

**Trinity Western University**

**Undergraduate Course Syllabus**

**Course Number:** PHIL 105 IS

**Course Name:** Introduction to Philosophy

**Semester and Year: Fall 2016**

**Instructor:** Tyler Chamberlain, MA, Ph.D (candidate)

**Contact Information:** Tyler.Chamberlain@twu.ca

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Co-requisites or Pre-requisites:** None. (3-0; 3-0)

**Semester Hours:** 3 sem. hrs.

**Course Description:**

An introduction to questions addressed by philosophers: the relationship between perception and knowledge (appearance and reality); the existence and nature of God; human freedom and determinism; the meaning of human existence; the nature of moral judgments; the mind/body problem; artificial intelligence; feminist philosophy; the problem of suffering; and whether humans are capable of selfless motivation.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

It is hoped that through course readings, assignments, lectures, and interaction with peers, by the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Read and critically understand philosophical writing.
2. Comprehend, in broad strokes, the history of western philosophy.
3. Relate the import of central philosophical questions to Christian thought and practice.
4. Clearly express arguments and ideas in writing.

**Required Texts and Materials:**

Stanley Rosen, ed. (2000). The Philosopher’s Handbook: Essential Readings From Plato to Kant. Random House.

Thomas V. Morris (1992). Making Sense of it All: Pascal and the Meaning of Life. William B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Various essays and book chapters will be made available on MyCourses.

**Course Activities/Requirements:**

1. **Reading of all the assigned texts.**
2. **Weekly Summaries**

The chapter summary is a **1 page, double-spaced** summary of the main arguments of the thinker. The question you’ll need to ask, and answer, is the following: “What exactly is the writer trying to accomplish here?” You must identify the main point/claim/assertion, as well as the main line of argument given in its defense. You do not need to give any background information on the topic or author – the only thing you will be graded on for this assignment is how well you understand the argument of the chapter.

1. **Book Review: Making Sense of It All – March 9th**

The Book Review should be **5 pages long** **and double-spaced**. You must summarize the author’s main ideas and arguments, and critically evaluate them. You are not expected to provide a thorough summary of everything the book discusses, although you are expected to identify some of the main threads of argument that unite the various themes.

Your critical evaluation must, obviously, go beyond mere personal reflection on the themes. A successful review will analyze, among other things, Morris’ interpretation of Pascal, as well as what the other thinkers you’ve read have to say on the topic.

**5. Final Exam**

The final exam will be take-home. It will consist of a combination of short and long answer questions. Some choice will be provided in the questions you can answer.

All written assignments can be emailed to the professor any time before midnight on the day they are due. You will be graded according to the following criteria: understanding of the readings and issues, grammar/clarity/spelling/etc., and the insightfulness of your evaluation of the key themes. Assignments must be properly formatted: size 12 font, double spaced, 1 inch margins.

**Instructor’s plagiarism policy:** Plagiarism of any sort will be accepted at all. This includes copying from a friend, the internet, or quoting a secondary source without proper citation. Students caught plagiarizing will receive an automatic zero on the assignment in question.

**Course Evaluation:**

The final grade will be determined by the satisfactory completion of all requirements. All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.

Chapter Summaries 50%

Book Review 20%

Final Exam 30%

**Total 100%**

**Course Policies:**

**Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU**

One of the core values of Trinity Western University is the integration of academic excellence with high standards of personal, moral, and spiritual integrity. The University considers it a serious offence when an individual attempts to gain unearned academic credit. It is the student’s responsibility to be informed about what constitutes academic dishonesty. For details on this, and on identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to the [University Homepage > Academics > Academic Calendar > Academic Information > Academic Policies > Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism](http://www.twu.ca/academics/calendar/2014-2015/academic-information/academic-policies/academic-dishonesty-and-plagiarism.html).

**Campus Closure and Class Cancellation Policy**

In the event of extreme weather conditions or other emergency situations go to the [University Homepage > Campus Notification (in the page footer) > Class cancellation policy](http://www.twu.ca/campus/campus-notification.html).

**University Standard Grading System**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Letter Grade | Percentage | Grade Point |
| A+ | 90-100 | 4.3 |
| A | 85-89 | 4.0 |
| A- | 80-84 | 3.7 |
| B+ | 77-79 | 3.3 |
| B | 73-76 | 3.0 |
| B- | 70-72 | 2.7 |
| C+ | 67-69 | 2.3 |
| C | 63-66 | 2.0 |
| C- | 60-62 | 1.7 |
| D+ | 57-59 | 1.3 |
| D | 53-56 | 1.0 |
| D- | 50-52 | 0.7 |
| F | Below 50 | 0 |

**Students with a Disability**

Students with a disability who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and include the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined in the Student Life section of the University Calendar.

**Course Outline:**

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** |
| Jan. 27 | What is Philosophy and why is it important? | Grant, “What is Philosophy?” |
| Feb. 3 | Plato | PH: 39-44 |
| Feb. 10  | Saint Augustine | PH:125-133 |
| Feb. 17 | Machiavelli | PH: 77-79 |
| Feb. 24 | Rene Descartes | PH: 343-348, 429-437 |
| March 2 | Blaise Pascal | PH: 147-163 |
| March 9 | BOOK REVIEW DUE THIS WEEK | “Making Sense of it all” |
| March 16 | David Hume | PH: 439-452 |
| March 23 | Thomas Kuhn | PH: 503-519 |
| March 30 | Paul Feyerabend | PH: 493-502 |
| April 6 | Christianity and Postmodernism | Hollinger, “Postmodernity and the Moral Life” |