

Course Prerequisites: None**Required Materials**

Textbook: “Introduction to Philosophy,” ISBN 978-1-308-02748-7

This is a “custom text” published by McGraw-Hill Education Create. The full course information—“Introduction to Philosophy, PHL 221, Professor David Layman, York College of PA, PHILOSOPHY”—is on the cover, which is predominately blue and gray in color.

Course Resources

The primary resource for this class is the instructor’s website: <http://www.davidwaynelaymanphd.com/york-college.html>. The student will be able to find the following resources: Syllabus, Lecture Notes, “Staying Alive Presentation,” Grading Rubric for Essays, and “Grading Grid,” and a list of Extra Credit Events.

The instructor does **not** use Moodle for communication. The student is responsible to check his or her @ycp.edu account on class day. Any documents required will be posted at the website identified above.

Learning Outcomes:

Disciplinary Perspectives courses will FOCUS upon facilitating the student’s ability to:

- 1) Describe discipline-specific knowledge, including vocabulary, concepts, principles, terminology, and major theories.
- 2) Recognize methods by which the discipline a) creates, b) evaluates, and c) communicates knowledge and/or products.
- 3) Interpret evidence appropriate for the line of inquiry and hypothesis.
- 4) Examine social, political, economic, and/or cultural issues in a disciplinary context.
- 5) Discuss how humanity has reacted to and been shaped by historical and/or contemporary social, political, economic, and cultural issues.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Outline of Assignments

- a. **Class Preparations:** Throughout the semester, the student will be expected to write brief responses to the readings or projects. These may take the form of (1) explaining key ideas in the readings (Jan. 29), (2) creating outlines of the day’s text (Feb. 5) (3) reporting the results of online projects (Feb. 26).
 1. In most cases, a single page ought to be sufficient for an adequate response. If two pages are needed, the student is encouraged to print double-sided.
 2. At the top of the page, print: Name, “Phil 221.103,” and date.
 3. Please type **double-spaced**.
 4. Class Preps will be graded on the following scale: 100=Outstanding Work; 75=Acceptable Work; 50=Unacceptable Work; 0=Did not turn in.
 5. Currently, **6** Class preparations are scheduled. The instructor reserves the right to add additional preparations.

- b. **Essays** are critical philosophical reflection essays, and are the primary assignments for the course. On the Course Calender, the dates the essays are due are prefaced with ★.
 1. February 28: Essay #1 (see p. 9)
 2. March 25: Essay #2 (see p. 10)
 3. April 27: Essay #3 (see p. 11)
 4. May 11: Essay #4 (see pp. 11–2)
 5. Essays are graded in accordance with the following rubric:

<i>Rubric</i>	<i>points possible</i>
1. Thesis	10
2. Claims	20
3. Support	20
4. Theoretical Framework	20
5. Organization	10
6. Style	10
7. Mechanics	10
Total	100

A detailed explanation of these Rubrics can be found at the instructor’s website.

Essays: Formatting

1. Essays must have a **separate** cover page, to include the following information:
 - a. Name
 - b. Course Number and Section (“PHL 221.103”), followed by “Spring 2020”
 - c. “Essay # ...” (correct number)
 - d. You *may*, at your discretion include a *title* and/or *date*.
 - e. Do *not* place the essay in a folder or holder.
 - f. **The student must paste the “Grading Grid” underneath above information, which can be copied from the instructor’s web site.**
2. One inch margins on all sides;
3. Double–spaced (not 1-1/2 space)
4. Use a 12–pt. size font, *preferably* a standard “serif” font such as Times New Roman, or Cambria;
5. Do not use fully justified margins.

Essays: Documentation

1. The preferred form of documentation is “**MLA.**” If the student is not familiar with that form, simply follow this form: *quotations or paraphrases of a source are noted in the following form: “...togerato mento examina (Doe, 111).”*
2. If a single paragraph is paraphrased from a range of pages of some source(s), the student can summarize the sources at the end of the paragraph in the following manner: *...togerato mento examina (Doe, 111-114, 120).*
3. The “author” of the textbook should be cited as “(Layman, 123).”
4. The student is *not* an expert in philosophy. In academic writing, to state an interpretation or fact in a field where one is not an expert is plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, the student must provide **a minimum of three (3) citations from the textbook.** Failure to meet this requirement will be penalized under both the “Claims” and “Mechanics” sub-rubrics (see top of this page).

