



**Division of Philosophy, Humanities and Library Sciences
Philosophy Department**

<https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/liberal-arts-humanities--education/philosophy/>

Phil 1301: Introduction to Philosophy | #11547

Spring 2020 | 16 Weeks (January 21—May 17)

Face-to-Face/Lecture | NOLN Rm 228 | M/W 9:30—10:50 A.M.

3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: **Professor David Liakos**
Office: **NOLN Building A/Rm 302**
HCC Email: david.liakos@hccs.edu

Office Phone: **713-718-2447**
Office Hours: **W 11 A.M.—12 P.M.**

Please feel free to reach me via email or Canvas inbox to discuss any concerns or questions regarding the course and/or philosophy more generally. I want everyone to succeed in this course. I am happy to listen to your questions and to discuss the course material.

My preferred method of contact is email or Canvas inbox; see also my office phone number. I will respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday; I will reply to weekend messages by Monday mornings. *Please* also come to my office hours with any questions!

Prerequisites and/or Co-Requisites

ENGL 1301

Canvas Learning Management System

This section of PHIL 1301 will use [Canvas](https://eagleonline.hccs.edu) (<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>) to supplement in-class assignments, exams, and activities. **I will use Canvas to post all course readings, rubrics, and assignments, and to communicate with the course. Some assignments will also be turned in on Canvas (assignments will include more details).** HCCS Open Lab locations may be used to access the Internet and Canvas. **USE [FIREFOX](#) OR [CHROME](#) AS THE INTERNET BROWSER.**

HCC Online Information and Policies

Here is the link to information about HCC Online classes including the required Online Orientation for all fully online classes: <http://www.hccs.edu/online/>

Instructional Materials

Textbook Information

All texts will be made available to students online on Canvas. **Course readings must be brought to the class session for which they are assigned.**

Other Instructional Resources

Tutoring

HCC provides free, confidential, and convenient academic support, including writing critiques, to HCC students in an online environment and on campus. Tutoring is provided by HCC personnel in order to ensure that it is contextual and appropriate. Visit the [HCC Tutoring Services](#) website for services provided.

Libraries

The HCC Library System consists of 9 libraries and 6 Electronic Resource Centers (ERCs) that are inviting places to study and collaborate on projects. Librarians are available both at the libraries and online to show you how to locate and use the resources you need. The libraries maintain a large selection of electronic resources as well as collections of books, magazines, newspapers, and audiovisual materials. The portal to all libraries' resources and services is the HCCS library web page at <http://library.hccs.edu>.

Supplementary Instruction

Supplemental Instruction is an academic enrichment and support program that uses peer-assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success in historically difficult courses. Peer Support is provided by students who have already succeeded in completion of the specified course, and who earned a grade of A or B. Find details at <http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/supplemental-instruction/>.

Course Overview

This course is a study of the 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 (Texas ACGM). It provides a theoretically diverse introduction to the study of ideas, including arguments and investigations about abstract and real phenomena, particularly in the areas of knowledge, ethics, and religion (HCC Course Catalogue). This course stresses the HCC Core Objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility

Core Curriculum Objectives (CCOs)

This course satisfies the Philosophy, Language, and Culture component area or the Component Area Option in the HCC Core Curriculum. If you are not sure that you need this course to graduate, please consult with your advisor.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy.
2. Analyze and critique philosophical texts in ways that demonstrate an awareness of argument structure and the evaluation of philosophical claims.
3. Present logically persuasive arguments orally and in writing that are relevant to philosophical issues covered in course material.

4. Evaluate personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world in terms of the philosophical issues raised in course material.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)

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.

Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Read canonical texts in the philosophical tradition.
- 1.2 Analyze, discuss, and critique philosophical texts in class, including through student presentations.
- 1.3 Analyze and critique philosophical texts in written work, including papers and tests.
- 2.1 Learn basic philosophical vocabulary, major arguments, and positions in central areas of philosophy.
- 2.2 Define key concepts in your own words and provide definitions in regular quizzes.
- 2.3 Demonstrate understanding of key arguments and claims made by philosophers studied in the course through short answer questions and papers.
- 3 Present logically persuasive arguments in presentations, papers, and tests.
- 4.1 Engage in critical thinking through classroom discussion and presentations.
- 4.2 Demonstrate critical thinking skills in written work.
- 5.1 Consider the impacts of philosophical ideas on personal and social responsibility.
- 5.2 Apply philosophical concepts discussed in the course to personal and contemporary issues, demonstrating a concern for social and personal responsibility.

Student Success

Successful completion of this course absolutely requires a combination of:

- Closely reading (and re-reading) the assigned texts
- Attending and actively participating in class on a regular basis
- Completing assignments in a timely and thorough manner
- Participating in in-class activities and engaging with lectures
- Seeking extra help, if needed, and engaging with the instructor

Instructor and Student Responsibilities

As your Instructor, it is my responsibility to:

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how student grades are to be derived
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through learner-centered instructional techniques
- Provide a description of any special projects or assignments
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness, and making up assignments
- Provide the course outline and class calendar that will include a description of any special projects or assignments
- Arrange to meet with individual students before and after class as required

As a student, it is your responsibility to:

- Attend class in person and/or online
- Participate actively by reviewing course material, interacting with classmates, and responding promptly in your communication with me
- Read and comprehend the textbook
- Complete the required assignments and exams
- Ask for help when there is a question or problem
- Keep copies of all paperwork, including this syllabus, handouts, and all assignments
- Be aware of and comply with academic honesty policies in the [HCCS Student Handbook](#)

Assignments, Exams, and Activities

Written Assignment

There will be one paper assigned in this class, namely, a **Critical Paper** due in Week 13. This 2-3 page paper will require you to accurately explain a philosophical argument, and then to suggest an objection to or critique of that argument, all in a concise amount of space. You will prepare to submit this short paper by first completing a **Writing Workshop** in class in which you will peer review each other's papers and provide helpful suggestions to your fellow students as to how to improve their writing assignments.

Exams

There are two **Exams** (in Weeks 10 and 17), each covering approximately one half of the course. These Exams will include multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, quotation-identification, and short answer questions. We will provide study guides and review sessions.

Reading Responses

We will have four **Reading Responses** turned in on Canvas throughout the term (see Calendar). *You should only complete three Responses.* These Responses, of two full paragraphs (200-300 words) each, should include your thoughtful reactions to a *reading assignment assigned within two weeks of the due date for that Response*—including questions, comments, objections, reflections, opportunities for further inquiry, etc. These Responses are not graded for content, but rather only for effort. Guidelines will be provided.

Attendance & Participation

As per HCC policy, I shall take daily attendance, by means of a sign-in-sheet. **Regular attendance** is required to succeed in this course, and will factor into your final grades;

attendance means not only being present, but also *on time* for class. In addition, this component of your final grade captures your **active participation** in the course—which is required, and can include, *broadly*, asking questions, making thoughtful comments, attending office hours, emailing questions and comments to the instructor, listening carefully to lecture and discussion, taking good notes, and completing various for-credit in-class activities.

Grading Formula and Scale

Critical Paper: 20%

Writing Workshop: 5%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Reading Responses (x3): 15%

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Grading scale: A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: Below 60

Incomplete Policy:

No student may withdraw from a course following the set “last day to withdraw,” which for Spring 2020 Regular Term is **April 6**. After that date, a student can only receive a grade earned, or an “I” for incomplete. Incompletes must be made up by the end of the following long semester, after which they will be automatically changed to a “F” grade unless completed. The awarding of an “I” is *up to the instructor’s discretion* in circumstances in which (1) the course was not completed in the semester it was offered and (2) the coursework may be realistically finished within 6 months.

Course Calendar (* = web link; all others uploaded on Canvas)

Week 1 (1/22 only): Course introduction
Syllabus

Week 2 (1/27 and 1/29): Philosophy as an activity
Immanuel Kant: “An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?”*

Week 3 (2/3 and 2/5): The value of philosophical thinking
Bertrand Russell: “The Value of Philosophy”*

Week 4 (2/10 and 2/12): Logic I
Joel Feinberg: “A Logic Lesson”
Reading Response 1 due

Week 5 (2/17 and 2/19; no class M—President’s Day): Logic II
Feinberg continued

Week 6 (2/24 and 2/26): Platonic metaphysics
Plato: From *Symposium* and *Republic* Book VII

Week 7 (3/2 and 3/4): God
St. Augustine: From *Confessions* Book X
Friedrich Nietzsche: From *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
Reading Response 2 due

Week 8 (3/9 and 3/11): Soul and death
Plato: From *Phaedrus*
Thomas Nagel: "Death"*

Week 9 (3/16 and 3/18): **Spring Break**—We will NOT meet.

Week 10 (3/23 and 3/25): Exam 1
Review for Exam 1
Sit for Exam 1

Week 11 (3/30 and 4/1): Skepticism and human knowledge
René Descartes: First and Second Meditations*

Week 12 (4/6 and 4/8): Philosophy of mind
René Descartes: Sixth Meditation*
Reading Response 3 due

Week 13 (4/13 and 4/15): Papers
Writing Workshop for Critical Papers
Critical Papers due

Week 14 (4/20 and 4/22): Experience and human knowledge
David Hume: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (§§2-4)*

Week 15 (4/27 and 4/29): Social and political philosophy
Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Letter from Birmingham City Jail"*
Hannah Arendt: "Truth and Politics"*
Reading Response 4 due

Week 16 (5/4 and 5/6): Friendship / Exam 2 Review
Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Friendship"*
Review for Exam 2

Week 17 (5/11 and 5/13): Exam 2—**Finals Week**
Sit for Exam 2 on Monday, May 11 at 9 A.M. (see Spring 2020 Final Exam Schedule)

Syllabus Modifications

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus *at any time* during the semester and will promptly notify students in writing, typically by e-mail, of any such changes.

