POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY	**School of Theology and Christian Ministry: Department of Philosophy** **PHL 2001-4: Introduction to Philosophy** **3 credits**
Fall 2025	

Meeting days: MWF	**Instructor title and name: Dr. Rob Thompson**
Meeting times: 1:30pm-2:25am PST	**Phone: 849-2930**
Meeting location: Taylor 105	**Email: robertthompson@pointloma.edu**
Final Exam: 12/19: Friday 1:30pm-4:00pm PST	**Office location and hours: SMEE 207; MW, 12:15-1:15pm**
Required Text: *The Broadview Introduction to Philosophy, Andrew Bailey, ed.*	

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

General Education (GE) Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

PHL 2001 Introduction to Philosophy is a historical survey of selected philosophical ideas, systems, and methods, especially as these have developed in western civilization.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will recognize and appreciate their connection as human beings to the world of ideas and the rich history of that world as found in the western philosophical tradition.

2. Students will engage in the disciplined practice of asking questions about the world, God, humans, and of themselves, including questions for which there may be no easy answers, so as to perpetuate this practice in their lives and provide a means to assess the responses others give to these questions.

3. Students will recognize and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of human reason and experience to provide an adequate account of the human, the world, ethics, and God, and appreciate how these bear on matters of Christian faith and practice.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) Link to GE courses and corresponding GELO's: https://assessment.pointloma.edu/academic-assessment/general-education/assessment-plan/
2) Critical Thinking : Students will be able to examine, critique and synthesize information in order to arrive at reasoned conclusions.
3) Written assessment of an historical argument, including clear articulation of the argument along with a critical assessment of the argument. The assessment is housed in the final exam.

COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

COURSE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Attendance and Participation: Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions (virtual or face-to-face), the faculty member may issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. A small portion of the credit hour content will be delivered **asynchronously** and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.

Readings: Read all of the assigned material before coming to class.

20% **Discussion Board Attendance and Participation:** Prompts for Discussion Boards (DB) will be provided for most DBs. The purpose of our (almost) weekly DBs is to provide the space for broad student interaction concerning the reading and questions being addressed in class at that time. The student may provide an initial post in response to one or more of the prompts **or** may comment on something that struck them from the reading (as outlined below). Discussion Boards will occur most weeks, but the deadlines will sometimes change, so be sure to stay on top of when they do occur and the deadline for the week, so that you do not miss any posts/points.

For your **initial post**, respond to one or more of the prompts that are provided for the reading **or** provide a response drawn from your own experience, interests, or vocational passion that is related to the reading. In addition, a direct quotation from the week's reading (with appropriate citation–see DB guidelines below) is required to ensure that your post is clearly rooted in the reading. Appropriately cited summary references are also helpful but will not satisfy the direct quotation requirement. Your post must clearly arise out of the reading for it to count. In some cases, the reading for the week may strike you in a particularly engaging way that does not easily connect to any of the prompts, e.g., the reading may connect with your own experience, or may connect well with your vocation/major. In such cases, you are encouraged to go with what struck you, but be sure to clearly root your post in the text and to explain the connection, and, of course, include a direct quote, as each initial post is required to contain at least one direct quotation from the required reading with appropriate citations in order to receive credit (no exceptions). The initial post is generally due by 11:59pm PST each Monday and all additional responses are due by 3:30pm PST on the relevant Tuesday (unless otherwise stipulated in the assignment).

- **Initial Posts** must include an appropriately cited direct quote from the week's required reading(s) and either respond to one or more of the prompts for that DB or address the student's own take on the reading (due by 11:59pm PST).

- Additional **Responses** (*at least one for every DB is required*) should be made to classmates (due by 3:30pm PST). In your responses, be sure to further the conversation in a substantial way (see DB guidelines in Canvas).
- You are encouraged to "like" posts and responses. "Likes" will not count in your grade, but will help to facilitate a more active and engaged discussion community.

