

GRAYSON COLLEGE
Philosophy 1301 Course Syllabus for Spring 2017

Course information

Philosophy 1301.A01

Professor contact information

Dr. Jean Sorensen
903.463.8660

sorensenj@grayson.edu

LA105D

MW 9-11:30 and 2:15-3 pm, online TR 9:30-11 a.m., and TR 2-3 (and also by appointment).

Prefer "Inbox Messages" through Canvas

Course pre-requisites, co-requisites, and/or other restrictions

Preparation: Reading-Writing intensive, so college ready

Course description – from college catalog

PHIL 1301 Introduction to Philosophy. (3-0-3). A study of major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications.

Student learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts.
 2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
 3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing.
 4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life.
 5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world.
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Required textbooks (ISBN # included) and materials

Pojman, P. Louis and Lewis Vaugh. *Classics of Philosophy*, 3rd ed. Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-973729-1

Vaughn, Lewis. *Writing Philosophy: A Students Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*. Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN 978-0-19-517956-9

Additional course requirements

You will need to have access to a word processor to write your papers and may want a camera or microphone to use Canvas's Media Comment Tool if you are absent the day of your oral preparation.

Required assignments & Academic calendar

Due dates for assignments are scheduled using the Calendar function in Canvas. If assignment due dates change as we move through the semester, Canvas will notify you. In case of inclement weather, emergency closings, or other unforeseen disruptions to scheduled classes, students should log in to their Canvas accounts for directions on how to continue their class work.

Methods of instruction & support services

Classes are taught through lecture and class interactions requiring preparation and participation from students in the form of both written and oral communication.

Students requiring technical help should use GC's help desk to resolve problems (help.grayson.edu). Students seeking writing help should use GC's writing center (1st floor of the library, writingcenter@grayson.edu) as an additional resource.

Overview of assignments, instruction, and evaluation

Below is an overview of the semester. An additional file will outline the full details of the schedule.

The complete schedule is a separate document and is subject to change with announcements being made in class. The four units are associated with the four units chronologically organized in our anthology.

Unit 1: The Ancient Period

Unit 2: The Medieval Period

Unit 3: The Modern Period

Unit 4: The Contemporary Period

Material from the slim book on writing about philosophy will not only help teach about writing, but also prove useful for reading arguments.

Students will come to class prepared with notes from the reading to gain attendance/participation points.

Then the class will work to write a rhetorical precis in the following format:

(1) A single sentence names the author of the work, title of the work, date in parenthesis, and uses a present tense verb (ex. assert, argue, deny, observes, posits, proves, disprove, insist, etc.) that (fill in the major claim or thesis of the work). (2) Another sentence or two explains how the author develops and supports the claim. (3) A sentence follows that reasons about the author's purpose using the phrase "in order to." (4) The last sentence gives a description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Using the précis, students will evaluate and apply the philosophical concepts to life.

Moving from the Ancient to Middle periods, from the Ancient and Middle to the Modern period, and from the Ancient, Middle, and Modern to the Contemporary period, students will note similarities and differences between philosophers and their arguments. This comparison helps with the critical thinking needed for the final exam.

Two oral presentations will indicate the direction of the two papers before they are written in terms of an AAP (About, Audience, and Purpose) statement.

Two papers will be written, first about the initial presentation of justice and second about what philosophers write concerning knowledge, beliefs, and feelings.

The final exam will examine the issue of audience in terms of students living in our diverse world.

How to be Successful

1. Attend all classes (3 hours each week). Plan to spend 3-6 hours each week with preparing for class and completing assignments.

2. Ask for help when you need it.
3. Complete all assignments as scheduled.
4. Do the extra credit of sending formal papers to the writing center.

Grading

Categories	Each	Total Points
Writing Precís with Reflection	27 for 2 points each	54
Linking Periods	3 for 2 points each	6
Class attendance/participation	Recorded each class	10
Oral Presentations	2 at 2.5 points each	5
Papers (3-4 pages)	2 at 10 points each	20
Final Exam		5

* Extra credit will be available for these papers with GC writing center evidence-2 points each

Grade Scale: An A corresponds to the point range 90 - 100; a B, 80 - 89; a C, 70 - 79; a D, 60 - 69; an F, 0 - 59.

How will students be notified of grades? Grades are posted in Canvas

Final grades posted in student portals

Rubrics used: Rubrics prepared by professor and displayed with assignments in Canvas

A = performance of outstanding quality

B = superior, but less than exemplary performance

C = adequate performance meeting standards

D = performance that marginally meets minimum standards

F = performance falls below standards or lacks academic integrity

Criteria for Evaluating Assignments:

Appropriateness: The work responds to the assignment and addresses the main topic with a purpose clearly and precisely stated in formal papers with a **thesis statement**.

