PHIL 101.1015: Introduction to Philosophy Fall 2021 Instructor: Virtual office: <u>https://unlv.webex.com/meet/</u> Office: Office hrs: Tu/Th 10:00–11:00pm

# Aim of the Course:

In this course, we will examine some of the central topics in philosophy by means of a study contemporary and historical philosophical texts. We will focus on questions such as the following: Can we prove that God exists? How do we know our own mind, and in what way can we know the world that lies outside our mind? How is the mind different from the body? Am *I* the same thing as my mind? Is the will free or subject to necessity or fate? Can we discover through reason a principle of morality and an account of happiness and the good life? Our questions thereby touch on the main branches of philosophy: metaphysics (philosophical theology and the philosophy of mind), epistemology and ethics.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to

- 1. identify the principal branches of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics)
- 2. articulate the diverse philosophical views of multiple historical and contemporary figures in philosophy in each of these branches
- 3. interpret and reconstruct the arguments in challenging philosophical texts
- 4. evaluate these arguments critically
- 5. synthesize textual interpretation and argument-evaluation in clear, precise, and wellorganized written expression.

# **Required Text:**

G. Rosen, *et al.* (eds.), *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*. Second Edition. New York: Norton, 2018.

Note: You may use either the paper or the electronic version of this text (available at the bookstore or from the publisher at <u>https://digital.wwnorton.com/introphilosophy2 (Links to an external site.)</u>)

# **Email:**

Course announcements and assignments will be distributed via Canvas or to the email address that UNLV has on file for you in MyUNLV. In most cases, this is your Rebelmail account (<username>@unlv.nevada.edu). <u>You will be responsible for any announcements and assignments sent to this email address</u>. For instructions on forwarding your Rebelmail see: <u>http://rebelmail.unlv.edu/set-pop-imap-or-forwarding (Links to an external site.)</u>. You are welcome to send me emails with questions about the contents or mechanics of the course, but it may take me a day or more to respond. Please take this into account if, for example, you email me the night before an assignment is due.

# **Assignments and Grading:**

Your grade for this course will be based on the following elements:

- 1. Weekly Discussion Posts: 25%
- 2. Mini-Quizzes (Formative Quizzes): 20% (multiple short quizzes every week; two attempts per quiz)
- 3. Quizzes (Summative Quizzes): 20% (tentative due dates: 9/19, 10/17, 11/14, 12/7)
- 4. Essays: 35% (tentative due dates: 9/26, 10/31, 12/9)

Your final letter grade for the course will be based on the following scale:

>93%	>90%	>85%	>80%	>77%	>75%	>70%	>67%	>63%	60%	<60%
А	A-	B+	В	B-	C+	С	C-	D	D-	F

## **Modules:**

To begin the course, navigate to the modules tab in the left-hand menu. There is one module for each week of the course. Typically, a module will be opened on the **Friday** *before* the week in which the module's readings and assignments should be completed. (The first module, which is shorter, is an exception: it is open right now.) This will allow you to get a head start on the next week's readings and assignments once you complete that week's module. Each module will have multiple reading assignments and quizzes that should be completed in order. Plan to complete a discussion post by Thursday and then return to the discussion board contribute a peer response by **Sunday**. This means that you will typically have about 8 and half days to complete all the work in each module. This schedule ensures that everyone stays on track and engaged together on the same texts at the same time.

# **Plagiarism Statement:**

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or writings as if they were one's own. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that any ideas or expressions in your writing that are not your own (and that are not merely "common knowledge") are indicated as such. (An item is probably "common knowledge" if it appears in exactly the same form in multiple sources without any credible disagreement. But no instructor will penalize you for citing too much.) Please note that rewording (paraphrasing) the ideas of someone else counts as a form of plagiarism. **Ignorance of plagiarism standards will in no case be considered an excuse**. You are therefore *required* to read the following document about plagiarism:

UNLV Writing Center, "Avoiding Plagiarism": <u>https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kYHoVxPKLh-cKnYzEDqpid8SqqmpRzA3/view</u>

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

### I. PHILOSOPHY, SKEPTICISM, & KNOWLEDGE

### Week 1. Philosophy & the Importance of Arguments

1.1 Norton Introduction to Philosophy, Second Edition (NIP), Preface, p. xvii only;

and Getting Started, "Why Philosophy? Five Views" pp. xxvii-xxxii.

1.2. NIP, Getting Started, "A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation," sections 1-3 pp. xxxiiixxxviii.

1.3. NIP, Getting Started, "A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation," sections 4-9 pp. xxxviiili.

### Week 2. Philosophy and the Demand for Knowledge in Socrates and Descartes

2.1. Plato, *Apology*. In J. Cooper (ed.) *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 17a, 19a-19d, 20c-24c, 28a-32a, 34b-35b, 35d, 36b-37a, 37e-42a. [Canvas]

2.2. Plato, Meno (selections). In NIP, pp. 137-142.

2.3. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, First Meditation. In NIP, pp. 264-267.

### Week 3. Can We Know There is a Real World Out There? Contemporary Perspectives

3.1. Rosen *et al.*, Introduction to Chapter Six, "How Can We Know About the External World?", NIP 259-263.

- 3.2. Vogel, "Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation," NIP 284-291.
- 3.3. Bostrom, "Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?", NIP pp. 442-451.

### **II. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

### Week 4. Ontological and Other Arguments for God's Existence

4.1. Rosen et al., Introduction to Chapter One, "Does God Exist?", NIP 3-8.

and Anselm, The Ontological Argument in the Proslogion, with Reader's Guide NIP 8-13.

ÒР`Н

# **UNLV Provost's Policies:**

#### **Public Health Directives**

Face coverings are mandatory for all faculty and students in the classroom. Students must follow all active UNLV public health directives while enrolled in this class. UNLV public health directives are found at <u>Health Requirements for Returning to Campus</u>, https://www.unlv.edu/coronavirus/health-requirements. Students who do not comply with these

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student's control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of "F" will be recorded, and the student's GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the "I" grade.

#### Library Resources

Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the Libraries' Research Consultation

competitions, science and engineering competitions, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

#### Rebelmail

Rebelmail is UNLV's official email system for students and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students' Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways in which students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Sending emails within WebCampus-Canvas is also acceptable.

#### **Tutoring and Coaching**

The Academic Success Center (ASC), at the Claude I. Howard Building, provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the <u>ASC website</u>, https://www.unlv.edu/asc, or call 702-895-3177. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the Co004 (ucce)2.990.996 (,)-()-3.995 (t)-4s12(25)