

# Tompkins Cortland Community College

## Master Course Syllabus

**Course Discipline and Number: PHIL 101**  
**Course Title: Introduction to Philosophy**

**Year: 2024-2025**  
**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

### Course Description

This course is a study of such philosophical questions as: *Is there any plan to life and the universe? Does free will exist? How much of what we perceive of our world, is really just in our minds? How are our minds and experiences related to our physical brains? How can we live happily, or at least well, despite adversity and loss?* PHIL 101 fulfills the SUNY General Education Humanities requirement. Prerequisites: Prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100 and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

### Course Context/Audience

Philosophy 101 is required in the Liberal Arts and Sciences – Social Sciences degree program. It is one of two courses that Liberal Arts and Sciences – Women's Studies majors can take for the restricted philosophy elective requirement. Students in other programs can use the course for a liberal arts, humanities or unrestricted elective requirement. In addition, the course meets both the SUNY and the TC3 GEN ED requirements in the humanities. Students will acquire college level competence in three traditional liberal arts skills: critical reasoning, personal reflection, and scholarship. When liberal arts students learn critical reasoning they identify their own beliefs, express these in the form of clear assertions, and defend them with logical argumentation with appreciation of the full spectrum of reasonable objection. Personal reflection entails a student's discovering that before they come to the class they are already endowed with a wide variety of beliefs that guide their lives, beliefs which they may never have examined. Lastly, the skills of scholarship are learned as the student sees that philosophical ideas have historical context and precedent.

### Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations

**Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

**Math:** M0 Course requires very little or no math.

**Reading:** R3 Course may be taken concurrently with RDNG 116.

### Course Goals

The most general goal of the course is that the student learn skills of critical reasoning, personal reflection, and scholarship, with respect to the traditional philosophical questions of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. For example, Philosophy 101 typically examines metaphysical issues of the ultimate nature of reality, mind, body, purpose and epistemological questions such as how we can justify our various knowledge claims. It also examines normative and metaethical questions such as How should we live?, and How should we treat ourselves and all other beings?

## Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
Critical Reasoning in the context of traditional philosophical questions: Through readings, lectures, one to one dialogue, and group debate, each student practices this skill of critical reasoning to the point at which they would be expected to be able to make precise statements of their beliefs, to anticipate the range of reasonable objection, and to defend or justify their philosophical belief with argumentation in valid logical form.	60%
Personal Reflection about traditional philosophical questions: This skill is demonstrated when students can readily acknowledge both the importance and disputability of philosophical views they hold. This is evident in their independent attempts to assert their views in opposition to other's views, in their independent attempts to analyze their own intuitions down to the level of essentials, and in the degree to which they appreciate the necessity of reconciling these intuitions with other closely held beliefs.	50%
Scholarship: As both the above objectives are attained through a study of the history of philosophy, a substantive understanding of methods of scholarship can be expected. Specifically students learn the names, dates, and historical context of major figures and concepts in philosophy. They learn to appreciate issues of textual evidence, interpretation, and the range of contextual issues which bear on the relative importance of various thinkers, ideas, and trends.	50%
Note: Because student mastery of the knowledge, skills and understanding of individual objectives overlap, the sum of the amounts of class time assigned to each objective exceeds 100%.	

## General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li> </ul>	<p>Philosophy 101 reflects the "Socratic" tradition of philosophy questioning. This has a "public justification" dimension in that all views are subject to questioning from all sides. One on one student and teacher dialogues; class debate; debate format in written work.</p> <p>This course emphasizes the effort to find generalizations which accurately capture concrete phenomena; this requires close attention to issues of practical relevance. Students will learn to provide historical, social, biological and polemical context for debates.</p> <p>Philosophy 101 teaches logical argumentation, both formal and informal reasoning. We present a range of arguments and have students evaluate validity and truth of premises.</p> <p>Nearly all views in philosophy are contested, therefore all sides to each debate should be evaluated. To this end: we engage in class debate and use debate format in written assignments.</p>

<b>SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES</b> (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are in part shaped by the history of philosophical ideas.</li>   <li>➤ Students will understand that their philosophical views have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<p>Philosophy 101 focuses on how our beliefs, and more generally our world view determines and is determined by a broad range of factors. We present cultural and sociological context for the formation of philosophical world views; we present theories of philosophical change across place and time.</p> <p>The philosophical debates about our nature and place in the world, about the ultimate nature of reality all have clear social consequences. We present historical, cultural, sociological context for philosophical questions.</p> <p>The ethical questions about justice moral responsibility, the good life, the value of nature, all have broad consequences for life. We present philosophical questions in the context of their bearing on everyone's personal life.</p> <p>The ethical and metaphysical questions about god, nature, man and animal all directly bear on the environment. We also present philosophical controversies in the context of their relevance to the environment.</p>

**Instructional Methods**

Instructors may find that a traditional Socratic interview approach is the most exciting and rewarding for students, as it involves the student in a rational and emotional analysis, expression, and internal adjustment, conducted fully within the student's set of pre-existing beliefs. This dialectic is supplemented by historical lecture, definitions, classifications, and thought experiments chosen to illicit further Socratic interview. An approach which has proven valuable is to have students, by the latter half of the semester, choose to sit with other students who share their general philosophy, such as "materialism", "dualism", "theism", "romanticism", "eastern mysticism" and so forth.

**Methods of Assessment/Evaluation**

Method	% Course Grade
Midterm and Final Exams	Up to 50%
Attendance and possibly Class Participation	Up to 20%
Quiz Results	Not more than 30%

**Recommended Text(s)**

The Voyage of Discovery, A Historical Introduction to Philosophy, William Lawhead, Thompson Publishing.

OR  
Introduction to Philosophy, Classical and Contemporary Readings, John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer, Oxford University Press.

**Bibliography**

Online sources for this course:

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/> (Tends to be too challenging for most introductory students but often provides useful ideas anyway, even to beginners.)

Wikipedia has become a valuable resource for a quick, entry-level way to track down the meaning of concepts in philosophy. It should be supplemented with the more reliable and peer-reviewed entries in the online encyclopedias above.

Finally, an anthology of annotated excerpts, open source classical readings, and links to philosophy articles on the web developed by the instructor is helpful.

### **Other Learning Resources**

<b>Audiovisual</b>
No resources specified
<b>Electronic</b>
Instructors will enhance the applicability of philosophical questions to their students by considering current events which illustrate these issues. A quick look at some online news websites and blogs will give fresh examples of the role philosophical beliefs play in determining current events. For example religious, ideological, political, and social strife invariably hinge on metaphysical, epistemic, and ethical assertions about value, design, obligation, reality, reason and so forth.
<b>Other</b>
No resources specified