Clarity of exposition and argument: Clear explanations of positions and concepts as well as critical evaluation of arguments are given. All parts of an argument, both strengths and weaknesses are considered. When appropriate, positions are qualified and fully supported. All arguments are supported through evidence and careful reasoning. Arguments anticipate objections to the writer's point of view and provide a response to those objections. Glaring errors in logic are absent.

Fairness to positions: Alternative positions are fairly explained, and when appropriate, concessions and refutations are offered to opposing views.

Coherence of explanations and arguments: The work as a whole makes sense and is well organized so that reader or listeners are able to make connections between steps within an argument and connections between alternative positions. Support and evidence are provided for all claims.

Mechanics and Grammar: Conventions of Standard American English are properly used. Formal papers provide MLA documentation of sources and formatting.

All assessment attempts to reward students for what they have accomplished. If at any time during the semester, you think that your work has not been fully appreciated for its merits, please see your professor privately to review your contribution to the course in both its written and oral form.

Course and instructor policies—late work, participation, and attendance

Descriptions of

Late Work Policy: No late work is accepted.

Class Participation: Students are expected to have completed reading and writing assignments as scheduled.

Academic success is closely associated with regular classroom attendance and course participation. All successful students, whether on campus or online, are expected to be self-motivated. You are required to participate in courses regularly and are obliged to participate in class activities and complete and submit assignments following my instructions. Students taking courses during compressed semester time frames such as mini-mester, summer sessions, and mid-semester should plan to spend significantly more time per week on the course. Responsibility for work missed because of illness or school business is yours. **More than two absences are considered to be excessive.** In addition, your eligibility to receive financial aid or live in a college dormitory can be affected by withdrawal from courses. If you withdraw, any tuition refund would be made in accordance with state regulations.

Student Conduct & Discipline

Students should behave respectfully toward each other and their professor. If they feel offended or somehow disrespected, they should discuss the matter privately with their professor either (1) in person, (2) via the phone, or (3) through Canvas messages. They should question individual grades privately using the same formats noted above, but general grading and assignment concerns should be brought up with the entire class present to benefit from clarification or extended explanations.

Good participation requires paying attention to each other. Please do not use cell phones, tablets, or laptop computers for private purposes while we are meeting. Students who are distracted and possibly distracting others through virtual or side conversations may lose credit for the class. Any one of us might forget to silence a “ring tone,” or make a quick comment as an aside, but that kind of oversight or private word to a single person is different from tuning out. I will do my best to help students keep mindfully aware of the class and am educated to provide contemplative practices to assist in this area. Let me know if you need help at any time in keeping focused, rather than turning your attention away from the class.

On a personal note: I may come across as overly formal, “corny,” or “old-fashioned,” but I prefer to use salutations in Canvas messages such as “Dear” as a reminder to myself that I care about the person I am addressing. Students have enjoyed returning the formal greeting as a favor to me. I believe that it sets the tone in a positive way for the kind of discourse that promotes learning. Use formal writing in all of your communications, including Canvas messages. I am happy being addressed as Dr. S since *Sorensen* is a long name to type.

Academic integrity

The faculty expect students to demonstrate responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, a student must demonstrate individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting for credit any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, for example, from the Web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the college's policy on plagiarism (see *GC Student Handbook* for details). Grayson College subscribes to turnitin.com, which allows faculty to search the Web and identify plagiarized material. Plagiarized papers in this course will receive a "0." Furthermore, students may fail the entire course for plagiarizing.

TITLE IX

GC policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: sexual violence (sexual assault, rape), sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on Title IX, please contact:

- Dr. Regina Organ, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8714)
 - Dr. Dava Washburn, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8634)
 - Dr. Kim Williams, Title IX Deputy Coordinator- South Campus (903) 415-2506
 - Mr. Mike McBrayer, Title IX Deputy Coordinator (903) 463-8753
 - Website: <http://www.grayson.edu/campus-life/campus-police/title-ix-policies.html>
 - GC Police Department: (903) 463-8777- Main Campus) (903) 415-2501 - South Campus)
 - GC Counseling Center: (903) 463-8730
 - For Any On-campus Emergencies: 911
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Grayson College is not responsible for illness/injury that occurs during the normal course of classroom/lab/clinical experiences. These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at my discretion. Grayson College campus-wide student policies may be found on the college homepage under "Current Student."