



Walters State Community College Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number and Name: PHIL 1030 Introduction to Philosophy

Section ID: 81321.202380

Semester and Year: Fall 2023

Credit Hours: 3

Start Date: August 21, 2023

End Date: December 08, 2023

Course Format: WEB - Web Classes

Catalog Course Description: A study of philosophical perspectives of human nature and the meaning of life. F, S

General Education Course Designation: General Education Course

Meeting Details: TBD

Course Drop Deadline: October 27, 2023

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Roger Turner

Office Location: CCEN 215 - C

Office Hours: M (virtual): 4p - 9p; W: 9a - 4p; TR: 2:10p - 3:40p

Office Phone: 423-585-6948

Email: Roger.Turner@ws.edu

Supervisor Name: Dr. Robert Pratt

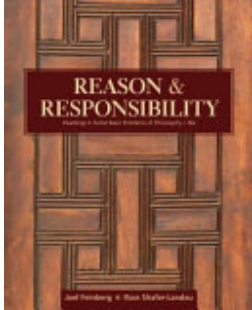
Supervisor Phone: 423-585-6952

Required Textbook(s) and Materials

Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy

ISBN: 9781305502444

Authors: Joel Feinberg, Russ Shafer-Landau



Publisher: Cengage Learning

Publication Date: 2016-01-01

Supplemental or Optional Materials

Additional readings in online course packet (CP).

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- 1. Articulate a basic understanding of the questions and importance of philosophy
- 2. Explain the theories of human nature of some of history's most influential philosophers
- 3. Compare and contrast different philosophical viewpoints
- 4. Recognize strong and weak arguments
- 5. Describe how philosophical thinking is relevant to everyday life
- 6. Explain Socrates' moral philosophy
- 7. Explain Plato's theory of Forms
- 8. Explain Aristotle's theory of the good life

Instructional Approach and Methods

1. The course is lecture based.
2. Evaluation happens informally through graded assignments consisting of written papers ('reflective notes') and exams.

Assessment, Evaluation and Testing Procedures

1. There are three exams in this course.
2. There are ten short writing assignments that are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Assignments

Exams (3 @ 100 points each) = 300

Reflective Notes [RNs] (10 @ 15 points each) = 150

Total = 450 points

Class Participation

This is an online course. Students are expected to keep up with the reading schedule (below), and to submit assignments on time.

Course and Class Policies/Procedures

You must be reachable via your eLearn email. I cannot stress this enough: you will be notified of any changes that occur to the course over the semester (if there are any changes, that is) via email. Moreover, if I need to contact you, personally, for any reason at all, this will be the method through which I contact you. Do not neglect to check your eLearn email often! **If a student wishes to email the instructor, s/he can expect a reply within 48 hours *except on weekends and holidays*.**

Additional Course Requirements/Details/Information

I. What We'll Be Doing

In this class we will focus on areas and questions in philosophy that will help us deepen our views about human nature and the meaning of life. To do this, we will focus on three main issues: knowledge (can we ever really *know* anything?), God (does God exist? Is anyone ever *intellectually* justified in believing God exists?), and free will and moral responsibility (do we ever deserve *moral* praise or criticism for our actions?). If there's time, we'll focus on the meaning of life (do our lives have a purpose? If so, what does that mean? If not, what does *that* mean?).

A note about doing philosophy and asking philosophical questions:

- Philosophical questions differ from other kinds of questions (e.g., scientific questions) in that they combine these three features:
- Philosophical questions concern certain abstract yet deeply interesting and important concepts: Knowledge, Intellectual Justification, God, Personhood, Causation, Action, Freedom, Moral Accountability, Justice, and so on.
- The main intellectual tool we use to explore philosophical questions is our power of *reason* or *rational insight*, a kind of "sixth sense" that's distinct from the five "empirical" senses (vision, touch, taste, smell, hearing).
- Philosophical questions resist (but do not deny that there are) final, definitive solutions: as we'll see both in assigned readings *and* in class discussion, it's often very difficult to achieve widespread agreement on the best answer to a given philosophical question.

II. Assignments and Assessment

The grading goes as follows:

Exams (3 @ 100 points each) = 300

Reflective Notes [RN's] (10 @ 15 points each) = 150

Total = 450 points

Exams:

There will be three exams on the material we cover in the course. The first exam will focus on the material covered in UNIT 1; the second exam will focus on the material covered in UNIT 2; the final exam will focus on the material covered in UNIT 3. The UNIT 1 exam must be taken

on or before Sunday, September 18th; the UNIT 2 exam must be taken on or before Sunday, November 13th; the final exam (on UNIT 3) must be taken on or before Friday, December 9th.

