



Introduction to Philosophy: PHIL 11001/002

Spring semester, 2025

Monday/Wednesday: 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Location: Bowman 223

Instructor: Kevin Fink

Office: Philosophy Dept., 320 Bowman

Office Hours: 1:45 – 2:30 PM M/W and by appointment

E-mail: kfink@kent.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will be introduced to a wide range of philosophers – from ancient to contemporary – and to a wide range of philosophical questions: especially those dealing with metaphysics (i.e., with the nature of reality), epistemology (i.e., with what can be known and how it is known), philosophy of mind (i.e., with the nature of the mind and the mental), and some supposed proofs for the existence of God. This course has two primary goals: (1) allowing students to become familiar with some of the major developments and currents in the Western philosophical tradition, and (2) providing students with the tools and encouragement necessary for them to engage in philosophical analysis of their own.

KENT CORE

This course may be used to satisfy a Kent Core requirement. The Kent Core as a whole is intended to broaden intellectual perspectives, foster ethical and humanitarian values, and prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers.

DIVERSITY ELEMENT

This course may be used to satisfy the University Diversity requirement. Diversity courses provide opportunities for students to learn about such matters as the history, culture, values and notable achievements of people other than those of their own national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, physical and mental ability, and social class. Diversity courses also provide opportunities to examine problems and issues that may arise from differences, and opportunities to learn how to deal constructively with them.

Specifically, this course will examine and incorporate important philosophical views from underrepresented groups, such as women philosophers in the 17th century.

COMPETENCIES (LEARNING OUTCOMES):

Students will be able to understand, explain, compare and analyze prominent theories in the history of Western philosophy. Students will be able to intelligently discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these various theories and will possess a general understanding of their historical development and philosophical significance. Students will learn basic principles, skills, and techniques of philosophical argumentation.

SHORT-TERM DISTANCE EDUCATION

In the event that I am unable to come to campus (due to mild illness, quarantine/isolation, snow closure, etc.) but able to teach, we will meet in a virtual classroom (provided on Canvas) during our regularly scheduled class time. You will be informed via email as soon as feasible of such an occurrence and provided a link to our virtual classroom.



TEXTS (all are required)

1. *Five Dialogues*, Plato, translated by G. M. A. Grube.
2. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes, translated by Donald A. Cress.
3. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, David Hume, ed. Eric Steinberg.
4. *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy (5th ed.)*, Samuel Enoch Stumpf (ed.) (ON CANVAS)
5. Various excerpts and articles all available on Canvas.

ENROLLMENT / OFFICIAL REGISTRATION, DROP, WITHDRAWAL

- The official registration deadline for this course is 1/19/2025.
- The course drop deadline is 1/26/2025.
- The course withdrawal deadline is 3/30/2025.

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

EVALUATIONS

(See schedule: dates are subject to change – any change will be announced in class)

TOTAL POINTS = 350

Two critical responses: 25 points each

Three exams: 100 points each

GRADING SCALE

A	94-100	C	73-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	Below 60

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at class is required. Although I will not take roll, it will not be possible for me to furnish students with class notes or give private lectures on material already covered. Further, students will be evaluated not only on the readings, but also on any other material covered in class. Most importantly, failure to attend an exam or to turn in any assignment on time without prior approval by the professor will result in a zero for that evaluation (except in the most extreme of cases, in which proper justification will be required).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for



these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS

The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-16 in the University Policy Register. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental chairperson.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating and plagiarism, as defined in the University Policy 3-01.8, Administrative policy and procedures regarding student cheating and plagiarism, section C will not be tolerated. In accordance with section D of that policy, appropriate sanctions will be imposed on students discovered cheating or plagiarizing. Sanctions include but are not limited to (i) assigning a zero grade for the work in which the cheating or plagiarism took place or (ii) assigning a grade of “F” in the course in which the cheating or plagiarism took place. For more information concerning academic dishonesty, please consult University Policy 3-01.8.

REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS (IN COMPLIANCE WITH H.B. 353)

Endorsed by Faculty Senate on 5/8/23

The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds (ombuds@kent.edu).

SCHEDULE

On each date indicated below, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material listed for that day’s session – i.e., read the stuff listed before class. Students are highly encouraged to discuss in class any questions or difficulties that they may have concerning that day’s reading.

Date	Topics	Readings	Assessments
13-Jan		Introduction	
15-Jan	Part I: Ancient Philosophy	“Socrates’ Predecessors” Stumpf chpt. 1 (on Canvas) pp. 3-28.	

20-Jan	MLK Day, NO CLASSES		
22-Jan	Plato	Plato: Euthyphro (in <i>Five Dialogues</i> pp. 1-20)	
27-Jan		Plato: Apology (in <i>Five Dialogues</i> pp. 21-44)	
29-Jan		Plato: Crito (in <i>Five Dialogues</i> pp. 45-57)	
3-Feb		Plato: Phaedo (in <i>Five Dialogues</i> pp. 93-122)	
5-Feb		Plato: Phaedo (in <i>Five Dialogues</i> pp. 122-154)	
10-Feb	Aristotle	“Aristotle” Stumpf chpt. 4 (on Canvas) pp. 80-98	
12-Feb		Aristotle (cont.)	
17-Feb			EXAM ONE
19-Feb	Part II: Modern Philosophy	“The Renaissance Interlude” Stumpf chpt. 10 (on Canvas) pp. 203-207, 213-219	
24-Feb	Method of science	“Advocates of the Method of Science: Bacon and Hobbes”, Stumpf chpt. 11 (on Canvas) pp. 220-230.	
26-Feb	Rationalism	"Rationalism on the Continent" Stumpf chpt. 12 (on Canvas) pp. 235-242; Descartes (pp. 1-7)	
3-Mar	Descartes	Descartes (pp. 13-24)	
5-Mar		Descartes (pp. 24-42)	

10-Mar	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES		
12-Mar	SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES		
17-Mar		Descartes (pp 42-59)	
19-Mar		Correspondence: Princess Elizabeth & Descartes (on Canvas), pp. 61-73.	
24-Mar	Spinoza and Leibniz	"Rationalism on the Continent", Stumpf chpt. 12 (on Canvas) pp. 248-262	
26-Mar			EXAM TWO
31-Mar	Empiricism: Locke and Berkeley	"Empiricism in Britain" Stumpf chpt. 13 (on Canvas) pp. 263-271; 274-280.	
2-Apr	Hume	Hume (pp. 1-25)	
7-Apr		Hume (pp. 25-53)	
9-Apr		Hume (pp. 53-69, pp. 90-114)	
14-Apr	Kant	"Kant" Stumpf chpt. 15 (On Canvas) pp. 299-314.	
16-Apr		Kant, continued.	
21-Apr	Part III: Contemporary Philosophy: a brief glimpse	Gilbert Ryle "Descartes's Myth" (On Canvas)	
23-Apr		Barry Stroud "The Problem of the External World" (On Canvas)	

28-Apr		G. E. Moore "Proof of an External World" (On Canvas)	
30-Apr		Thomas Nagel: "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (On Canvas)	
8-May	Finals week: Our final will be held Thursday, May 8 from 10:15 AM - 12:30 PM in our regular classroom		