Emailing Documents

1. The instructor expects the student to provide the instructor with “**hard copies**” of assignments. There are exceptions that will be explained in process of the course. When digital versions of the assignments are needed, they will be provided to the instructor in accordance with the following guidelines:
2. The student must attach the document to the email. Unformatted emails will not be accepted.
 - a. The email should be addressed to either dlayman@ycp.edu or dwlayman@icloud.com.
 - b. The *subject line* in the email must read as follows: “PHL 221 [number or name] attached”.
 - c. The *title* of the essay (which will be attached to the email) must read as follows: “[last name], [first name], PHL [number or name]”.
 - d. Emails/essays that fail to follow the above guidelines will be refused and returned to sender for correction and resubmission.
2. Please wait for a return receipt. If the instructor does not send you one within 6 hours, or within 3 hours the next morning if you sent it after 9 pm, assume he did not receive the document.
3. The student is responsible for ensuring that the professor receives the document. The professor is not responsible for failure to attach a document, incorrect email addressing, or any technical errors in the internet delivery system.

Final Grade Calculation and Criteria

Assignment Weights:

Essays..... 17% each68% aggregate
 Class Preparations..... 3.67%*22% aggregate
 Attendance 10%.....10%

*If the instructor adds additional preparations, then the per-assignment weight will be proportionally reduced. The *aggregate* weight of *all* preparations will remain 22%.

(See “Cultural Enrichment Events,” below, bottom of p. 8, for opportunities for extra credit.)

Final Grade Criteria

90.0% and above **4 (Excellent):** Denotes accomplishment that is truly distinctive and decidedly outstanding
 85.0-89.9% **3.5 (Very Good):** Denotes mastery of the subject matter
 80.0-84.9% **3 (Good):** Denotes considerable understanding of the subject matter
 75.0-79.9% **2.5 (Above Average):** Denotes above average understanding of the subject matter
 69.5-74.9% **2 (Average):** Denotes average understanding of the subject matter
 59.5-69.4% **1 (Below Average):** Denotes below average understanding of the subject matter
 59.4% and below **0 (Failure):** Denotes inadequate understanding of the subject matter

Any changes upward in this scale (e.g, changing an 84.9% to 85.0%) are made purely at the instructor’s discretion. The instructor *will not consider any appeal* from students who do not receive the benefit of such a change.

Attendance Policy

The instructor takes attendance promptly at the scheduled beginning of class. (As he learns the students’ identities, he will take attendance silently before class begins, but verify it at the beginning of class.)

This instructor considers “**excused absences**” to be: (1) sickness certified by a note from a physician, health care professional, or health care institution, (2) family related situations (death in immediate family, sickness of children), and (3) documented work-related problems.

Attendance is worth **10%** of the grade. The grade is calculated as an percentage: for example, a student who missed 6 out of 41 class dates would receive an 85% (out of a possible 100%) for attendance.

Beginning on **February 5**, a student who comes into class **late** will be recorded as “Late,” but considered **absent** for the purpose of this grade. Lateness shows disrespect for the instructor (who must interrupt his teaching), fellow students (whose attention or participation is interrupted), and lack of responsibility. Students will not be allowed to show up late when they enter the world of work; they must therefore develop those habits of consistent and punctual attendance while they are in school.

Late Submission of Essays

Late Essays and Class Preparations will be penalized with a **10-point deduction per day**.

1. Weekends will count as 1 day. E.g., if a paper is due on Friday, and is turned in on the following Monday, a 85% paper would be reduced to 65% (Sat/S, Mon.= -20 pts.).
2. Since the instructor is only on campus Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, in order to minimize the deduction the student can turn in a late essay in two possible ways:
 - a. Hand in the essay to the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Arts and the Humanities in WOLF HALL, ROOM 206, Ms. Allison Altland. She will stamp the essay with the date/time of submission.
 - i. *Never* place in the essay in the black wall file outside the instructor’s office. This violates student confidentiality laws. The date of submission will be the date the instructor picks up the document and the essay will be penalized by an *additional* 10 points.
 - b. The student can send the late essay *via email*. The rules stated above for emailing documents must be followed. Documents that fail to follow the above guidelines will be refused and returned to sender for correction and resubmission.
3. The following is a *partial* list of excuses that will *not* be accepted:
 - “I was sick.”
 - “I had to work last night.”
 - “My computer broke.”
 - “The printer was out of toner/paper.”
 - “There was a long line at the printer.
 - “Email didn’t work.”
 - “I thought I sent it.”
 - “I put it in your [faculty] mailbox yesterday.”