Reflective Notes (RNs) (10 @ 3.33% each – 33%):

Each Reflective Note (RN) you submit will earn a grade of 'Acceptable' or 'Unacceptable'. An *Acceptable* RN will be a healthy paragraph (i.e., five or more sentences) in which you raise *either* (i) a question about *or* (ii) an objection to something that happens in a particular assigned reading. To ensure that I understand exactly how your question or objection engages the material you're writing about, you'll need to provide some context by briefly summarizing the part of the reading your question or objection concerns. Sincere effort will usually suffice for an Acceptable RN. However, an RN that's too short or inaccurate or unclear will earn a grade of 'Unacceptable', and won't count toward this portion of the final grade. (See the end of the syllabus for two sample Acceptable RNs.)

Here are six important rules about RNs:

- RNs can only be submitted in the class eLearn Dropbox.
- RNs on UNIT 1 (RNs 1 and 2) are due on or before **Sunday, Sept. 10th**.
- RNs on UNIT 2 (RNs 3, 4, 5, and 6) are due on or before **Sunday, Nov. 12th**.
- RNs on UNIT 3/4 (RNs 8, 9, and 10) are due on or before **Sunday, Dec. 3rd**.
- Each RN must be about one of the starred (*) readings in the reading schedule below (there are many more options than 10, so you'll have a lot of leeway here).
- Each of your RNs must be about a different reading assignment—no more than one RN on a given reading assignment.

III. Class Policies:

You must be reachable via your eLearn email. I cannot stress this enough: you will be notified of any changes that occur to the course over the semester (if there are any changes, that is) via email. Moreover, if I need to contact you, personally, for any reason at all, this will be the method through which I contact you. Do not neglect to check your eLearn email often! **If a student wishes to email the instructor, s/he can expect a reply within 48 hours except on weekends and holidays.**

IV. Important Dates:

8/21 (M): Class begins

9/10 (Su): RNs 1 and 2 (from UNIT 1) due on or before this date

9/17 (Su): UNIT 1 exam due on or before this date

11/5 (Su): RNs 3, 4, 5, and 6 (from UNIT 2) due on or before this date

11/12 (Su): UNIT 2 exam due on or before this date

12/3 (Su): RNs 7, 8, 9, and 10 (from UNIT 3) due on or before this date

12/8 (F): UNIT 3 exam due on or before this date

V. Tentative Reading Schedule (CP = Course Packet; * = RN option):

UNIT 1: Are there any facts we really *know* to be true?

Aug. 21 – Aug. 27: Read: Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer, and John Perry, “On the Study of Philosophy,” **(CP)**; Huemer, “Three Skeptical Arguments,” pp. 195 – 201 **(*)**

Aug. 28 – Sept. 3: Read: Pollock’s “A Brain in a Vat,” pp. 193 – 195 **(*)**; G.E. Moore, “Proof of an External World,” pp. 290 – 292 **(*)**

Sept. 4 – Sept. 10: Read: Plato’s “Knowledge and Justified True Belief,” pp. 210 – 214 **(*)**; Edmund Gettier’s “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”, pp. 215 - 216 **(*)**

UNIT 2: Is anyone ever *intellectually* justified in believing that God exists?

1. The Cosmological Argument

Sept. 11 – Sept. 17: Read: Thomas Aquinas’ “The Five Ways,” pp. 47 – 48 **(*)**;

Samuel Clarke’s “A Modern Formulation of the Cosmological Argument,” pp. 49 – 50 **(*)**; David Hume’s “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,” Part IX, pp. 99 – 101 **(*)**; William Rowe’s “The Cosmological Argument,” pp. 50 – 58 **(*)**

2. The Ontological Argument

Sept. 18 – Sept. 24: Read: Anselm’s “The Ontological Argument,” pp. 31 – 33 **(*)**; Gaunilo, “On Behalf of the Fool,” pp. 33 – 36 **(*)**

Sept. 25 – Oct. 1: Read: Alvin Plantinga, “A Modal Version of the Ontological Argument” **(CP) (*)**

3. What's Required for Intellectually Justified Belief in God?

Oct. 2 – Oct. 8: Read: W.K. Clifford's "The Ethics of Belief," pp. 151 - 154 (*); William James's "The Will to Believe," pp. 155 – 164 (*)

Oct. 9 – Oct. 15: Read: Alvin Plantinga, "Religious Belief Without Evidence" (CP) (*)

4. The Problem of Evil

Oct. 16 – Oct. 22: Read: J.L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence," pp. 118 – 126(*)

Oct. 23 – Oct. 29: Read: Alvin Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense," (CP) (*)

Oct. 30 – Nov. 5: Read: William Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism" (CP) (*); Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Rebellion," pp. 112 – 118

UNIT 3: Do we ever deserve *moral* praise or criticism for our actions?

1. The Problem of Moral Responsibility

Nov. 6 – Nov. 12: Read: Fischer/Bratman/Perry, "Intro to Free Will/Moral Responsibility" (CP); Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self," pp. 459 – 467 (*)

2. Does Responsibility Require Freedom?

Nov. 13 – Nov. 19: Read: A.J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity", (CP) (*); Harry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility", (CP) (*)

3. Do We Ever Act Freely?

Nov. 20 – Nov. 26: Read: Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck," pp. 534 – 541 (*)

Nov. 27 – Dec. 1: Read: Galen Strawson's "Luck Swallows Everything," pp. 521 – 527 (*)

VI. Appendix: Sample 'Acceptable' RNs:

1. 'Question' RN:

One of Turner's main aims in this syllabus is to give us a clear sense of the questions and issues we'll explore in this course. Unfortunately, he sometimes slips into using unfamiliar terminology. One important place this happens is when Turner tries to describe the questions about God's existence that we'll be exploring. Here, he uses the expression 'intellectually justified': "is anyone ever *intellectually justified* in believing that God exists?" 'Intellectually

justified' is not an "everyday" or "ordinary" expression: the typical person on the street probably won't know exactly what that means. Rather, this unfamiliar term seems to be one that's defined and used primarily within the field of Philosophy. So, my question: What does it mean for a belief in God to be intellectually justified?

2. 'Objection' RN:

According to Turner, the "main intellectual tool" we use to explore philosophical questions is what he calls the "power of *reason* or *rational insight*". Turner distinguishes what he calls 'reason' or 'rational insight' from the "five senses" (vision, touch, taste, smell, hearing). Apparently, then, Turner thinks that we can gain knowledge and/or intellectually justified beliefs using something *other than* the five senses. I don't buy this vaguely "spooky" idea. Instead, it seems to me that whatever knowledge we have comes *only* from the five senses. So, it looks like *either* Turner is wrong about the proper way to explore philosophical questions *or* Philosophy turns out to be a pretty dubious discipline. Either way, Turner seems to be wrong about Philosophy.

Academic Honesty

Faculty expect all students to refrain from acts of academic misconduct including but not limited to:

1. Plagiarism - refers to using another person's ideas or writing without giving proper credit to the original source. Indulging in this type of conduct will subject the student to disciplinary sanctions, which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures of Walters State Community College as outlined in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism will result in a grade of "0" for the paper/exam/presentation. Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions contained in the college Catalog/Student Handbook apply (see policy 04:18:02 Disciplinary Sanctions). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Using cut/paste tool from original document with no references given.
 - b. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own.
 - c. Forging or otherwise altering signatures.
 - d. Giving or falsifying academic documents or materials.
2. Cheating - construed as attempting to deceive or mislead which includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Utilizing old tests, projects, notes or written papers.
 - b. Providing unauthorized information to a fellow student about exam content.
 - c. Receiving unauthorized aid from any source with quizzes, examinations, or other assignments.

- d. Seeking information in an unacceptable manner during/preceding an exam or other assigned work (cheat sheet, verbal exchange, looking at another person's paper or electronic device, utilizing headphones, using textbook when the test/quiz is not an open book test/quiz, using textbook test bank etc.).
 - e. Consulting with a classmate or others when taking a computerized test.
 - f. Disregarding other specific policies and procedures outlined for a particular class.
 - g. Utilizing unapproved technology/electronic equipment during testing (i.e.: mobile devices such as cell phones, smart devices, or tablets, etc.).
 - h. Using the same Internet Protocol network address (IP address) as another student for testing without approval from the course faculty.
3. The use of any generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, or any other pre-trained language model (commonly referred to as "chatbot"), must be cited for any assignment where it has been used and may not be used unless specifically allowed by your instructor. Please see your instructor or the course policies within the syllabus if you have questions.

Student Resources

TUTORING SERVICES

Students in need of tutoring assistance are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Tutoring located as follows:

- Morristown Campus - Student Services Building Room L107 - (423) 585-6920
- Niswonger Campus - GRNV 226 - (423) 798-7982
- Sevierville Campus - MMH Room 210 - (865) 286-2787
- Claiborne Campus - Room 123A - (423) 851-4761

Specific tutoring assistance in mathematics and writing is available in-person and online as follows:

- Morristown Campus - English Learning Lab - HUM 120 - (423) 585-6970

[Walters State English Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.walters.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab](https://www.walters.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)

- Morristown Campus - Mathematics Lab - MBSS 222 - (423) 585-6872

[Walters State Mathematics Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.walters.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab](https://www.walters.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Students who need assistance with computing and technology issues should contact the IET Helpdesk by phone at Morristown: (423) 318-2742; Niswonger: (423) 798-8186; or Sevierville: (865) 286-2789 or on-line access.

[Walters State Helpdesk \(opens in new window\)](https://helpdesk.ws.edu)
helpdesk.ws.edu

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with disabilities must register with Student Support Services each semester in the Student Services Building, Room U134 (phone (423) 585-6892) if they need any special facilities, services, or consideration.

[Walters State Student Support Services \(opens in new window\)](https://ws.edu/student-services/disability/)
ws.edu/student-services/disability/

SUICIDE PREVENTION STATEMENT

Walters State is committed to and cares about all students. Support services are available for any person at Walters State who is experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed, hopelessness, depression, thinking about dying by suicide, or is otherwise in need of assistance. For immediate help, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling or texting 9-8-8 or the Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386. Veterans may also contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or Text 838255.

Walters State has a relationship in place with the following community agencies to provide services (may include crisis referral services, prevention screenings, etc.):

- Cherokee Health Systems 423-586-5032
- Frontier Health 423-467-3600

College Policies

STUDENTS HANDBOOK AS OFFICIAL GOVERNING DOCUMENT

This class is governed by the policies and procedures stated in the current Walters State Community College Student Handbook. All students attending Walters State Community College, regardless of the time, location, or format of the class, must abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the current Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook and the current Walters State Timetable of Classes.

[Walters State Catalog.\(opens in new window\)](#)
catalog.ws.edu/

[Walters State Timetable of Classes \(opens in new window\)](#)
ws.edu/admissions/registration/

PURPOSE, LIMITATIONS AND MODIFICATION OF SYLLABUS

This syllabus sets forth the expectations for the course content, work, and grading as well as expectations for student performance and conduct. The syllabus does not constitute a contract between the student and the instructor or the College. The information contained here is subject to change at any time. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any time with written notification to the students. Though changes are possible, it is expected that the course will be conducted as described in this syllabus for the semester/year specified in the Course Information section of the syllabus. This syllabus is only valid for the semester/year specified and course requirements are not guaranteed for future semesters.

COURSE GROUND RULES

- Students must attend the first day of on-ground class or contact the instructor prior to the first class. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class. Excessive absences may substantially lower the course grade.
- Regular class attendance is a student's obligation for any course regardless of format. (See the Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook). If a student misses class, it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed assignments and/or activities and to be prepared for the next class assignment.
- Students enrolled in web courses must follow the course attendance policy defined for online attendance during the first week of class and throughout the term. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class during week one OR may result in the accrual of absences which may negatively impact the student's grade in the course.
- Students who have not paid fees on time and/or are not correctly registered for this class and whose names do not appear on official class rolls generated by the Walters State student information system (MyWS) will not be allowed to remain in class or receive credit for this course.
- Electronic devices must not disrupt the instructional process or college-sponsored academic activity. Use of electronic devices is prohibited unless use of the device is relevant to the activity and use is sanctioned by the faculty member in charge. Electronic devices that are not relevant to the activity or sanctioned by the faculty member in charge should be set so that they will not produce an audible sound during classroom instruction or other college-sponsored academic activity.

FINANCIAL AID

Students receiving any type of financial aid or scholarship should contact the Financial Aid Office before making any changes to their schedule. Schedule changes without prior approval may result in loss of award for the current term and future terms.

All forms of student Financial Aid may be jeopardized or lost due to the lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress in one or multiple courses. Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress may negatively impact a student's degree/certificate completion pace and further jeopardize Financial Aid eligibility.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES AND ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

For information related to the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather or other events, please check the Senators Emergency Text system or the college's Web site at:

[Walters State Homepage \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/home/)
[ws.edu/home/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/home/)

[Walters State Facebook page \(opens in new window\)](https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/)
<https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/>

[Walters State Twitter page \(opens in new window\)](https://twitter.com/waltersstate)
<https://twitter.com/waltersstate>

or call the college's student information line, 1-800-225-4770, option 1; the Sevier County Campus, (865) 774-5800, option 7; the Niswonger Campus (423) 798-7940, option 7; or the Claiborne County Campus, 423-636-6200, option 7. Also, please monitor local TV and radio stations for further announcements.

When an event or disaster interrupts the scheduled operations of the college and the ability to proceed with the academic course activities as planned, the college and your instructor may alter the course plan outlined in the syllabus. Should an event occur, students should refer to their course e-Learn pages and/or class materials previously delivered to receive guidance from their instructor. Students should continue to monitor the official college channels of communication listed in the above paragraph. If you would like to sign up for the Senators Emergency Text system, please go to the following Web site:

[Senator Emergency Text System \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/set/)
[ws.edu/set/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/set/)

Dual Enrollment students attending on a high school campus should refer to the high school inclement weather cancellations.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Brightspace (commonly known as eLearn or D2L) is the college's Learning Management System (LMS).

Brightspace is committed to accessibility by "deliver[ing] a learning experience that meets the needs of all people, regardless of age or ability." [Brightspace Accessibility Standard \(opens in new window\)](#)

Brightspace is also committed to guarding student data and privacy. [Brightspace Privacy Policy \(opens in new window\)](#).