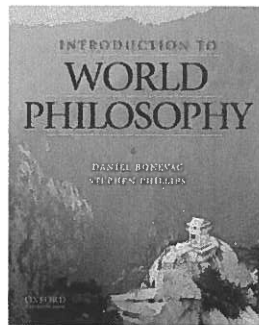
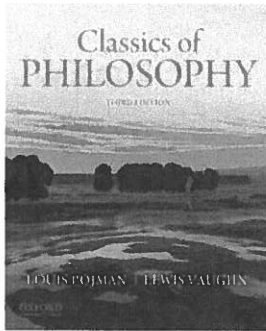


## INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring, 2025  
Phil. 11001-003-16068  
MW 2:15-3:30  
BOW 223

Dr. Frank Ryan  
Office: 320-E Bowman  
Hours: MW 3:30-4:45  
(and by appointment)  
Email: [fryan@kent.edu](mailto:fryan@kent.edu)  
Phone: 330-672-0274



**Course Design:** Does our existence have a purpose or meaning? Should we find an answer, could we be certain of its truth? And how might such knowledge affect our responsibilities to ourselves and others? This course invites exploration into fundamental questions that have fascinated thoughtful humans for millennia. Using a continuum approach that ranges from objectivism to relativism, we'll see how philosophy offers answers to basic questions of metaphysics (what is real?) and epistemology (what is knowledge?) that create a variety of moral and social options. Critically evaluating these choices can help launch a lifelong quest for self-empowerment.

**Required Texts:** (1) Louis P. Pojman, *Classics of Philosophy*, Third Edition.  
(2) Daniel Bonevac and Stephen Phillips, *Introduction to World Philosophy: A Multicultural Reader*.

**Grading:** Grades are calculated according to the standard scale:  
 $\geq 93 = A$ ;  $90-92 = A-$ ;  $88-89 = B+$ ;  $83-87 = B$ ;  $80-82 = B-$ ;  $78-79 = C+$ ;  
 $73-77 = C$ ;  $70-72 = C-$ ;  $68-69 = D+$ ;  $60-67 = D$ ;  $\leq 59 = F$

45% is determined by three predominantly objective unit tests, administered on line in class. (15% each).

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25% is determined by a *cumulative* final exam, similar to the unit tests, but a bit longer.

24% is determined by your responses to in class unit questions (6% each).

If you are unavailable on the day of the questions, or do not wish to speak in class, you may receive credit for the assignment by submitting a full set of written answers to your instructor by the day of the questions.

6% is an attendance grade determined by the number of *unexcused* absences on the following scale: A= 0-1, B= 2, C=3-4, D= 5-6, F 7+. Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. .

*Note:* Students who contribute regularly to class discussions will have 1-2 points added to their overall grade.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is taken for each class. Your instructor is generally willing to excuse absences when informed in advance or on the same day—an email post is ideal. Without advance or same day notification, written documentation in conformance with University policy must be presented in order to receive an excused absence.

**Expectations and Class Etiquette:** Because the study of philosophy is most beneficial when personal insights supplement a conceptual understanding of the views, regular attendance and active involvement in class discussions are important. Please avoid tardiness, which may disrupt the continuity of lectures and discussions. *Electronic media may be used for note-taking only—if used for any other purpose during class you will be asked to leave.* Ask questions in class or consult your instructor about any concepts or arguments you do not fully understand.

**Cultural Diversity Element:** The Western tradition is augmented by multicultural perspectives.

**Kent Core Course:** 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.

**Grievance Policy:** The Philosophy Department Grievance Procedure for handling grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 3342-4-16 in the *University Policy Register*. For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the Departmental Chairperson.

**Registration Requirement:** University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students not officially registered should not attend class 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 published university deadline.

**Withdrawal Deadline:** Please check the official Academic Calendar for the course withdrawal deadline.

**Student Accessibility Policy:** University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure 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](http://www.kent.edu/sas) for more information on registration procedures).

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** University policy 3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at [http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel\\_datapageid\\_1976529=2037779](http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/policydetails.cfm?customel_datapageid_1976529=2037779)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Author</u>	<u>Reading/Class Exercises</u>
		C: <i>Classics of Philosophy</i> W: <i>World Philosophy</i> BL: Item in Blackboard Learn
1/13	Syllabus Review & Introduction The Philosophical Continuum	
1/15	Rationalism & Empiricism—The Pre-Socratics	
1/20	<i>MLK Observance, No Class</i>	

**I. METAPHYSICS**

**1. Objectivism**

1/22 Socrates: A Seeker of Wisdom; Intro to Plato C: 22-24; 36-50

1/27 Plato: The Theory and Hierarchy of Forms  
 Intro to Aristotle C: 167-177

**2. Naturalism**

1/29 Aristotle: Form and Matter W: 446-447; C: 229-235

**3. Social and Individual Relativism**

Buddhism & Daoism W: 16-19; 420-423; 320-328

2/3 Metaphysics Study Questions

2/5 UNIT TEST 1

**II. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

**1. Objectivism**

2/10 Test Return and Review C: 397-411

Augustine: Confessions C: 411-434

2/12 Augustine: The City of God

**2. Naturalism**

2/17 God's Existence: Anselm vs. Guanilo, C: 444-447; 796-801

Aquinas vs. Kant, Paley vs. Hume

**3. Social & Individual Relativism**

2/19 Irreligion & Eternal Recurrence C: 1043

2/24 Philosophy of Religion Study Questions

2/26 UNIT TEST 2

**III. EPISTEMOLOGY**

**1. Objectivism**

3/3 Test Return and Review C: 487-491

Descartes: Knowledge as Certainty

3/5 Moore & Russell: Defeating Skepticism C: 1150; 1153-1158; 1108-1116

3/10-3/16 *Spring Break*

**2. Naturalism**

3/17 Hume: Empiricism and Skepticism C: 718-719; BL 187-193

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3/19 What is Objectivity? C: 815-816; 836-841 (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph)  
3/24 Hegel and Peirce: Knowing as Problem-Solving C: 1073-1077  
3/26 Dewey: Experimental Pragmatism BL: 159-167

**3. Social and Individual Relativism**

3/31 Nietzsche: The Will to Power C: 1044-1050  
4/2 Epistemology Study Questions  
4/7 UNIT TEST 3

**IV. ETHICS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY**

**1. Objectivism**

4/9 Test Return and Review  
Kant: The Good Will C: 872-876  
4/14 Kant: Categorical & Practical Imperatives C: 876-886; 888-895

**2. Naturalism**

4/16 Aristotle: The Construction of Good  
Dewey: The Crisis of Modernity W: 88-97

**3. Social and Individual Relativism**

4/21 Bentham and Mill: Utilitarianism W: 174-184  
4/23 Gilligan, Rawls & Nozick: Fairness or Freedom? C: 1268-1270  
4/28 Ethics and Social Philosophy Study Questions  
4/30 5/2 General Review Session

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday May 8, 12:45-3:00**