Institutional Policies

Tutoring and Study Skills Coaching: Students are encouraged to enhance their learning by meeting with the tutors and the study skills coaches in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and in the Writing Center. The CTL and Writing Center offers one-on-one sessions with peer and professional tutors who will provide feedback and suggestions for assignments in every course. Contact the CTL to make an appointment by calling 815-1296 or stopping by HUM Room 01. The web site for CTL is

<https://my.ycp.edu/web/center-for-teaching-and-learning/home> .

Communication Standards

York College recognizes the importance of effective communication in all disciplines and careers. Therefore, students are expected to competently analyze, synthesize, organize, and articulate course material in papers, examinations and presentations. In addition, students should know and use communication skills current to their field of study, recognize the need for revision as part of their writing process, and employ standard conventions of English usage in both writing and speaking. Students may be asked to further revise assignments that do not demonstrate effective use of these communication skills.

Use of Personal Technology in the Classroom

While York College recognizes students' need for educational and emergency-related technological devices such as laptops, mobile devices, cellular phones, etc., using them unethically or recreationally during class time is never appropriate. The college recognizes and supports faculty members' authority to regulate in their classrooms student use of all electronic devices.

Disability Support Services (adopted 2015)

In accordance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, York College and its faculty are obliged to make reasonable classroom and physical accommodations for students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability in need of classroom accommodations and have not already registered with Linda Miller, Director of Disability Support Services, please contact her at 815-1785 or lmille18@ycp.edu to discuss policies and procedures related to disability services and to establish the accommodations for which you are eligible.

Academic Integrity Policy (adopted 2015)

York College of Pennsylvania, as an institution of higher education, serves to promote and sustain the creation, acquisition, and dissemination of knowledge. In order to fulfill this purpose, an environment of integrity, dependability and honesty must be maintained by all members of the York College community. Without a foundation based on intellectual honesty and integrity, the very ability to uphold the academic endeavors that York College strives to pursue is inhibited.

The Spartan Oath embodies the expectation that all members of the York College community foster an environment of integrity and responsibility. Recognize that adhering to an ethical standard of honesty leads to professional, mature and responsible citizens, and enables society at large to trust our scholarship, research, and conferred degrees. Thus, each member of the York College community must be truthful, honest, personally and professionally responsible, and respect the intellectual contributions of others.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Engaging in academic dishonesty is a violation of the school's academic integrity policy and is not tolerated at York College. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarism (i.e. passing someone else's words or ideas off as one's own without proper attribution), improper paraphrasing, fabricating research, falsifying academic documents, handing in material completed for another course, and submitting work not done independently (unless part of an explicitly collaborative project).

Procedures for Academic Integrity Reporting and Appeals may be found in the College Catalog at: http://catalog.ycp.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=760#Academic_Integrity

This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor.

Course Calendar

wk DateTopic Readings (pages)

What is knowledge

January

1 22..... Syllabus

24, 27..... (Plato) <https://web.stanford.edu/class/ihum40/cave.pdf>

2 29, 31..... 4. René Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy

Class Prep: Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLKrmw906TM> .

If the “5 Minute Hypothesis” of Bertrand Russell (beg. at 5:49) is true, would it matter?

Can you refute it? **Due January 29**

February

3 3, 5 5. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

Class Prep: The student will complete an outline of the Locke text, using a handout that the instructor will provide Sept. 10. **Due February 5**

7, 10..... 6. George Berkeley, Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous

4 12, 14, 17..... 7. David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

5 19, 21..... 8. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason

Are you a self? Do you have an identity?

6 24, 26..... 10. The Problem of Personal Identity

Class Prep: Go to the web site

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/stayingalive/Default.aspx>.

This is an thought experiment in trying to “stay alive” through a series of physical or psychological transformations. Write a 1 page comment on the choices you made, briefly explaining the result of those choices. In light of that result, would you make the same choices? **Due February 26**

28..... 11. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding

★ Essay #1 Due Friday, **February 28**

March

2—6..... *Winter Vacation*

7 9, 11..... 12. Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers

8 13, 16, 18..... 13. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature

Ethics: How should we act?

