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Syllabus

PHI 101

Introduction to Philosophy

1. Course Information

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Location: Online on Canvas

First Day of Class: March 17, 2025

Last Day of Class: May 2nd, 2025

Final Exam: The Final Exam will be a Video-Proctored Exam on Canvas. Access to the Exam will require a webcam, microphone, and PC, Mac, or iPad capable of running Respondus Lockdown Browser, with a microphone and web camera. (Android devices and chromebooks will not work). The Final Exam is due on the last day of class.

2. Faculty Information

Name: Dr. Jeff Watson (call me 'Dr. Watson')

Email address: DrWatson@asu.edu - *Please reserve email for questions about your grade or crisis situations; otherwise, use the "[Community Forum](#)" discussion board in Canvas for general questions.*

Office hours: See Availability and Sign Up for an appointment at links.asu.edu/watson.  
Online options only.

Biography. I am an Associate Teaching Professor in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. My research focuses on accounts of Emergence in the the Philosophy of Mind. I've presented my work at meetings of the American Philosophical Association and elsewhere. My personal web page, including my C.V., can

be found at jeffreyjohnwatson.com ↗. I also have research interests in Ethics and Metaphysics. I love teaching philosophy, and hope that through this class you come to appreciate it too.

Technical Help

For technical support, use the Help icon in the black global navigation menu in your Canvas course or call the ASU Help Desk at 1+(855) 278-5080. Support representatives employed at ASU are available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3. Course Description

Catalog Description

Explores issues that philosophers have traditionally considered, including morality, reality, and knowledge.

Course Overview

In this course, we will reason clearly and carefully to seek answers to interesting and difficult questions, including:

- What tools does philosophy use?
- What is it to love the truth?
- How do you evaluate arguments for competing claims?
- Can you know anything at all?
- Can just thinking teach you something new?
- What is it like to be conscious?
- How do you move things with your mind?
- Who are you?
- Could you survive death?
- Does God exist?
- Should this world even exist?
- What is good?
- Do you have free will?
- What is a good life?
- What is a meaningful life?

We will probably fail to come up with a final, definitive, settled answer to these questions. The process of thinking about them, however, will help you sharpen your skills in analyzing and breaking apart difficult problems, thinking critically about what you read, considering and evaluating positions on controversial topics from multiple perspectives, formulating arguments in a precise and logical way, and justifying your opinions. It might even give you a way to think about these issues that you hadn't considered before.

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize significant debates in philosophy over the nature of knowledge, mind, personal identity, religion, ethics, and freedom.
- Recall standard definitions for the key concepts of validity, truth, necessity and possibility, knowledge, *a priori* and empirical justification, causation, metaphysics, epistemology,

consciousness, action, theism and atheism, actuality and contingency, ethics, good and right, freedom and determinism, and meaningfulness, and to carefully distinguish these key concepts from related but distinct concepts and their definitions.

- Identify a variety of established philosophical positions on controversial issues, either by defining the position, or by associating it with the name of the correct historical figure in philosophy.
- Recognize something as a reason which supports a premise in an argument for a conclusion, an independent reason which supports the conclusion, a reason which opposes a premise in an argument for a conclusion, an independent reason which opposes the conclusion.
- Critically evaluate reasons for and against a variety of philosophical positions, and critically evaluate a purported synthesis of opposing philosophical positions.
- Apply philosophical standards for reasoning, argumentation, and definition to new topics and situations.
- Extract, explain, and critically evaluate an argument for a philosophical position.

Humanities, Arts and Design

This course fulfills the ASU **Humanities, Arts and Design** General Studies requirement. Students completing a Humanities, Arts and Design course will be able to:

1. Analyze cultural, political, or social practices, texts, or discourses in historical or contemporary context.
2. Communicate coherent arguments or narratives using evidence drawn from qualitative or quantitative sources.
3. Identify perspectives or values as manifested in a given philosophical or religious framework or a given historical or cultural context.

4. Required Materials

Required Textbook

Our textbook is the Second Edition of "Introduction to Philosophy: Deducing Answers" (2025). The book is custom-fit to our class and required for it. Since online students often won't have access the Bookstore on campus, an eBook rental version is provided through Canvas automatically and billed to your student account, *unless* you purchase a paperback copy on your own and then opt out of the eBook as described below.

