

## PHIL 1050: Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2025.1050.001

### Instructor

Atoosa Afshari

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Monday, Wednesday, and Friday:, 10:00 AM to 10:50 PM, ENV 115


Office Hours: By Appointment

## I. Rationale and course outline:

This course is an introduction to the rich heritages of the world's philosophical traditions.

Rather than assuming or maintaining a particular definition of philosophy, this course will engage “philosophy” as an ongoing cite of contestation and debate: What is philosophy? Who counts as a philosopher? What can be recognized as a serious philosophical endeavor? How does philosophy intersect and differ from theory, critique, belief, science, and ethics? What is philosophy for and can it make any difference in the world? None of these are settled question, but reflects ongoing debates with material consequences. Congruent with the aim of opening rather than closing or assuming the question of “philosophy” this course engages multiple cultural perspectives and approaches.

The course begins where philosophical questions often first confront us: in the middle of everyday life as we ask questions about how we should live and how we know what is right or good. From there we often move to questions of society: how do we live well together, what makes a society just, what is justice and is it possible given the complexities of life? Reflecting on what is right and just leads to questions of truth and how we can have knowledge. If we are going to explore what it means to have good or true knowledge, then we will also need to ask questions of the real: what is reality, what is it composed of, what makes it up, how do we distinguish reality from illusion? Finally we will conclude the class with questions of identity, subjectivity, and embodied life: who am I, what am I, how should or can I relate to human and more-than-human others?

: Never ignore the class's Announcements on Canvas. When you receive an email notifying you of an Announcement to read, please make sure to read it.

## II. Course Outcomes:

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By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- accurately and fairly represent the thoughts and ideas of another
- think critically about a text or set of ideas

- clearly and compellingly communicate their own conclusions in conversation with others
- articulate what social and personal responsibility looks like in particular circumstances

**Prerequisite(s): Nope.** 😎

## Evaluation

Your performance in this course will be assessed using various assignments, each contributing to your final grade as follows:

1. **Discussions & In-class Exams (30%):** Throughout the course, you will participate in quizzes that are vital for your regular assessment. These quizzes are designed not just to test your knowledge but also to evaluate how well you can develop your answers, consider multiple perspectives, and apply critical thinking. You will be assessed on your ability to write and describe your answers in a well-organized and thoughtful manner. This component will account for 25% of your final grade.
2. **Group presentation projects (25%):** A mid-term exam will be administered to evaluate your comprehension and application of the concepts learned during the first half of the course. This exam will account for 25% of your final grade.
3. **Final project (20%):** You can choose the format for your final exam, whether it is a paper, an artwork, or any other creative thing that aligns with what we have covered in class. This flexibility allows you to express your strengths and demonstrate your understanding in a way that resonates with your personality and major. This exam will account for 25% of your final grade.
4. **Attendance & Participation (25%):** I will be checking attendance at every class. You get a free pass for up to **Four classes**, but after that, you will lose 5% of your attendance grade for every further unexcused absence. If you're missing class for a university event, a family loss, a religious holiday, or if you're feeling under the weather (with a doctor's note), don't worry – that's considered an excused absence. Please just make sure to provide the necessary documentation. (**Good news:** At the end of the semester, up to 4 unexcused absences will be waived. This means they will not negatively impact your attendance record.)

**More than physically being present, class participation entails:**

1. Coming to class having read the assigned readings and any other assignments completed.
2. Critical reflection on the text.
3. bringing the assigned reading and notes to class every day.
4. taking notes in class on lectures and class discussion.
5. contributing to class discussion with your observations and opinions on the topic being discussed.)

**Total: 100%**

## V. Grading Policies and Procedures

Grading rubrics will be used to evaluate class participation, assignments, and exam essays.

### GRADING SYSTEM:

A	90-100 %
B	80-89 %
C	70-79 %
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

All work is expected to be submitted by the designated due date. Late assignments will be docked 5% for each day late (2 days late: 10% deduction, 3 days late: 15% deduction, etc.).