9 20, 23, 25..... 1. Readings in the Sophists; 2. Gyges’ Ring
Class Prep: You have read three examples of “relativism” (Protagoras, Thrasymachus, and Callicles). In 1 or 2 sentences per thinker, explain how each of these thinkers were relativists. Put another way, what was it about their ideas that made them “relativists”. Then in another 1 or 2 sentences per thinker, explain what makes each thinker *different* from the other 2. **Due March 23.**

★ Essay # 2 (“Self/Identity”) Due **March 25**

27, 30..... 15. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

April

10 1, 3..... 18. Immanuel Kant, Fundamental Principles of Metaphysics of Morals

11 6, 8..... Intro to **Class Preparation** (Topic: Abortion)

Class Prep: On April 6, the instructor will give a lecture (with some preliminary discussion) on the morality of abortion. The student should respond to this information applying the ethics of **Aristotle** and **Kant**. Here are some *possible* questions: (1) What’s the “goal” or “end” of the sexual act? Pleasure? “Romance”? Procreation? (2) Here the student should think in terms of “function” and “virtue”—what does it mean to be an *excellent* human being, including sexuality? (3) Which view of abortion is likely to make human beings (including women and men in their sexual relations) *happy*? (4) Do people have *duties* towards a fetus? If Kant is correct that all humans have “absolute worth,” does this include fetuses? In other words, does a fetus count as a human being? Why or why not? This **Class Prep is due April 8.**

10, 13..... *Spring Vacation*

15, 17..... 19. Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals

12 20, 22..... 20. John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism

Is there a god? What sort of being would it be?

24..... 21. Anselm, Proslogion and Exchange with Gaunilo

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmTsS5xFA6k> . (1) Should we be studying “philosophy of religion” in this course? Why or what not? (*Hint:* how is “philosophy of religion different from “theology” or “religious beliefs”?) (2) State in one or two sentences your understanding of Anselm’s argument for the existence of God. Is this argument persuasive to you? Why or why not? This **Class Prep is due April 24.**

13 27, 29..... 22. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae

★ Essay # 3 (Ethics) Due April 27

May

14 1..... Introduction to design

15 4, 6 23. David Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

..... 24. William Paley, Natural Theology

Exam Week

11..... ★ Final Essay Due 10:00 pm via Email

Cultural Enrichment Events

Students enrolled in Department of English and Humanities courses are expected to attend various cultural enrichment events throughout the academic year. **The instructor will provide a schedule of these events when it becomes available.**

To receive credit for attendance, the student is to submit a one page report (the report itself must be at least 1/2 page long) on each event attended. Each successful report will receive *up to 0.5 points added to the final percentage of the student's grade*. The instructor reserves the right to reduce the extra credit received for poorly prepared reports. The student can submit up to a total of **three (3)** reports, for a total extra credit of **1.5** points.

Essay Prompts

All essays are to be 600–900 words long (i.e., about 1–½ to 2 pages, if you follow the font style and size requirements stated above).

Essay # 1, “Lost and Found” (Due March 1st)

In 2009, the instructor and his spouse purchased a house to rent out to some friends. The spouse wanted to show photographs of the house to her work-mates, and asked their son to bring in papers to her workplace—about 2-½ miles away by country road on bike. The folder that included the picture also included important financial information.

When the son arrived at her workplace, the papers were missing. Somehow they had fallen off the bike. The spouse called the instructor and asked him to go look for the papers. His first response was “*God help me.*” They could have been anywhere along the road (or in town, where the spouse worked); the berm was often wide with grass and weeds, and it was breezy.

The instructor got in his car, and began to slowly crawl along the road, looking for anything that might appear to be “important papers”. About a mile along, a car was coming behind him, and he didn’t want hold up the other driver. He was just coming to a section of road where there was a wide berm, so he pulled off.

As soon as he was off the road, he looked up. He noticed several pieces of paper perhaps 10 feet ahead of the car. He retrieved the paper. They were receipts, and had handwriting on them that resembled his spouse’s script. He kept looking, and there were other similar pieces of paper further along. The berm was next to an electric fence, and any of the papers could have been blown on the other side of the fence.

But the instructor was able to retrieve all the papers.

In light of these facts —

- That the instructor was “made” to pull off the road at a certain point;
- That the papers were immediately in front of his car where he pulled off;
- That all the papers remained together, and were not blown away;

Is the instructor justified in believing that there is a “god” who “answered his prayers.”

(It may be helpful to think of this in terms of "cause-and-effect": was the prayer "God help me" the *cause* of the effect [finding the papers]?)