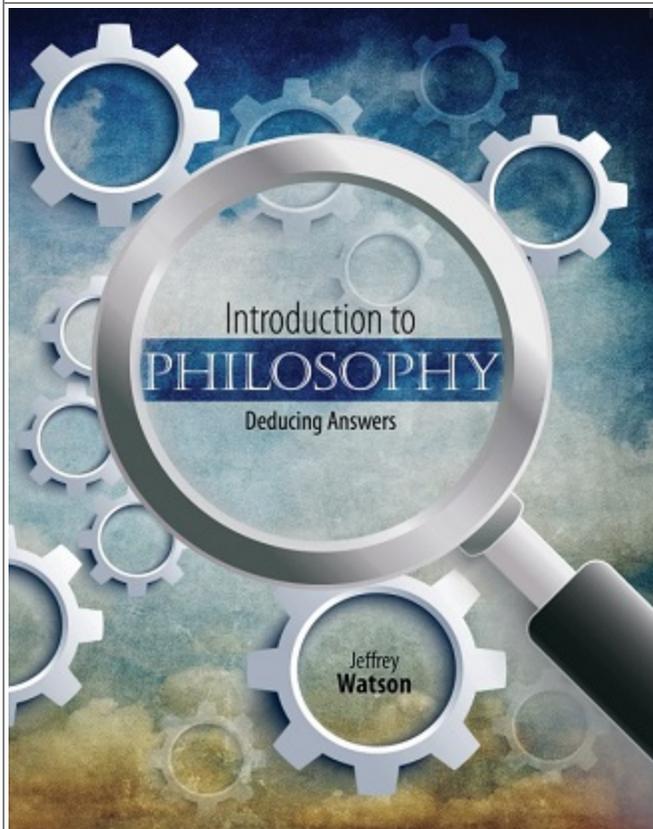
The required material for this course will be provisioned as an e-book and made available at a discounted price significantly cheaper than if purchased directly from the publisher. If you wish to take advantage of this discounted group price, no additional action is needed. Following the drop/add period, a charge plus tax will post to your student account under the header "Bkstr Publisher Negotiated Rate" and your access will continue uninterrupted. If you'd rather purchase the material from an alternate source, you may choose to opt out of the program by using this link: <https://includedcp.follett.com/1230>. Enter your ASU e-mail address AS IT APPEARS IN THE ASU DIRECTORY (<http://asu.edu/directory>), then follow the instructions provided. Be aware that if you do opt-out, your access to the e-book will be discontinued. TO ACCESS THE E-BOOK, CLICK ON THE BRYTEWAVE TOOL IN YOUR COURSE'S CANVAS SHELL. If you need assistance accessing the book or the opt-out portal, please email asuinclusiveaccess@gmail.com

NOTICE: ASU IT has found that emails forwarded to a student's personal email accounts are being blocked. Please disable any forwarding of your ASU email account.

To access the e-book, log into Canvas and click on the **BryteWave Course Materials e-book link**. If prompted to create an account, please use your ASU e-mail address EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS IN THE DIRECTORY. You'll also receive an e-mail directly from BryteWave/Redshelf with more info. If you have questions, please e-mail asuinclusiveaccess@gmail.com

Note: Although I am the author of this textbook, per college policy, I do not collect any royalties for sales of the 2nd edition of the textbook to my own students. All author royalties are sent directly by the publisher to the ASU Foundation. My purpose in authoring the textbook is not to make money but to maintain close alignment between the textbook and the other course materials.

Watson, Jeffrey (2025). Introduction to Philosophy: Deducing Answers, 2nd Edition. Kendall Hunt. [\[REQUIRED\]](#)



No other textbook or software purchases are required for this course.

If you are looking for a supplemental textbook that covers the same general topics as our course in an informal and conversational way, I would suggest [Robert C. Solomon's "The Little Philosophy Book"](#), ISBN [978-0195311143](#).

5. Course Topics, Schedule & Grading

How Grading Works

This class uses a variation on what is often called "contract grading". All students begin the course with a failing grade. To receive a passing grade, you must complete missions. Your grade is determined by which missions you complete, and how well you complete them. Your "Current Grade"

in Canvas will display an "E" until you have completed these missions, which is typically the end of the course. This means your "Current Grade" in Canvas does not provide information about how you are currently doing in the class. To receive a passing grade in the class, you must complete a final debrief assignment at the end of class, in which you state which assignments you completed, and which grade you should earn according to the terms of this syllabus.

Missions

Failing Level

Mission 1: Complete Introductory Unit Assignments

Mission 2: Complete Final Debrief Assignment at End of Class

Passing Level

Mission 3: On 4 out of 6 Unit Tests: Score of 70% or Above

C Level

Mission 4; VoiceThread Discussions for Units 1 - 6: Score of 80% or Above

C to B Level

Mission 5: On 5 out of 6 Unit Tests: Score of 80% or Above

Mission 6: Complete Final Exam Essay Part 1

Mission 7: Complete Proctored Final Exam Part 2

B+ to A Level

Mission 8: On 6 out of 6 Unit Tests: Score of 90% or Above

Mission 9: Complete Term Paper

Mission 10: Give Video Presentation on Term Paper

A+ Level

Mission 11: Volunteer to Help Your Peers

Grades

Organized by Number of Missions Completed and Quality

- No Missions Completed = EN
- Mission 1 Completed = EU
- Missions 1-2 Completed = E
- Missions 1-3 Completed = D
- Missions 1-4 Completed = C
- Missions 1-7 Completed
 - Failing Final Exam = C
 - Adequate Final Exam = C+
 - Good Final Exam = B-
 - Excellent Final Exam = B
- Missions 1-10 Completed

