

0101P115

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: TBA

Time: December 15, 2025 - January 16, 2026

Contact Hours: 60 (50 minutes each)

Office Hours: By Appointment

Credits: 4

E-mail: TBA

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the core questions of philosophy examined within the context of their historical development. Within the course readings, we will analytically study present and historical alternative perspectives on a wide range of issues concerning metaphysics (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and ethics (the nature of value). Students will be presented with alternative views on philosophical issues and encouraged to reflect on the content to arrive at their own conclusions, which should be based on arguments in during the discussions with classmates, as well as on the discussions in our readings. The purpose of philosophy is to encourage every person to think for themselves.

Required Textbook(s)

Reading materials will be provided by the course instructor in class.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Course Schedule

Please note that the schedule is meant to give an overview of the major concepts this course. Changes may occur in this calendar as needed to aid in the student's development.

Week 1 / Unit 1 – Introduction to Philosophical Concepts / Ancient Philosophy

Our lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments will introduce us to the historical backdrop of the origins of philosophy in Ancient Greece and focus upon the systematic thought of Socrates and Plato.

We will cover the following readings and theorist:

- Socrates and Plato: Section 1.2 Pages 4-8 & Chapter 2 Pages 43-83
- Plato “The Republic” (BKs I-II, VII-IX)
- Plato “The Apology”

Discussion 1 to be held no later than Sunday at 11:59am

Weekly reflection 1 due Sunday 11:59am

Week 2 / Unit 2 – Ancient to Medieval Philosophy

Our lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions in this section will focus on Ancient Greek Philosophy and the transition to the Medieval era of philosophy. We will focus on Plato's most famous student (and greatest critic) Aristotle, and the transition to the medieval era where theists like Augustine encounter philosophy and adapt it to religious uses.

We will cover the following readings and theorist:

- Aristotle: Chapter 5.3, Pages 243-248, Chapter 9.1, Pages 451-461, Chapter 10.2, Pages 533-542
- Augustine: Chapter 3.3, Pages 98-102, Chapter 9.7, Pages 518-523

- Aristotle “Nicomachean Ethics”
- Aristotle “Physics”
- Augustine “Confessions”

Discussion 2 to be held no later than Sunday at 11:59am

Weekly reflection 2 due Sunday 11:59am

Week 3 / Unit 3 – Medieval to Modern Philosophy

Our lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions in this section will focus on latter Medieval philosophy marked by the rediscovery of Aristotle and the transition to Modern philosophy brought about by the Copernican Revolution in science.

We will cover the following readings and theorist:

- Aquinas, Chapter 3.3, Pages 100-102, Chapter 7.4 Pages 359-369, Chapter 8.5, 436-442
- Rene Descartes, Chapter 3.4, Pages 102-108, Chapter 5.4, Pages 249-261
- Maimonides
- Maimonides “The Thirteen Principles of Judaism”
- Maimonides “Guide of The Perplexed” (selections)
- Avicenna (Ibn Sina)
- Aquinas “Summa Theologicae”
- Rene’ Descartes “Meditations I-II” (1641)

Discussion 3 to be held no later than Sunday at 11:59am

Weekly reflection 3 due Sunday 11:59am

Week 4 / Unit 4 – Modern Philosophy

Our lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions in this section will focus on Modern era of philosophy starting with Descartes and ending with the thought of Immanuel Kant. We will examine the differing approaches of the rationalists and empiricists, and the rival systems of ethics that arise during this period.

We will cover the following readings and theorist:

- Rene Descartes, Chapter 6.1, Pages 272-276.
- Leibniz (and intro to Locke) Chapter 6.2, Pages 276-288
- John Locke, Chapter 3.5, Pages 109-113
- George Berkely, Chapter 6.3, 289-294.
- David Hume, Chapter 6.4, Pages 294-302.
- Immanuel Kant: Chapter 3.7, Pages 117-122, Chapter 6.5, 303-321, Chapter 9.2 Pages 461-473.
- John Stuart Mill, Chapter 9.3, Pages 473-487.
- **Rene' Descartes** "Meditations III-VI" (1641)
- **John Locke** "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1689)
- **George Berkeley** "Principles of Human Knowledge"
- **David Hume** "Enquiry into Human Understanding",
- **Immanuel Kant** "Critique of Pure Reason"
- **Immanuel Kant** "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals"
- **John Stuart Mill** "Utilitarianism"

Discussion 4 to be held no later than Sunday at 11:59am

Weekly reflection 4 due Sunday at 11:59am

Week 5 / Unit 5 – Post-Kantian & Contemporary Philosophy

- **Note: Content for this week will be open early on the Friday of Week 4, so that students won't have a jump start for final exam**

Our lectures, readings, assignments, and discussions in this section will focus on philosophy in the aftermath of Kant. We will cover some of the many various directions philosophy has gone and some specific contemporary issues.

We will cover the following readings and theorist:

- Nietzsche, Sartre, And Existentialism: Chapter 9.4, Pages 488-509.
- Sartre and James: Chapter 4.4, Pages 182-201. Chapter 8.3 Pages 419-429.
- Sigmund Freud as Philosophy: Chapter 3.8, Pages 122-127

- Naturalism: Chapter 3.10, Pages 133-142
- Free Will and Determinism: Chapter 4.2, Pages 162-170
- Edmund Gettier
- Nietzsche “Genealogy of Morals”
- Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”
- Sartre “Existentialism is a Humanism”
- William James “The Will to Believe”
- Sigmund Freud, “Introduction to Psychoanalysis”

Discussion 5 to be held no later than Wednesday (week 5) at 11:59am – This final discussion will also be an opportunity to review for final or ask any questions.

Final Exam should be complete no later than Thursday at 11:59am so that professor can have sufficient time to grade and submit final grades.

Grading Policy

Evaluation	Percentage
4 weekly written reflections (15 points each) – due weekly	4 x 15 points each (60 points)
5 Weekly discussion – participation	4 points each x 5 (20 points) – must show up and talk in discussion for points
1 Final Exam	20 points x 1 (20 points)
Total = 100 % /100points	

Weekly reflections require you to draw upon the readings and videos for each particular week. Each assignment must make at least five direct references to our videos, and be your own completely original work without the aid of AI.

Grading Scale

The instructor will use the grading system as applied by JNU:

Definition	Letter Grade	Score
Excellent	A	90~100
Good	B	80~89
Satisfactory	C	70~79
Poor	D	60~69
Failed	E	Below 60

It is important to complete all course readings, to review all power points, and to participate in class discussions. Your unit assessments, written assignments, and final exam will cover all unit materials.

Academic Integrity

As members of the Jinan University academic community, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic coursework and activities. Academic dishonesty, includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another; submitting the same paper, or a substantially similar paper, to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned; or sabotaging other students' work within these general definitions. Instructors, however, determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct in any portion of the academic work face penalties that range from the lowering of their course grade to awarding a grade of E for the entire course.