

Introduction to Philosophy (PH 3901)  
Fall Semester/2014-15  
Course Syllabus

Dr. John Mahony  
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**Course Description:**

Introduction to Philosophy is a study of the main contributors of the Western philosophical tradition. The major areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, and ethics will be covered. Consequently, we shall focus on questions (for instance: Is knowledge possible? Does it come from reason or from experience? What is the ultimate substance of the world? Is it material or ideal? Are human actions free or determined? Does God exist? Why is there evil? Are moral norms relative or absolute?) as well as some specific concepts philosophers use to articulate their experience and the world we live in (being, substance, justice, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, contingent, necessary, empirical, etc.). In addition, the course will provide a preliminary orientation about the notion of philosophical argument, its various forms, and the ways arguments are analyzed.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Textbook. The textbook for the course is *The Love of Wisdom: A Christian Introduction to Philosophy*, by Steven Cowan & James Spiegel. Each student is expected to read the entire text. The schedule of daily reading assignments is listed on the attached Course Schedule.

2. Collateral Reading. The syllabus provides a general bibliography for the study of philosophy. Each student will read 200 pages from sources other than the textbook. A report of your reading will be submitted at the end of the semester (either last day of class for graduates or at the time of the final exam). Please give the author, title, publication information, and the pages read in your report.

3. Exams. A total of four tests will be given during the semester (three intra-semester exams and a final exam). These are listed on the course schedule. Grading for the course is:

Intra-Semester Exams:	60%
Final Exam:	20%
Reading	20%
Class Participation:	10%

The grading scale for all courses is found on pages 72-73 of the seminary catalog.

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4. Class Participation. The student is responsible for any material covered in class. It is imperative therefore that each student pays attention in class and seeks to make some contribution. Reading or working on assignments for other classes is not allowed. Each student is expected to take notes and pay attention during class. Use of computers is permitted. If the student, however, uses class time to check e-mail, send/receive messages, play games, etc, he/she will be dismissed from class and will be charged with an unexcused absence.

**Course Goals:**

- (1) To become familiar with major philosophical problems and the methods of dealing them,
- (2) To learn how to read and interpret philosophical texts (rightly considered as belonging to the category of the most complex intellectual products),
- (3) To acquire an initial command of philosophical language,
- (4) To demonstrate the supremacy of the Christian worldview in the face of the challenges of unbelief.

**Course Schedule**

- Session 1 (8/21): Introduction-Definition of the Discipline (Introduction)
- Session 2 (8/26): Introduction-Approaches, Characteristics, & Value
- Session 3 (8/27): Essential Features of all Worldviews
- Session 4 (8/28): Logic & Truth (1)
- Session 5 (9/2): Logic & Truth
- Session 6 (9/3): Logic & Truth
- Session 7 (9/4): Logic & Truth
- Session 8 (9/9): Logic & Truth
- Session 9 (9/10): Exam 1
- Session 10 (9/11): Epistemology (2)
- Session 11 (9/16): Epistemology
- Session 12 (9/17): Epistemology
- Session 13 (9/18): Epistemology- Epistemic Justification
- Session 14 (9/25): Epistemology- Epistemic Justification
- Session 15 (9/30): Philosophy of Science (3)
- Session 16 (10/1): Philosophy of Science: Scientific Realism
- Session 17 (10/2): Philosophy of Science: Scientific Nonrealism
- Session 18 (10/7): Philosophy of Science: Laws of Nature
- Session 19 (10/8): Exam 2
- Session 20 (10/9): Metaphysics (4)

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Session 21 (10/14): Metaphysics: Obstacles  
Session 22 (10/15): Metaphysics: Nature of the World  
Session 23 (10/16): Metaphysics: Universals  
Session 24 (10/21): Metaphysics: Particulars  
Session 25 (10/22): Human Nature: Constitutional Nature (5)  
Session 26 (10/23): Human Nature: Personal Identity  
Session 27 (10/28): Human Nature: Human Freedom  
Session 28 (10/29): Human Nature: Human Freedom  
Session 29 (10/30): Human Nature: Life after Death  
Session 30 (11/4): Exam 3  
Session 31 (11/5): Philosophy of Religion (6): Existence of God  
Session 32 (11/6): Philosophy of Religion: Existence of God  
Session 33 (11/11): Philosophy of Religion: Nature of God  
Session 34 (11/12): Philosophy of Religion: Problem of Evil  
Session 35 (11/13): Philosophy of Religion: Problem of Evil  
Session 36 (11/18): Philosophy of Religion: Nature of Religious Experience  
Session 37 (11/19): Ethics: Theory & Practice (7)  
Session 38 (11/20): Ethics: Ethical Relativism  
Session 39 (12/2): Ethics: Ethical Theories  
Session 40 (12/3): Political Philosophy: Issue of Law & Justice (8)  
Session 41 (12/4): Political Philosophy: Distributive Justice  
Session 42 (12/9): Political Philosophy: Biblical Reflections about the State  
Session 43 (12/10): Aesthetics: Approach  
Session 44 (12/11): Aesthetics: Value  
Final Exam (12/16-17)

**Certification:**

I have read the syllabus for Introduction to Philosophy (PH 3901) and understand each of the requirements for the course.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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