# Course Schedule



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## Introduction & What is philosophy

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**Mon Aug 18:** Introduce ourselves & Syllabus

**Wed Aug 20:** What is philosophy supposed to inquire about (P: 1-19)

**Fri Aug 21:** Discussion 1



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## How Should One Live?

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**Mon Aug 25:** What makes life meaningful? (P: 49-55)

**Wed Aug 27:** Reading & Discussion

**Fri Aug 29:** Buddha & Confucius, Atoosa's Video (P: 54- 59) Discussion 2



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## Socrates, Plato & Aristotle

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**Mon Sep 1:** No Class (Labor Day)

**Wed Sep 3:** Plato & Socrates (P: 60-75)

**Fri Sep 5:** Socrates, Atoos's Video (P:76-83) Discussion 3



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## How Can I know What is Right?

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**Mon Sep 8:** In-class Exam

**Wed Sep 10:** Kant & Mill (P: 113-130)

**Fri Sep 12:** Virtue Ethics, Nussbaum, Video (131-137)



WEEK V

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## Review, Movie, and What is the Ethics of Care?

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**Mon Sep 15:** review of consequentialism, Deontology, and Virtue ethics

**Wed Sep 17:** What is the Ethics of Care? & the first 20 minutes of the movie *The Lobster*

**Fri Sep 19:** The Ethics of Care, Nodding & Gilligan, Video, Discussion 4



WEEK VI

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## Continuing from Last week

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**Mon Sep 22:** The Lobster

**Wed Sep 24:** The Lobster

**Fri Sep 26:** Video (Donna Haraway)



WEEK VII

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## What Am I, Who Am I

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**Mon Sep 29:** Movie Discussion & What Does it Mean to be a Self or a Person

**Wed Oct 1:!** Descartes & others

**Fri Oct 3:** My body! My Thoughts!, Atoosa's Video, Discussion 5



WEEK VIII

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## Core Branches of Philosophy

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**Mon Oct 6:** Reading related to the last week & Core Branches of Philosophy

**Wed Oct 8:** The first 25 of the movie *'Common People'* & On Ethics

**Fri Oct 10:** Human Nature, Atoosa's Video, Discussion 6



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## Ethics

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**Mon Oct 13:** Movie discussion & On Ethics

**Wed Oct 16:** In-class Exam

**Fri Oct 17:** Reading together (Invisible Spaces and Invisible Lives), Atoosa's Video



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## Is Justice for All Possible?

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**Mon Oct 20:** Reading together: "Too late for indigenous climate justice: Ecological and relational tipping points" by César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández

**Thu Oct 22:** Reading together: Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation by Sunaura Taylor

**Fri Oct 24:** Review



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## Exam & Preparing for Midterm Group Projects

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**Mon Oct 27:** In-Class Exam

**Thu Oct 29:** No class (Preparing for Midterm Group Projects)

**Fri Oct 31:** The First Group Presentation

**First group presentation.** *The first group will receive a **bonus**.* 🙌

**Group presentations will be assigned later in the semester.**

**All the sources (books and videos) and everything you need to do, including assignments, are on the first page of the Canvas module**

## Policies

### CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Let's remember to always treat our instructors and each other with kindness and respect. Studying philosophy means we might have different viewpoints, which is entirely more than okay! Let's make sure our discussions stay friendly and respectful. 😊📖

### Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UNT's policy on Academic Integrity: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in academic penalties or sanctions ranging from failing an assignment to expulsion from the University.

### Disability Accommodations

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require accommodation for disabilities, please register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and communicate with the instructor as soon as possible. For additional information, see the ODA website at [disability.unt.edu](https://disability.unt.edu).

### Policy for Using AI Tools

You can use AI as a tool for receiving information, but you should not copy and paste from it, nor should you rely too heavily on its answers, since AI has a certain percentage of hallucination. All in all, you can use it as a tool to help you, but not as something you depend on entirely for answering questions or writing essays.