- Failing, Adequate, or Passing Final Exam: see above list
- Excellent Final Exam:
 - Failing Paper/Presentation = B
 - Adequate Paper/Presentation = B+
 - Good Paper/Presentation = A-
 - Excellent Paper/Presentation = A
- Missions 1-11 Completed:
 - Less than Excellent on Final Exam or Paper/Presentation: See Above
 - Excellent Final Exam & Excellent Paper Presentation = A+

Organized by Grade

EN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No Participation in the Course
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 70% or Above on 4 out of 6 Unit Tests
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 70% or Above on 4 out of 6 Unit Tests ● Complete VoiceThread Discussions with an 80% or Above Score
C+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 80% or Above on 5 out of 6 Unit Tests ● Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score ● Adequate Final Exam & Oral Defense
B-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 80% or Above on 5 out of 6 Unit Tests ● Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score ● Good Final Exam & Oral Defense
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 80% or Above on 5 out of 6 Unit Tests ● Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score ● Excellent Final Exam (Part 1 & Part 2)
B+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 90% or Above on 6 out of 6 Unit Tests ● Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score ● Excellent Final Exam (Part 1 & Part 2) ● Adequate Paper & Presentation
A-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Introductory Unit Assignments ● Complete Final Debrief Assignment ● Score 90% or Above on 6 out of 6 Unit Tests

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score • Excellent Final Exam (Part 1 & Part 2) • Good Paper & Presentation
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Introductory Unit Assignments • Complete Final Debrief Assignment • Score 90% or Above on 6 out of 6 Unit Tests • Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score • Excellent Final Exam (Part 1 & Part 2) • Excellent Paper & Presentation
A+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Introductory Unit Assignments • Complete Final Debrief Assignment • Score 90% or Above on 6 out of 6 Unit Tests • Complete VoiceThread Discussions with a 80% or Above Score • Excellent Final Exam (Part 1 & Part 2) • Excellent Paper & Presentation • Volunteer to help peers (contact instructor)

Assignment Descriptions

Introductory Unit Assignments include viewing the Course Information, passing the Syllabus Quiz, and completing the "Introduce Yourself" VoiceThread assignment.

Weekly Tests contain a mixture of multiple choice questions and short essay questions. They are video proctored using Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor, and allow only two attempts. Practice quizzes are provided to prepare for the weekly unit tests. Some tests might have fill in the blank questions: please use straight quotes and apostrophes (' or '), *not* curly quotes or apostrophes (‘ or ’ or “ or ”). **Note that your initial score in Canvas might show up without the essay question graded** (since it must be graded manually). Wait until the essay question is graded before assuming you know your score.

VoiceThread Discussions each week ask you to reflect on an idea in the course or a philosophical text, and to develop your skills in using reasons and critically evaluating arguments. You must have a microphone available and must produce an audio or video recording; text responses will not normally be accepted. (Contact [SAILS](#)  if disability accommodations are needed). Voicethread is graded on the basis of adequate completion. You may receive credit by default for completing posts which I have reviewed only briefly, on the presumption of adequacy, but later lose credit for those posts if on careful review I conclude that your posts were not relevant to the course, not relevant to the prompt, not relevant to the posts on which the comment is made, or did not meet the requirements of the assignment (including length). Students seeking higher grades in the class are more likely to have their posts given a careful review.

The Final Exam Parts 1 & 2 is a combination of a "take home" essay exam and a timed, video-proctored defense of the essay from memory. The essay portion of the exam will be comprehensive, and will ask you to extract, explain, and evaluate arguments from multiple units. The video-proctored defense will ask you to explain and evaluate the same questions as the take home essay, but without notes. Thus, Part 1 (essay) is your study guide for Part 2 (defense). A live oral defense by video call with the instructor is available as an alternative option for students who receive an inadequate grade on Part 2. Grading is as follows.

B = Excellent

B- = Very Good

C+ = Adequate

C = Inadequate

If you do not score 80% or Above on 5 out of 6 Unit Tests, then you are not eligible to complete the final exam, and the highest score possible in the course is a C.

The Term Paper and Presentation asks you to write an original argument paper defending a view on one of the assigned topics. Information about the paper requirements is provided on Canvas. The paper must meet the specific requirements listed in the assignment description on Canvas for credit. You then must post and record an audio or video VoiceThread presentation with slides summarizing the argument in your Essay for the benefit of your peers. Your grade will be based on both the Written Paper and the Recorded Presentation. They will be graded based on this scale:

A = Excellent

A- = Very Good

B+ = Adequate

B = Inadequate

If you do not score 90% or Above on 6 out of 6 Unit Tests and complete VoiceThread discussions with a score of 80% or better, then you are not eligible to complete the term paper, and the highest score possible in the course is a B. If you submit a term paper but receive less than an excellent score on the final exam, the paper will not improve your grade, and the highest grade you can receive in the class is a B-.

