 1200 to 1500-word term paper, which will be worth 100pts. Your paper will address our first major topic: whether God exists. In short, I expect you to produce college-level prose. You will also be graded on the quality with which you apply the hallmarks of philosophical investigation. The paper will be due two weeks before the end of classes.

After unit 1, I will give an assignment, or quiz, worth 30pts. Then, I will periodically assign short writing assignments that are to be no longer than a page. The assignments are designed to help you develop your reading comprehension, or practice philosophical investigation, etc. There will be 7 such assignment, each worth 10pts. The ability to make up an assignment is at my discretion, and the make-up assignment will incur a penalty.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance and participation are mandatory. Do not expect to do well in this class if you do not attend regularly. Rather than utilizing a textbook that analyzes the material for us, we will read primary texts and analyze them ourselves. This includes my analysis as offered in lectures and class discussion. As a result, the lecture material constitutes much of what you will be examined over.

Two unexcused absences will not result in a penalty. For each unexcused absence after two, 5 points (i.e. a whole percentage point) of your total grade will be docked.

## BLACKBOARD

There is a Blackboard site for this class. On it, I will make announcements, provide handouts, enter grades, etc. throughout the semester. Note that Blackboard emails, including announcements, are only sent to your officially registered email address. You are responsible for announcements and any changes of the course communicated through Blackboard.

## GRADING:

### Grading Scale:

>469-500 = A	>374-399 = -B	>274-299 = +D
>449-469 = -A	>349-374 = C+	>249-274 = D
>424-449 = +B	>324-349 = C	>224-249 = -D
>399-424 = B	>299-324 = -C	0-224 = F

Grading Practices: Your final score stands as is. I will not round it up to the next grade bracket (e.g. from a -C to a C)

## OTHER POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, giving or receiving unauthorized aid on examinations or other assigned work, and plagiarism. Being academically dishonest will result in an F for the course. For more on academic dishonesty, see the College policy on Academic Honesty as set out in New College Policy, 2017, especially the notion of *plagiarism*.

Withdrawals and Incompletes: Course withdrawals are the responsibility of the student. The RU Catalog lists the procedures for a student to withdraw from one or all courses and will be upheld. If the student does not process course withdrawal(s) correctly, it will result in a failing grade. Incompletes will not be awarded in this course, except in those very rare cases where the student has **very good (documented) reasons**, and has completed a **substantial** amount of the course work.

Intellectual Property: Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the **property of the instructor**. Video and audio recording of lectures without the consent of the instructor is **prohibited**. On request, the instructor may grant

permission for students and auditors to audiotape lectures, on the condition that the individual making the recording only uses these audio recordings as a study aid. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. **Students and auditors of this class are also prohibited from making commercial use of class lectures.**

Students with Disabilities: Rockhurst University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Please contact Sandy Waddell, Director of Access Services (Massman Hall, Room 7, 816.501.4689, [sandy.waddell@rockhurst.edu](mailto:sandy.waddell@rockhurst.edu)) to provide documentation and request accommodations. If accommodations have already been approved by the Access Office, please communicate with the instructor(s) of this course regarding these arrangements by the second week of class in order to coordinate receipt of services. (x) "Student contact information must be kept current in order to receive important notices from Rockhurst University. Your contact information is online via your RockWeb account. Please check your local address, local phone number, and emergency contact information on RockWeb and revise as needed. All important University notices will be sent only to your RU email address. Please check your RU email account in addition to any other email accounts you may have. Accounts are activated at the Computer Services Help Desk. (xi) The Crisis Management Team for Rockhurst University, out of a concern for the safety and welfare of all community members, urges you to familiarize yourself with Campus Emergency Procedures as well as emergency, evacuation, and shelter signage located within and outside of buildings across campus. They also request that you sign up for Rock@lerts, the University's emergency communications system. All community members must comply with University staff instructions during regularly scheduled fire/tornado drills as well as actual emergencies. Information regarding the above resources can be found at [www.rockhurst.edu/emergency](http://www.rockhurst.edu/emergency).

**(TENTATIVE) COURSE OUTLINE** (Exact readings will be given in class or through Blackboard)

### Unit 1: Philosophy's Nature, Its Value, and Basics in Logic

Introduction to the course

Readings from:

Russell's *The Value of Philosophy*

Plato's *Euthyphro*

Parts of arguments

Identifying arguments

Validity and soundness

Strength and Cogency

**Major Writing Assignment**

## Unit 2: God's Existence, God's Goodness in the Face of Evil, and Believing in God

Readings from:

Anselm's *The Ontological Argument*  
Guanilo's *On Behalf of the Fool*

Aquinas' *The Five Ways*  
Clarke's *A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument*  
Rowe's *The Cosmological Argument*

Paley's *Argument from Design*  
Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

Johnson's *God and the Problem of Evil*  
Swinburne *Why God Allows Evil*  
Frontline's *Memory of the Camps* (graphic)

Review  
**Exam 1**

## Unit 3: Knowing the External World, Scientific Investigation, and the Mind

Readings from:

Pollock's *Brain in a Vat*  
Descartes' *Meditations* 1 and 2  
Locke's *The Causal Theory of Perception*  
Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*

Hume's *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*  
Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations*  
Kitcher's *Believing Where We Cannot Prove*  
(Recall: Clifford's *The Ethics of Belief*)

Descartes' *Meditations* 2 and 6  
Carruther's *The Mind is a Brain*  
Jackson's *The Qualia Problem*

Review  
**Exam 2**

Moral Subjectivism and Cultural Relativism vs. the Objective Moral Theories

Readings from:

Shafer-Landau's *Ethical Subjectivism*  
Nussbaum's *Female Genital Mutilation*

Aristotle's *Virtue and the Good Life*  
Mill's Utilitarianism  
Kant's *The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative*

Review

**Final Exam**