

	School of Theology and Christian Ministry: Department of Philosophy
	PHL 2001-3: Introduction to Philosophy 3 credits
Spring 2024	

Meeting days: MWF	Instructor title and name: Dr. Rob Thompson
Meeting times: 11:00am-11:55am PST	Phone: 849-2930
Meeting location: Taylor T 105	Email: robertthompson@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: 5/03: Friday, 10:30am-1:00pm PST	Office location and hours: SMEE 207; M, 3:15-4:00pm; TR, 10:45-11:45am
Required Text: <i>Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, John Perry, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer, eds. (9th ed.)</i>	

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.

Foundational Explorations (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.

FOUNDATIONAL EXPLORATIONS LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Link to FE (formerly GE) courses and corresponding FELO's:
<https://assessment.pointloma.edu/academic-assessment/general-education/assessment-plan/>
- 2) FELO (GELO) 1D: 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 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 drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. A 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 and all responses are due by 3:30pm PST on the relevant Tuesday (unless otherwise stipulated in the assignment).

- **Additional Responses** (*at least one for every DB is required*) should be made to classmates (also 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 posts are due by 3:30pm PST on the due date 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 two weeks 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 in reality they are the results 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. Please see the University policy stated in the catalogue ([Academic Policies](#)). Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) is not permitted, and use of these tools will be treated as plagiarism.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class 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.

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

While all students are expected to meet the minimum standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic adjustments, modifications or auxiliary aids/services. At Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU), these students are requested to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center (DRC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). The DRC's policies and procedures for assisting such students in the development of an appropriate academic adjustment plan (AP) allows PLNU to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 504 prohibits discrimination against students with special needs and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities. After the student files the required documentation, the DRC, in conjunction with the student, will develop an AP to meet that student's specific learning needs. The DRC will thereafter email the

student's AP to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester. The AP must be implemented in all such courses.

If students do not wish to avail themselves of some or all of the elements of their AP in a particular course, it is the responsibility of those students to notify their professor in that course. PLNU highly recommends that DRC students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester about the applicability of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not desire to take advantage of some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

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. You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

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. If a student is in need of technological resources please contact student-tech-request@pointloma.edu.

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

COURSE READING SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction to Philosophy and What it is (Weeks 1-3)

Week 1: Introductions

01/08: Read through syllabus and investigate Canvas

01/10: No Class; Finalize schedule and work on first discussion board (DB); DB due by 3:30pm PST

01/12: "Logical Toolkit" and "Writing Philosophy Papers"

Week 2: The Socratic Method

01/15: No Class (MLK, Jr. Day)

01/17: Plato, The Apology: Defence of Socrates

01/19: Plato continued

Week 3: Liberation, the Self, and Social Justice

01/22: DB (virtual class discussion)

01/24: Russell, The Value of Philosophy

01/26: 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

01/29: DB

01/31: The Ways of Knowing: Mskokii Peltier, ["The Child is Capable: Anishinaabe Pedagogy of Land and Community"](#)

02/02: Descartes, Med on 1st Philosophy (1-3)

Week 5: The Senses

02/05: DB

02/07: Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

02/09: Descartes and Hume continued

Module 3: What are Human Beings? (Weeks 6-9)

Week 6: Wiley Lectures

02/12: Attend Wiley Lecture

02/14: Attend Wiley Lecture

02/16: DB

Week 7: Soul and Body

02/19: DB

02/21: Ryle, Descartes's Myth (hyperlink in Canvas)

02/23: Churchland, Eliminative Materialism

Week 8: Bodies and the Self

02/26: DB

02/28: Jackson, What Mary Didn't Know

03/01: Perry, A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality

Spring Break 03/04–03/08

Week 9: Mid-term Exam

03/11: catch-up; exam prep

03/13: catch-up; exam prep

03/15: ****Mid-Term Exam** (In Class)**

Module 4: Who is God if there is One? (Weeks 10-13)

Week 10: Human Agency and the Meaning of Life

03/18: DB

03/20: Nagel, The Absurd; Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus

03/22: Wolf, The Meanings of Lives

Week 11: Can we think about God and does the World Speak?

03/25: DB

03/27: Anselm, Ontological Argument

03/29: Aquinas, Existence of God

Week 12: The World, God, and Belief

04/01: DB

04/03: Paley, Natural Theology

04/05: Pascal, Wager (hyperlink in Canvas)

Week 13: Problem of Evil (Essay Exam Prompts)

04/08: DB; Essay Exam Prompts

04/10: Problem of Evil

04/12: Continued and catch-up

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

Week 14: Human Flourishing and Duty

04/15: ****Essay Exam** (in class)**

04/17: Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics

04/19: Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals

Week 15: Consequences, Justice, and Anti-Racism

04/22: DB

04/24: Mill, Utilitarianism

04/26: Baier, The Need for More Than Justice; Alcott, Racism and Visible Race

05/03: **Final Exam (Friday, 10:30am-1:00pm PST)**