Volunteering to Help your Peers such as agreeing to host online discussion for your peers using Zoom, or hosting a live online chat hour, or maintain an online discussion board for your peers, or meeting one-on-one for individual Zoom tutoring, is an option for students who wish to receive an A+ in the course. You must contact the instructor within 5 days of the start of class to volunteer and to get information on how to set up, and you must hold at least 6 sessions, and each session must be held before the Canvas listed due date for that session. **Do not pick this option unless you know you will work ahead of the rest of the class. You will need to meet with me in office hours to confirm this.** This option is also available for students who are members of Barrett Honors College and seeking Honors Credit, whether or not they are seeking an A+.

If you otherwise would earn an A in the course, and you complete this option, you will receive an A+. If you otherwise would earn an A- or below in the course, and you complete this option, you will receive a note of thanks and appreciation, but it will not raise your grade.

The Final Debrief is the basis of your final grade in the class. The Final Debrief requires you to state which missions you have completed, and which grade you should get based on the syllabus. It is due within 24 hours of the last day of class. If you miss the final debrief, you will normally receive an EU in the course, apart from special circumstances.

Other Grades

XE: The Grade of XE is given in cases of Academic Dishonesty.

I: This class offers the grade of I or "incomplete" in situations where (i) the withdrawal deadline for the course has passed, and (ii) the student currently has a passing grade, and (iii) there is a serious, verifiable major life event with documentation which makes it a practical impossibility for the student to complete the coursework by the last day of the course.. I would suggest you contact an academic advisor or academic coach for more information if you think this situation might apply to you. See [Grade of Incomplete](#) ↗.

W: Withdrawn. There is a limited timeline to add/drop or [withdraw from the course](#) ↗. Consult with your [Academic Advisor](#). ↗ to add or drop this course or to withdraw. If you add the course, contact the instructor immediately to get caught up. You do not need to contact me to drop or withdraw from the course. Also please review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#) ↗, and [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#) ↗.

Grading and Feedback

Grades are returned within 7 days (typically sooner). Many assignments make use of 'rubrics' which provide a guide to your score in the absence of detailed feedback. [Please look at your detailed rubric score](#). ↗ After reviewing your rubric score, please e-mail me if you'd like more detailed feedback on your grade on an assignment.

6. Online Course Policies

Communicating With the Instructor

This course uses a discussion board called "Community Forum" for general questions about the course. Prior to posting a question, please check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts. If you do not find an answer, post your question. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates. Please do not email me questions of a general nature which other students might have; instead, post them to the "Community Forum"

Email questions of a personal nature to me directly. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

I am available to talk in more depth via video chat (Google Hangouts) or phone call, simply sign up for an appointment (links.asu.edu/watson ↗). I am available to meet on campus with students who live near Tempe.

Online Course

This is an online course. There are no face-to-face meetings.

Email and Internet

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) ↗ among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

You should use your ASU e-mail, not your personal e-mail, for any communication or assignments related to this course. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Course Time Commitment

According to the Arizona Board of Regents, this three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course. If you find you need to spend more than 18 hours a week on this course, please contact me.

7. Late Work Policy

Due Dates

Due dates in this course listed on Canvas are recommended for staying on pace in the class, but not required. This is to help you practice responsibility for completing work independently. Unlike most other ASU Online classes, you may complete the work in this class at your own pace **up until the official last day of class established by the University**, without penalty, with the following natural limitations:

- Late work may receive a '0' by default. I will update the 0 as soon as I receive your completed work and have an opportunity to grade it. **DO NOT EMAIL ME ASKING ME TO GRADE YOUR LATE WORK.** I will grade it when I have time. I will not forget to grade it before the end of class. I prioritize grading work submitted on time. If you like getting a grade back quickly, you need do your work on time. Otherwise, please extend to me the same patience I have extended to you.
- Your instructor (me) is concerned about your success, and so are your academic advisors. If you fall behind on deadlines by more than a couple of days, you might start to receive emails or notifications. You might even receive an academic status report which alerts you and your academic advisors that you are behind and leads to a request for a phone call. We're not ultimately responsible for whether you complete the class -- that's your job -- but we reserve the right to keep nudging you forward on the journey you've chosen for yourself and asked us to help coach you in. We want you to finish. If you don't want us to bug you, you've got to turn work in on time.
- You won't know whether you are eligible to complete the Final Exam until you have completed at least Five Unit Tests. But you will need time to prepare for the final exam. So, if you run behind on the Unit Tests, you will find it hard to efficiently complete the final.
- The term paper and video presentation are due on the last day of class. But you won't know if you are eligible to turn them in until you've completed all six Unit tests. But you will want to spend significant time writing if you want to do well on the paper. So, if you run behind on the Unit Tests, you will not have time to write the paper.
- It takes time to grade your work, and it would not be fair to ask me to prioritize late work over the work of students who turn things in on time. The later you submit assignments, the longer grading will take.
- Philosophy can't really be rushed. You have to take time to ruminate and meditate and converse. If you put things off, you won't have enough time to do well.
- There may be other natural limitations on completing assignments late. You must account for those.

Assignments Will Not Normally Be Accepted After the Last Day of Class (per the official University Calendar), with the Following Exceptions:

- The Final Debrief may be completed up to 24 hours after the last day of class.
- Short overnight extensions of up to 6 hours for technological issues are allowed by default. Longer extensions may be available with documentation that the issue is on ASU's end, and documentation of having contacted ASU Technical Support and their being unable to resolve the issue in a timely way. <https://tech.asu.edu/contact>
- The Following circumstances may allow completion after the end date of the course, including a temporary grade of "I":
 - the "Flexible Deadlines" accommodation for a disability [↗](https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility), which can only be granted by SAILS (<https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility> [↗](#)). *Note that pregnancy may qualify for SAILS*

accommodations.

- [accommodations for religious practices](#) ↗
- [University-sanctioned activities](#) ↗ - documented by a letter on ASU letterhead
- [Active-Duty Military Service](#) ↗ - please reach out by e-mail at the start of class
- natural disasters or state, local, or national emergencies with official declarations
- an "absence letter" from [ASU's Student Advocacy and Assistance](#) ↗ office, such as due to mental health, physical health, family situation, legal situation, victim of assault, bereavement, personal emergency, etc. You do not need to reveal the details of the situation to me if you do not want to; Student Advocacy & Assistance can keep the circumstances confidential.

Note that events which are part of the normal course of life for your fellow online students are not going to qualify for extensions, even if I completely understand them and can emphasize. For instance, demands from a job, from other coursework, from family or vacations, and involvement with extracurricular activities are all part of the lives your peers are juggling too and do not count for extensions.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, must be submitted through Canvas. Please do not submit an assignment via e-mail.

8. Academic Policies

Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals

This course adheres to a compressed schedule, therefore, there is a limited timeline to [drop or add the course](#) ↗. Consult with your [Academic Advisor](#) ↗ to add or drop this course or to withdraw. If you add the the course, contact the instructor immediately to get caught up. You do not need to contact the instructor to drop the course, although you're encouraged to contact the instructor if you intend to withdraw. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#) ↗, [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#) ↗, and a [Grade of Incomplete](#) ↗.

Grade Appeals

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the [University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades](#) ↗.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

ASU expects and requires its students to act with honesty, integrity, and respect. Required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures](#) ↗, [Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy](#) ↗, [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) ↗, and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) ↗. Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

[Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference](#) ↗ by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#) ↗.

Appropriate online behavior (also known as netiquette) is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial

atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

College Statement

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

Instructor's Policy On Academic Integrity

When you submit an assignment, you represent yourself as having done the work you submitted.

When someone submits work that somebody else did without acknowledging it, whether through plagiarism (uncited sources) or contract cheating (paying someone else), they are seeking to get credit for work they didn't do. This harms the entire class, since most students have to work extremely hard in this class to earn credit for it.

Part of my job is to protect the majority of students by enforcing rules against cheating. This falls into two categories: (a) *enforcing preventative rules*, and (b) *reporting suspected plagiarism or cheating*

(a) Enforcing Preventative Rules

I impose certain rules on how the assignments in this class must be submitted. These are intended to make it harder to cheat. Sometimes students violate these rules even though they are not cheating. If I determine that you violated one of these rules, it does not mean that I believe you cheated, that I've accused you of cheating, or that you are accused of an academic integrity violation. Violating these rules may result in a grade penalty or '0' on the assignment. Rules include:

1. Relevance - written work submitted must be closely relevant to assigned readings and lectures, and to the prompt.
2. Citations - assigned textbook readings and lectures should be cited in parentheses when appropriate. For instance, (Lowe, 23) or (Lecture 3B)
3. Originality - formulaic or robotic responses will not receive credit.
4. Genuine Scholarship - if you cite a scholarly source not discussed in the class, and I ask for a copy of the source you cite, you must be able to provide it to me and to identify the relevant passage in the text.
5. Coherence - submissions must make sense; do not misuse a thesaurus.
6. Respect Respondus - avoid suspicious behavior during the video proctored final exam, such as talking out loud, looking away from the screen repeatedly, showing only a small part of the exam environment, or otherwise flagging respondus software. Even if you did not cheat, you can be penalized for inappropriate exam behavior.

7. Meet with me if asked - In order to insure that you are the author of your written work, you may be required to discuss any written assignments through a phone call or other conversation with me at a mutually convenient time within 7-10 days. If I make a reasonable request to discuss an assignment with you, and you fail to respond, I will not grade the assignment.

