

“The study of philosophy is not primarily about knowing what individuals thought, but about the way things are.”  
~St. Thomas Aquinas

**Course Identification:**

Introduction to Philosophy  
PHIL 110-001 (H) and -002  
MWF 8:55-9:50 and 10:00-10:55, CH 119  
Prerequisite: None

**Instructor Information:**

Dr. Kevin Timpe  
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Office: Founders 165A  
Office Hours: 7:55-8:55 MWF and 1:05-2:05 MW  
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**Course Description:**

Philosophy of some sort or other is presupposed by all of life, whether one realizes it or not. Consider the following quotation:

The truths of philosophy, it should be said, are not restricted only to the sometimes ephemeral teachings of professional philosophers. All men and women, as I have noted, are in some sense philosophers and have their own philosophical conceptions with which they direct their lives. In one way or other, they shape a comprehensive vision and an answer to the question of life's meaning; and in the light of this they interpret their own life's course and regulate their behaviour (Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, sec. 30).

Yet many college students do not know what philosophy is. This course is designed to introduce students to philosophy by studying some of the most influential figures and issues in its history.

**Course goals and objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, the students should:

- (1) be able to critically evaluate philosophical texts and arguments,
- (2) be able to formulate and defend a philosophical position,
- (3) have a basic understanding of the history of western philosophy.

**Texts:**

Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett)  
Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will* (Hackett)  
Renee Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations* (Hackett)  
Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil* (Eerdmans)

Additional readings in the form of handouts, reserve articles or the like will also be used.

This course will also make use of WebCT and E-reserve: (password: Wisdom).

**Assignments:**

Students are to keep up with the reading and have read enough to participate in class discussion.

Periodic quizzes may be given over the reading material to make sure that students are staying current with the texts. The frequency of quizzes will be inversely proportional to the level of overall class participation. Quizzes need not be announced ahead of time and cannot be made up if missed.

One reading question per reading will be posted on WebCT. Students are responsible for answering any 20 of these questions throughout the course of the semester. Answers to individual questions will only be accepted on the day the reading assignment in question is discussed in class (particular due dates for individual questions will be on WebCT).

Students will write *three* short papers during the course of the semester on topics assigned by the instructor. The papers will be analysis, reflection and/or argumentative in nature. Papers are to be turned in at the *start* of the class period in which they are due. Those turned in late will be docked 1 full letter grade for each 24 hour period late (or part thereof), excluding weekends and official University holidays. Papers are to be turned in typed, Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins and page numbers. The student is free to use footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical documentation if necessary, as long as they are *consistently* used and *contain all the relevant information*.

There will be mid-term and final exams for the course. They will (in all likelihood) consist primarily of short-answer and essay questions. The final exam will *not* be comprehensive in nature but will be given during the assigned period for final exams. A study guide will be circulated prior to each exam. There are *no* makeup exams.

Students are responsible for checking WebCT for when the various assignments are due.

**Course Grade:**

Reading Quizzes/Participation	15%
Papers	45% total
Mid-term exam	20%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20%</u>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Grading Scale:**

A	> 93%
A-	90-92%
B+	88-89%
B	83-87%
B-	80-82%
C+	78-79%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	< 60%

**Academic honesty:**

This is, after all, a course concerned with truth. Academic dishonesty in any form (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) will not be tolerated. The University of San Diego's policy on academic honest reads, in part, as follows:

Academic dishonesty, and allegations of academic dishonesty, are matters of University-wide concern in the same way that academic integrity is a matter of University-wide concern. Students bear the responsibility not only for their own academic integrity but also for bringing instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the attention of the proper authorities....

Penalties imposed by the instructor or supervisor with respect to a course or academic exercise may include: reduction in grade of the affected person in the course or exercise; the requirement that the affected person withdraw from the course or exercise; the requirement that all or part of the course or exercise be retaken; the requirement that the person engage in additional work in connection with the course or exercise.

***Rough Course Schedule (Subject to Change):***

The current class schedule of readings and assignments can be found on the course WebCT site. Make sure you check this regularly!

<u><i>Week Starting:</i></u>	<u><i>Topic:</i></u>
31 January	Introduction to Philosophy
7 February	<i>Apology, Crito</i>
14 February	<i>Phaedo</i>
21 February	<i>Phaedo</i>
28 February *	<i>On Free Choice of the Will</i>
7 March	<i>On Free Choice of the Will</i>
14 March	<i>On Free Choice of the Will</i>
21 March	<i>No Class—Spring Break</i>
28 March *	Review and Mid-term ( <i>No class on 28 March</i> )
4 April	<i>Discourse on Method and the Meditations</i>
11 April	<i>Discourse on Method and the Meditations</i>
18 April	<i>Discourse on Method and the Meditations</i>
25 April	<i>God, Freedom and Evil</i>
2 May *	<i>God, Freedom and Evil</i>
9 May	<i>God, Freedom and Evil</i>
16 May	Review

**Final Exam:** Wednesday, 18 May, 8:00-10:00 (-001)  
Monday, 23 May, 11:00-1:00 (-002)

\* = paper due that week (this may change depending on our progression during the semester)