Instructor's Practices and Procedures

Missed Assignments

All assignments turned in late will, unless under extraordinary circumstances discussed *ahead of time* with the instructor, result in the **deduction of points** from the graded assignment. (See prompts for details.) The longer the assignment is overdue, the more points will be deducted. If your assignment is late, **still pass it in**—as soon as possible! Missing in-class assignments, such as the Exams, Writing Workshop, or in-class participation activities, will result in a **0** barring a documented emergency. Such assignments can only be made up, according to a procedure agreed upon between the instructor and student ahead of time. Accommodations will be made **according to the instructor's discretion**.

Academic Integrity

Scholastic Dishonesty—cheating, plagiarism, claiming an unfair academic advantage—may result in a referral to the Dean of Student Services

Here is the link to the HCC information about academic integrity (Scholastic Dishonesty and Violation of Academic Scholastic Dishonesty and Grievance):

<http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/> **Cheating or plagiarism will result—at least—in a 0 for the assignment.**

Student Conduct

I want this semester to create a classroom with a high level of discourse—of open conversation in which we try to collectively reach some truths. We will model positive behavior toward this end, a few things are also prohibited—namely, *interrupting* your fellow classmates when they are speaking, loudly disrupting the class by *being late*, conspicuously using electronic devices for non-academic purposes during class.

Electronic Devices

Laptops and tablets may be brought to and used in class **only to take notes and/or to access course readings**. Please do not conspicuously and distractingly use your phones or other electronic devices when class activities are occurring.

PHILOSOPHY Program Information

You should keep studying Philosophy at HCC!!! The HCC philosophy program provides students opportunities to explore and cultivate open, critical ways to understand the search for truth and to examine the moral implications of thinking and action in an increasingly technologically driven multicultural world. See <https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-ofstudy/liberal-arts-humanities--education/philosophy>

HCC Policies

Here's the link to the HCC Student Handbook <http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/> In it you will find information about the following:

- Academic Information
- Academic Support
- Attendance, Repeating Courses, and Withdrawal
- Career Planning and Job Search
- Childcare
- disAbility Support Services
- Electronic Devices
- Equal Educational Opportunity
- Financial Aid TV (FATV)
- General Student Complaints
- Grade of FX
- Incomplete Grades
- International Student Services
- Health Awareness
- Libraries/Bookstore
- Police Services & Campus Safety
- Student Life at HCC
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Student Services

- Testing
- Transfer Planning
- Veteran Services

EGLS³

The EGLS³ ([Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System](#)) will be available for most courses near the end of the term until finals start. This brief survey will give invaluable information to your faculty about their teaching. Results are anonymous and will be available to faculty and division chairs after the end of the term. EGLS³ surveys are only available for the Fall and Spring semesters. -EGLS3 surveys are not offered during the Summer semester due to logistical constraints.

<http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/egls3-evaluate-your-professors/>

Campus Carry Link

Here's the link to the HCC information about Campus Carry:

<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/>

HCC Email Policy

When communicating via email, HCC requires students to communicate only through the HCC email system to protect your privacy. If you have not activated your HCC student email account, you can go [to HCC Eagle ID and activate it now](#). You may also use Canvas Inbox.

Housing and Food Assistance for Students

Any student who faces challenges securing their foods or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students at their college for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable HCC to provide any resources that HCC may possess.

Office of Institutional Equity

Use the link below to access the HCC Office of Institutional Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement (<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/>)

disAbility Services

HCC strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including long and short term conditions, mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please meet with a campus Abilities Counselor as soon as possible in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Ability Services. It is the policy and practice of HCC to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. For more information, please go to <http://www.hccs.edu/support-services/disability-services/>

Title IX

Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex-including pregnancy and parental status in educational programs and activities. If you require an accommodation due

to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to:

David Cross
Director EEO/Compliance
Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity
3100 Main
(713) 718-8271
Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu
<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/title-ix-know-your-rights/>

Office of the Dean of Students

Contact the office of the Dean of Students to seek assistance in determining the correct complaint procedure to follow or to identify the appropriate academic dean or supervisor for informal resolution of complaints.

<https://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-complaints/speak-with-the-dean-of-students/>

Department Chair Contact Information

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