8. Understand what you write - You are responsible to submit work that you understand and are familiar with, to the point that you will remember in a few days roughly what you represented yourself as having learned. If, in discussion with me, or in a question on an exam, you are unable to recall much of what you wrote, or unable to explain the meaning of what you wrote in a paper or assignment while looking at what you wrote, then I may penalize your grade or give you a '0' on the assignment, even if I do not suspect a violation of academic integrity, simply on the basis that you did not understand what you wrote deeply enough to recall it later, and thus don't deserve credit for learning something you didn't learn.

(b) Reporting Suspected Violations

I regularly investigate student work for academic integrity violations. This may be in response to some objective measure, like a Turnitin score or Respondus score, or it may be in response to violating one of the preventative rules above. If I am investigating a violation, my job is not to act as judge as to whether or not a violation occurred. Rather, my job is to gather evidence and information to submit to the College along with my recommendations. The College will then determine whether a violation occurred and what penalties may or may not be appropriate.

I will only contact students about suspected academic integrity violations after I have already decided to file a report with the college. Students are encouraged but not required to respond to me with any evidence or mitigating circumstances they believe would be helpful to your case for me to pass along, but this will not stop me from filing the report.

The college has its own independent appeals process. A grade of "I" or "Incomplete" may be issued until the College's process is complete. You may continue to submit work in the class while waiting, but I will not grade further work until the College informs me that no violation occurred.

Citations

As part of academic integrity, you must cite everything which you obtain from any source except your own ideas, on every assignment. Citations are required on essay questions on weekly quizzes, discussion board posts, writing assignments, non-proctored exams, and the final paper. Citing sources isn't just a matter of integrity, it's a matter of being a good member of the academy - it shows that you know where an idea came from. You do not need to use a formal citation style, except on the term paper. On most assignments, informal parenthetical citations such as (Lowe, 24) or (Lecture 5H) or (plato.stanford.edu/epistemology) will be sufficient.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Guidelines

Below are my current Generative AI Guidelines. I welcome feedback on them and am open to adapting them as we go along in conversation with the class on the Course Questions board. I'd like to think through how we can use Gen AI to promote learning, but also want to be aware of ways the use of Gen AI can inhibit learning or undermine the goals of the course.

Generative AI is likely to be a feature of our lives for decades to come. While Gen AI can help save time on mundane tasks, I am skeptical about its value for philosophy students. The purpose of taking a philosophy class is not to complete tasks, but to improve your own skills in critical thinking, reading, and arguing. Every assignment has the goal of exercising some intellectual skill or ability. There is no busy work. (If something seems like busy work, please ask me about it, I am glad to explain its

purpose). Using Gen AI to complete philosophy coursework is comparable to paying for a very expensive personal trainer, and then having a robot lift all the weights for you and run on the treadmill while you watch. Driving a car is faster than running or riding a bicycle, but driving a car will not strengthen your legs. Sitting all the time will weaken your legs. Gen AI is faster than your brain, but you will not get a stronger brain by having it do your brain workouts for you. This class is a brain workout. It is supposed to make your brain hurt. If your brain doesn't hurt, you are not doing philosophy. If you rely on a predictive text engine to do the mental work for you, your brain will become weaker, not stronger.

Having said that, there are some productive ways to use AI. I have tried to organize my guidelines into Green (encouraged uses), Yellow (use only with caution), and Red (prohibited uses).

These are subject to revision in conversation with students. If you have a use and you'd like to know whether it is Green, Yellow, or Red, please post on the Community Forum.

Green - Encouraged Uses of GenAI

- You can give it a passage of text, and ask it to explain the text to you in simpler language, or in another way.
- You can give it a document, and ask it to summarize the document to you, or direct you to relevant parts of the document for a question you have.
- You can ask it to test your own understanding of a text you uploaded to it, so it can act as a kind of tutor
- You can use it as a research tool (an easier form of googling) to identify relevant sources to read or explore further information or context.
- You can give it something you have written, and then make suggestions to improve your spelling, grammar, style, and tone in writing so that you can more clearly express your own ideas

Yellow - Use Only With Caution

You may use Gen AI in these "yellow" ways, but be aware that you have to know enough about the material on your own in order to use Gen AI in these ways. If you try to use Gen AI in these ways and you don't actually know the course materials, you are likely to be misled into submitting failing-quality work without yourself being able to recognize why it is of poor quality. If you don't think you could do the task on your own, you don't know enough to trust it to Gen AI.