How graded: Initial and response posts must be substantive and timely, and will either receive all credit or no credit. There is no length requirement for any given entry, whether your initial post or a response to a peer, but there is a 500 word minimum requirement for each total DB. In other words, the sum of all your posts must be equal to or greater than 500 words. If that minimum word requirement is not met, you will not receive credit for that DB. You will achieve full credit for any given DB only if it

- meets the total length requirement listed above (minimum of 500 words total for all posts collectively),
- includes one **initial post** and at least one **response** to a peer,
- is on time (all initial posts are due by 11:59pm PST and all responses are due by 3:30pm PST on the relevant days for each DB),
- is clearly related to the relevant readings for that DB,
- is a diligent attempt to provide substantive initial or subsequent comment, and
- contains an appropriately cited direct quote from at least one of the primary reading texts in the **initial post**

50**%** **Content Exams:** There will be two content exams: a mid-term and a final. The exams will test over the texts, the lectures, and class discussions (including discussion boards), and will tend toward objective style questions, though there may also be some short answer questions. They will be in-class exams. The nature of the course material is both cumulative and comprehensive, so the exams will tend that way as well. Each exam is 25% of the final grade. **(Note: the final exam must be taken as scheduled. Any (very rare) exception must be cleared by the end of the first week of classes.)**

30**%** **Essay Exam:** There will be one essay exam. The essay exam corresponds to the two content exams in that they cover the same material; however, you will have one week to prepare your responses to the prompts for the essay exam before taking the in-class exam. There will be multiple prompts covering the entire semester and each student will choose two on which to write. The idea behind the essay exam is to allow you sufficient time to critically and creatively engage the questions raised by the subject matter covered this semester before writing your in-class essays in response to the prompts you've chosen. It also affords you an opportunity to refine your general writing skills and to hone the skill of philosophical writing. Given the added

time with the prompts, essays are expected to be well thought through, polished, and of high quality, even though they are hand written in class. The essay response to each of the two prompts should stand on its own. As such, you will write two discrete essays for the essay exam, and each should be of sufficient length to adequately address the related prompt. Students will be allowed to bring one 3x5 card of hand written notes to be used for the exam. This will help you to include quotes from the readings in your essay responses.

Late work, Extra Credit, and Incompletes: No unsanctioned late work will be accepted. Extra credit is very rare and is only offered to the entire class. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

Grades will be based on the following Scale:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism and the use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any exam or other academic exercise. It also includes assisting others in any attempt to cheat. It will not be tolerated. However, respect for academic honesty is consistent with discussing the ideas of the course with others. In fact, I encourage you to discuss any and all of the course material that you find interesting outside of class. In the end, however, you must do your written work on your own. If you have any questions about academic honesty, either in general or in particular, please ask me.

A special note on plagiarism is warranted. Each of you is responsible to know what plagiarism is and to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism in your work. (A decent working definition is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when they are

the result of another person's creativity and effort.) No act of plagiarism, whether born of one's intention or ignorance, will be tolerated in this class. Anyone caught plagiarizing will incur severe academic consequences. Such consequences will include a grade of zero for the plagiarized work and may also include expulsion with a failing grade from the course. The student's name and an explanation of the incident will also be forwarded to the Department Chair/School Dean and the area Dean. The area Dean will review the report and submit it to the Provost and the Vice President for Student Development. It will also be placed in the student's permanent academic file. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

FINAL EXAM POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

PLNU ATTENDENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-
enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT POLICY

Discrimination or harassment related to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity or orientation, differences in ability, religious choice, or any other type of behavior that dehumanizes human beings or dismisses difference, is not conducive to a good learning environment and is harmful to human vitality and healthy community. These behaviors will not be tolerated. I encourage all students to be open to any honest, respectful, and tactful discussion of issues that might arise in the context of our learning.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE POLICY

The use of inclusive language is now prevalent, even expected, throughout most sectors of our society (e.g., academia, government, business, religious organizations). Further, inclusive language is very often a more accurate and fair representation of the intended meaning of a person's communicative content. As such, everyone is expected to make use of inclusive language in all written work. The avoidance of such use in a given project will result in a lowering of the grade for that project. In addition, everyone is expected to make use of inclusive language during classroom discussions.

LANGUAGE AND BELONGING

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by

all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality. If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

SPIRITUAL CARE

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the Office of Spiritual Development

STATE AUTHORIZATION

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the *Technology and System Requirements* information.

Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

PLNU RECORDING NOTIFICATION

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

LOMA WRITING CENTER

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see Loma Writing Center webpage or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: https://plnu.mywconline.com/

- Website: https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

COURSE READING SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction to Philosophy and What it is (Weeks 1-3)
Week 1: Introductions
09/01: No Class (Labor Day)
09/03: Read through syllabus and investigate Canvas
09/05: Introduction, pp XIII-XXIII; first discussion board (DB); due by 3:30pm PST
Week 2: The Socratic Method
09/08: DB (virtual class discussion)
09/10: Plato, The Apology: Defence of Socrates
09/12: Plato, The Apology: Defence of Socrates (continued)
Week 3: Liberation, the Self, and Social Justice
09/15: DB
09/17: Russell, The Value of Philosophy
09/19: Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Module 2: What is Knowledge and How do we Know? (Weeks 4-5)
Week 4: The Mind and Ways of Knowing
09/22: DB
09/24: The Ways of Knowing: Mskokii Peltier, "The Child is Capable: Anishinaabe Pedagogy of Land and Community"
09/26: Descartes, Med on 1st Philosophy (1st and 2nd Meditation), pp. 143-150
Week 5: The Senses and Implicit Bias
09/29: DB
10/01: Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 177-184
10/03: Saul, Skepticism and Implicit Bias, pp. 245-253

Module 3: What are Human Beings? (Weeks 6-8)
Week 6: Soul and Body
10/06: DB
10/08: Descartes, Med on 1st Philosophy (6th Meditation), pp. 164-171
10/10: Ryle, Descartes's Myth, pp. 347-354
Week 7: Bodies and the Self
10/13: DB

10/15: Nagle, What Is It Like to Be a Bat?, pp. 374-381
10/17: Dennett, Where Am I?, pp. 505-513
Week 8: Mid-term Exam
10/20: catch-up and Mid-term Exam Prep
10/22: ****Mid-Term Exam** (In Class)**
10/24: No Class (Fall Break)

Module 4: Who is God if there is One? (Weeks 9-13)

Week 9: Wiley Lectures: *"Grace, Genuineness, and Glory: Spirituality for Living into the New Things of God"*
10/27: DB
10/29: Nagel, The Absurd, pp. 1009-1015
10/31: Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, pp. 1005-1007
Week 10: The Meaning(s) of Life
11/03: DB
11/05: Anselm, Ontological Argument, pp. 6-11
11/07: Anselm (cont.), pp. 11-17
Week 11: Can we think about God and does the World Speak?
11/10: DB
11/12: Aquinas, Existence of God, pp. 23-27
11/14: Paley, Natural Theology, pp. 52-58
Week 12: The World, God, and Belief
11/17: DB
11/19: Pascal, Wager, pp. 95-97
11/21: Mackie, Evil and Omnipotence, pp. 73-80
Week 13: Problem of Evil and Human Flourishing (Essay Exam Prompts)
11/24: Essay Exam Prompts
11/26: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)
11/28: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Module 5: Ethics, Justice, and Compassion (Weeks 14-15)

Week 14: Moral Duty (and Essay Exam)
12/01: Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, pp. 575-587
12/03: Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals, pp. 597-609 (and to top of next page)
12/05: ****Essay Exam** (in class)**
Week 15: Consequences, Justice, and Anti-Racism
12/08: Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 622-636
12/10: Okin, Justice and Gender, pp. 880-888

12/12: catch-up and Final Exam prep

12/19: **Final Exam (Friday, 1:30pm-4:00pm PST)**