

PHIL 1500 Intro to Philosophy

Instructor: YF

Summer 2025

E-mail: yx331@georgetown.edu

Location: White-Gravenor 213

Class Hours: MTWR 1-2:55 PM

Course Description

This introductory course explores the relationship between philosophy and the contemporary world. We begin by examining the role of philosophy in today's academic landscape and its place within modern educational institutions. The course then guides students through the history of modern science and society by tracing their interconnections with the development of modern western philosophy. In the latter half of the course, we will look at some of the key critiques of modern society, with a particular focus on the critiques of capitalist ideologies. To close, we will engage in discussions on practical ways to live a better life, informed by our deepened understanding of today's world.

Required Materials

All course materials are available on Canvas.

Prerequisites

This is an intro-level philosophy course. Anyone interested in the topic is welcomed.

Communication Expectations

Most class meetings will be discussion-based instead of lecture-based, so everyone is not only welcome but encouraged to talk. Each participant is asked to respect the thoughts and views of others. We should always be learning to understand what others are saying with our best efforts and be open-minded. If you want to persuade another to think in a certain way, try to do so in a way about which you would feel comfortable yourself. Please never interrupt another - if you want to make a quick correction or follow-up, notify me in a quiet way.

Accessibility and Disabilities

Your well-being and success in this course are very important to me, so please feel free to communicate with me about what you think can make this classroom a better place, including but not limited to, e.g., the structure of the course and how each meeting can be designed. If any course content makes you feel uncomfortable or offended, please inform me either directly in class or via email. If you need special accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the course.

Students with disabilities can communicate their needs to the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) before the beginning of the course. For the most up-to-date policy information, please refer to the Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website.

Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University and its faculty and staff are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator. If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor or staff member in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty or staff member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator and no action will be taken without the student's awareness. More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the Sexual Misconduct Website:

<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/resourcecenter>.

If you would prefer to speak to someone confidentially, Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources that can provide support and assistance. These resources include:

Health Education Services: Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: sarp@georgetown.edu

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): 202.687.6985

Additional resources are included below:

Georgetown Self-Care Resource Guide:

<https://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/health-promotion/self-care/>

Georgetown Wellness Wheel:

<https://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/hoya-wellness-wheel/>

Georgetown Guide to Recognizing Students in Distress:

<https://studentaffairs.georgetown.edu/studentoutreach/facultystaffresources/>

Pregnancy Modifications and Adjustments

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant students. At any point throughout their pregnancy, students may request adjustments/modifications based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication or medical

need. Students may also request accommodations following labour and delivery based on a complication or medical need.

To request pregnancy modifications, please complete the SCS Pregnancy Modification Request Form:

<https://forms.gle/ZBfASxui7u13A8TU6>

More information about pregnancy modifications can be found on the Georgetown University Title IX website:

<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/title-ix-pregnancy/student-pregnancy/>

Privacy

All participants should be guaranteed to engage in class discussions freely. To ensure that, recording or reporting on the course discussions is not allowed without the consent of all participants.

Integrity and Honesty

Don't steal ideas from others in your written works. If you are not sure how to properly cite your sources, please find me.

The use of technologies such as Grammarly and DeepL is not prohibited, with the condition that the work you submit is a result of your intellectual labour. Students are not permitted to submit texts generated by large language models.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. The summer schedule is short and intense, but many issues only become clear and intelligible if we discuss them in class, and philosophy is always much more enjoyable if done through dialogue. I understand that life is complicated. So each of you is allowed for **two** unexcused absences as long as you notify me ahead of time. Beyond that, however, further justification will be required so that we can figure out a plan allowing you to succeed in this course.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments

One paper (1.5-3k words) (35%)

AND

7 discussion posts (one or two paragraphs each, and you get the full grade as long as you finish them) (35%)

Grade

Each of your assignments will be assigned a letter grade and a numeric grade. Your final grade will be the sum of your assignment grades plus a participation grade (30%). The conversion of numeric grades and letter grades is shown in the table below.

Letter grade	Numeric grade
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A	93%+
A-	90-93%
B+	87-90%
B	83-87%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-80%
C	73-77%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-70%
D	63-67%
D-	60-63%
F	60-%

Provisional Schedule

Please find the full schedule on the next page.

(The schedule is tentative and subject to change.)

Theme	Topic	Main materials (Please read them all)	Supplementary materials (Optional)
General Introduction	Philosophy as a Subject	Weise and Metz, "When AI Chatbots Hallucinate"	Bender et al., "On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots"
	Formal & Informal Logic	[No reading - just come to class]	
	Argumentation	[No reading - just come to class]	
	Philosophy Education	Freier, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , Ch 2 Corvino, "The Fact/Opinion Distinction"	McBrayer, "Why our children don't think there are moral facts"
Philosophy & Modern Society	The Rise of Modern Science	Plato, <i>Meno</i> Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> (excerpts) Kant, <i>Prolegomena</i> (excerpts)	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> Ed. B Preface (excerpts)
	Foundations of Modern Politics	Kant, Idea for a Universal History Kant, Perpetual Peace	
	Scientific Practices	Cartwright: "In Favor of Laws That Are Not <i>Ceteris Paribus</i> After All" Potochnik, <i>Idealization</i> (excerpts)	Cartwright: "Do the Laws of Physics State the Facts?"
Philosophical Evolution	Better Science and Better Philosophy	Dennett, <i>Darwin's Dangerous Idea</i> (excerpts) Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (excerpts) Lukács, "What is Orthodox Marxism" (excerpts)	
	Theory and Practice	[Workshop] Ism-ism: Ideology Critique and Practice Marx, "A Critique of the German Ideology" (excerpts) Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"	
Practice	Liberating from the Status Quo	Marx, "On <i>The Jewish Question</i> " Žižek, <i>The Ticklish Subject</i> (excerpts) Howes, "HYPERESTHESIA, or, The Sensual Logic of Late Capitalism"	Khurana, "Genus-being: On Marx's Dialectical Naturalism"
	Living in the 21st Century	Naomi Klein, "Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within" Laurie Anne Whitt, "Biocolonialism and the Commodification of Knowledge" Plumwood, "The Wisdom of the Balanced Rock: The Parallel Universe and the Prey Perspective."	