- You may use it to inquire about well-known philosophical figures and their views, but keep in mind that:
 - Gen AI will invent false information to fill in the gaps in its knowledge
 - Gen AI tends to re-present the same basic information in several different ways as though it were new
 - Gen AI tends to have more superficial views of major ethical figures than those studied in a 300-level college class
- You may use it for help getting over writer's block by jump-starting the process of outlining or planning a paper, but keep in mind that
 - Gen AI tends to give writing advice appropriate to fields other than philosophy
 - Gen AI is not inherently familiar with the expectations of the class unless you provide this information
 - Gen AI is not as reliable or effective as you are at planning what you actually want to say.
- You may use it as a philosophical conversation partner, but keep in mind that:
 - Gen AI does not run on a truth-preserving algorithm, unlike a traditional computer, so unlike traditional computing it does poorly with logic or formal criteria of validity.
 - Gen AI may not recognize circular reasoning as problematic, and may treat repeating a claim in different words as an argument for the claim

- Gen AI typically has filters which make it prefer florid but vapid writing over clear, precise writing that takes a position.
- You may use it to help you think of objections to your own arguments, but keep in mind that:
 - Gen AI tends to offer critiques from the *absence* of something not discussed or the *failure* of an argument to do something it didn't aim to do, which are not legitimate in philosophy
 - Gen AI tends to insist on deference to expertise, even where no such expertise exists or would be relevant to a philosophical issue
 - Gen AI tends to offer critiques along the lines that a subject requires a "more complex and nuanced analysis" without actually providing a more complex or nuanced analysis (because it can't). This sounds fake and robotic.

Red - Prohibited Uses

These uses contradict the learning objectives of the course, and using Gen AI in this way undermines your own learning in the course. If you use Gen AI in these ways, you should not be surprised about receiving a failing grade or even a '0' on the basis of your failure to meet the requirements of the assignment. I do not need to know or prove that you used Gen AI to give a '0' or failing grade; it is sufficient to show that you did not meet the requirements. If I have proof that you used it, it will be reported as an academic integrity violation.

- Do not use Gen AI as a substitute for learning from the lectures, readings, and other course materials
 - You need to cite relevant portions of the lectures and readings in your answers to get credit.
 - Your understanding is being examined on the basis of the way topics are presented in the course materials, which may differ from Gen AI's training data
- Do not use text from Gen AI without citing Gen AI as the source.
 - This is plagiarism and academic dishonesty
 - It also is poor scholarship because it means one can't track the source of information to verify it, leading to the spread of misinformation
- Do not use information from Gen AI without either citing Gen AI or citing another relevant source
 - Gen AI is inclined to make overly broad and general pronouncements about philosophical views which are dubious or false.
 - If you make claims like this, whether they come from Gen AI or not, your grade will be penalized, because it is bad philosophy to make claims like this without citing a source.
- Do not use Gen AI to generate fake citations or to provide citations of articles which you are not sufficiently familiar with to cite.
 - Gen AI produced citations are often not relevant in a way only an expert can recognize, and providing irrelevant citations makes you look bad and will hurt your grade
 - I may even ask you to locate the article for me, or to explain the context of your citation
 - If you can't tell me about a source you cite, it's poor scholarship, and you may lose credit
 - You don't have to have read an entire article to cite it, but you need to know where the claim cited occurs; include page numbers.
- Do not submit writing generated by Gen AI as though it were your own writing, whether to answer an exam question or to fill in a part of a paper
 - This is plagiarism.
 - This defeats the point of the assignment, since the point is not producing text, but assessing what you've learned
 - I might ask to have a conversation with you, and if I do, and you aren't familiar with the meaning or content of your own writing, then you will receive a failing grade
 - Even if we never talk, students whose writing suggests that they only have a highly superficial understanding of a topic, whether they relied on Gen AI or not, should not expect a passing grade just because the text is in good English and generally relevant.
 - My assignments and rubrics are designed to make this difficult
- Do not submit ideas which you obtained through using Gen AI unless you have been intellectually engaged in the process and can confidently stand behind the ideas

- Do not expect a passing grade for submitting beautiful sounding but philosophically empty, vapid, vague, dubious, logically incoherent, robotic junk. Plenty of "good writing" is bad Philosophy.
 - Keep in mind that without significant effort in prompt engineering by somebody who already knows what they're after, this is what Gen AI produces.
 - If you naturally produce writing like this without Gen AI, notice that this policy also impacts you. Consider meeting with the philosophy writing tutor (links.asu.edu/phitutor) for help.
- Other assignments in the course will test your ability to explain what you submitted in writing, so your future self will suffer if you have been disengaged in prior assignments.
- This doesn't prohibit using Gen AI to test out ideas, if you are intellectually engaged in the process and stand behind your work
- Do not pay money to anybody who promises to do your assignments for you
 - They will just use Gen AI and keep the money
 - You will be stuck with the nonsense they produced
 - Those caught in my classes have received a grade of XE. This is fraud.

Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services

In accordance with [ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available.

ASU Title IX Policy Statement

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>

Inclusion Statement

Arizona State University is a comprehensive public research university which measures itself not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed. My class welcomes and includes students of differing ages, races, ethnicities, nationalities, geographic locations, economic, linguistic, and family backgrounds, sexual and gender identities, religious beliefs (or non-beliefs), political affiliations and temperaments, disabilities, and life experiences. I, Dr. Watson, am committed to providing instruction without discrimination, and encourage you to contact me if there is something I

can do to make you feel more welcome. I respect my students, and I encourage each of them to bring to their voice to the table to offer their unique perspective without intimidation. I expect students to extend civility towards one another as we engage in dialogue about controversial topics in philosophy.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Accessibility Statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations [↗](#). Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation [↗](#) to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the **Disability Resources Center:** [↗](#)

- <https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility>
- **Phone:** 480-965-1234
- **FAX:** 480-965-0441
- **Email:** Student.Accessibility@asu.edu

Computer Requirements

This course requires a computer with Internet access and the following:

- A couple of web browsers ([Chrome](#) [↗](#), [Edge](#) [↗](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#) [↗](#), or [Safari](#) [↗](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) [↗](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) [↗](#) (free)
- Microphone and speaker required for VoiceThread
- Microphone and Webcam required for Proctored Exams
- An ASU.EDU Google Drive account with the ability to compose documents in Google Docs.
See <https://tech.asu.edu/google-drive>

In addition, the final exam for this course requires the use of Respondus Monitor. (Respondus Monitor is not RPNOW). There is no charge to you for using Respondus Monitor, but it requires you to download and use Respondus Lockdown Browser. You will need access to a standard Mac or PC computer with a microphone and web camera and the ability to download Respondus Lockdown Browser in order to take the final exam. Chromebooks are not compatible with Respondus. **Students using Chromebooks will need access to a secondary, standard PC or Mac computer to take exams using Respondus.**

Technical Support

This course uses Canvas to deliver content. It can be accessed through MyASU at <http://my.asu.edu> , through asu.instructure.com, or through the Canvas home page at canvas.asu.edu. Note that even if there is a disruption to my.asu.edu you should still have access to the course through canvas.asu.edu.

To monitor the status of campus networks and services, visit the System Health Portal at <http://syshealth.asu.edu/> .

To contact the help desk for technical support, I recommend using 24-hour Live Chat via the Question Mark icon on the Left Hand Sidebar on Canvas. Alternatively, you may Call 855-278-5080.

Student Success

This is an online course. To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
	Grading Information	to do: 11:59pm
	How to Access the Textbook	to do: 11:59pm
	How to Cite Sources	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Mar 16, 2025	Syllabus	to do: 11:59pm
	Welcome to PHI 101!	to do: 11:59pm
	Welcome to Unit 1: Truth and Logic	to do: 11:59pm
Mon Mar 17, 2025	Syllabus Quiz - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam	due by 11:59pm
	Video Lectures for Unit 1	to do: 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	<u>Introduce Yourself on VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 20, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 1</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Fri Mar 21, 2025	<u>Unit 1 VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
	<u>Welcome to Unit 2: Knowledge</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Mar 23, 2025	<u>Unit 1 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 24, 2025	<u>Video Lectures for Unit 2</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Thu Mar 27, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 2</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Fri Mar 28, 2025	<u>Unit 2 VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
	<u>Welcome to Unit 3: Philosophy of Mind</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Mar 30, 2025	<u>Unit 2 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 31, 2025	<u>Video Lectures for Unit 3</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Thu Apr 3, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 3</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Fri Apr 4, 2025	<u>Unit 3 VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
	<u>Welcome to Unit 4: Personal Identity</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Apr 6, 2025	<u>Unit 3 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 7, 2025	<u>Video Lectures for Unit 4</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Thu Apr 10, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 4</u>	to do: 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Fri Apr 11, 2025	<u>Unit 4 VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 13, 2025	<u>Welcome to Unit 5: Philosophy of Religion</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Apr 13, 2025	<u>Unit 4 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 14, 2025	<u>Preview Final Requirements</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Mon Apr 14, 2025	<u>Video Lectures for Unit 5</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Thu Apr 17, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 5</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Fri Apr 18, 2025	<u>Unit 5 VoiceThread</u>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 20, 2025	<u>Welcome to Unit 6: Ethics</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Sun Apr 20, 2025	<u>Unit 5 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 21, 2025	<u>Video Lectures for Unit 6</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Thu Apr 24, 2025	<u>Reading for Unit 6</u>	to do: 11:59pm
Fri Apr 25, 2025	<u>Unit 6 Reflection</u>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 27, 2025	<u>Unit 6 Test - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 28, 2025	<u>Final Exam Part 2 (Timed, Proctored, No Notes) - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser + Webcam</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 28, 2025	<u>Final Exam Part 1 (Untimed, Open Note, Essay).</u>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 28, 2025	<u>Term Paper Part 1 - Written Argument Paper</u>	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Tue Apr 29, 2025	<u>Term Paper Part 2 - VoiceThread Presentation</u>	due by 11:59pm
	<u>Final Debrief Assignment</u>	due by 11:59pm