Essay # 2, "Mr. or Ms. Perry?" (*the Self*) (Due March 25th)

Donna Perry is a woman as a result of "gender reassignment surgery". When a male, she was Douglas Perry. Donna/Douglas Perry has been linked to the murder of several prostitutes through fingerprints and DNA evidence.

Her defense is that she (Donna Perry) is a different person from Douglas Perry.

When detectives interviewed Perry and asked why the murders had stopped, she replied, "Douglas didn't stop, Donna stopped it," according to the affidavit. Since then, Perry said she is "paranoid and emotional but won't hurt anybody."

"I'm not going to admit I killed anybody, I didn't. Donna has killed nobody," she told police. When pressed if "Doug did" the killings, Perry replied, "I don't know if Doug did or not, it was 20 years ago and I have no idea whether he did or did not,"

Using the philosophy of *self* presented in one or two philosophies, you are to answer the following question:

Assuming Douglas Perry committed the murders, is Donna Perry responsible for the murders? Why or why not?

The full article can be found at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/transgender-woman-male-persona-serial-killer/story?id=22959423> .

Here's a link to the official court documents, at the instructor's website:

<https://www.davidwaynelaymanphd.com/uploads/9/6/0/5/9605300/donnaperrycourtdocuments.pdf>

The interview of "Donna Perry" begins on the bottom of p. 4.

Other accounts include:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2584343/Transgender-woman-62-blames-male-persona-shooting-dead-3-prostitutes-1990.html>

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/nov/01/charges-recommended-in-1990-spokane-prostitute/> briefly identifies some of the evidence that links "Douglas" to the crimes

(Related stories can be located through normal searching.)

Essay # 3, "The Ethics of Euthanasia" (Due April 26th)

On August 19, 1990, Bertram R. Harper assisted his wife, Virginia Harper, in committing suicide. She had taken sleeping pills. When she was unable to place a plastic bag over her head by herself, Bertram "waited until she had fallen asleep and then put the bag on her himself. He secured it around her neck with rubber bands." Then he and Virginia's daughter (his stepdaughter) sat by her side until she expired, after which they called the police.

Virginia had been suffering from cancer since 1983. She had previously had 2 tumors removed. After the initial diagnosis, she and Bertram had joined the Hemlock Society, which promotes the "right-to-die," i.e., the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

After being told she had "two months to two years" to live, they made plans to fly to Michigan, which they thought (incorrectly it turned out) would be lenient on assisted suicide. (This was during the time that Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a Michigan doctor, was in the news for assisting a woman to commit suicide.)

Read the full story at http://articles.latimes.com/1990-09-08/news/mn-525_1_murder-charges , and then answer the following question:

Was it *wrong* for Mr. Harper to have helped Virginia Harper to die?

Essay # 4, "Do we need God to explain the universe and meaning?"

(Due May 13th via Email)

Watch the following videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zORUUqJd81M> (Jim Holt, "Why does the universe exist?"); and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUTE5x-ghd8> (Michio Kaku: "Does the Cosmos have a reason?").

You are welcome to find other related videos on Youtube, and use them as resources in your essay. However, all such sources must be completely documented (Name, Title, URL), and quotations or references must include a time stamp within 30 seconds of when the referenced text begins (e.g., "6:30," meaning "6 minutes 30 seconds").

Your final essay should answer the following question:

Do we need GOD to explain the universe and the alleged meaning of our lives?

This is your primary question. Everything you argue, whatever sources you use, must be directed to answering this prompt.

In order to apply the videos, here are some possible questions and ideas that you can think about and attempt to answer. Just remember: *your essay is not a matter of "answering questions". Addressing the following questions should be organized in such a way that you answer the above prompt, in bold.*

Holt gives us an explanation why physics itself probably doesn't explain why *some*-thing exists. Michio Kaku also says that a "unified theory" does not give us meaning.

- Does the world strike you as a "random mediocre generic reality"?
- Is that a satisfactory explanation of both the apparent purpose of the natural universe, and of the fact that humans want their lives to have meaning?

Michio Kaku says that the universe does not give us meaning, but we invent our meaning.

- Is invented meaning the same as meaning? Do we need an external standard to have meaning?
- He also says that we exist to work and love. But not all societies and religions agree with this. How does Michio know this?
- Can you have *self*-discovery, if the "self" itself is a fiction? In other words, if the self is an imaginary construction of different perceptions (remember Hume!) then what are you discovering if/when you discover "your self"?

This syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor.