

Bismarck State College

Bismarck State College, an innovative community college, offers high quality education, workforce training, and enrichment programs reaching local and global communities.

Current Semester: Fall 2018

Course: PHIL 101, Introduction to Philosophy

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Contact Information: Daniel Sportiello, daniel.sportiello@ndus.edu

Course Materials:

These readings are available at the bookstore—though you are free to buy them elsewhere:

- Plato. *The Republic*. Third edition. Edited and translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 2016. ISBN: 978-0465094080.
- René Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Edited and translated by John Cottingham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN: 978-0521558181.

Any other readings are available on Blackboard.

Course Description:

An introduction to any discipline ought to be straightforward. An introduction to physics, for example, ought to begin with the Laws of Motion of Isaac Newton. Just so, an introduction to chemistry ought to begin with the Periodic Law of Dmitri Mendeleev, and an introduction to biology ought to begin with the Theory of Evolution of Charles Darwin.

But philosophy is not like physics, chemistry, or biology: philosophers disagree about where they ought to begin. Perhaps this is because they disagree about the point of *doing* philosophy:

- According to René Descartes, the point of doing philosophy is to secure our insight into the world. Philosophy, in other words, is a matter of *foundations*.
- According to Plato, the point of doing philosophy is to change ourselves into who we ought to be. Philosophy, in other words, is a matter of *practice*.

This course will explore these two conceptions of philosophy in turn. By the end, perhaps we will discern what an introduction to philosophy *ought* to be; in the meantime, we will explore at least three subfields of philosophy—epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics.

Course Outcomes:

Course Learning Outcomes (or Course Outcomes)	Program Learning Outcomes (or Program Outcomes)	Institutional Essential Learning Outcomes (IELOs)
Remember the doctrines of Descartes and Plato.		Diversity

Explain the doctrines of Descartes and Plato in your own words.		Written Communication
Apply the doctrines of Descartes and Plato to your own life.		Integrative Learning
Evaluate the doctrines of Descartes and Plato by defending one of them as more plausible than the other.		Critical and/or Creative Thinking

* The BSC Institutional Essential Learning Outcomes can be found at <https://bismarckstate.edu/uploads/0/BSCsInstitutionalEssentialLearningOutcomes.pdf>.

Unit Objectives: Explore the philosophical subfields of epistemology, ethics, and metaphysics, respectively.

Active Learning: In addition to educational strategies such as reading, listening, and reflecting, when appropriate this class makes use of learning techniques commonly known as active learning. Students should expect to participate in active learning techniques such as discussions and presentations, small group activities, writing, problem-solving, movement, case studies, role-playing, etc. These activities promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content in order to improve student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on nine quizzes, on three tests, on three reflections, and on a paper:

- Nine quizzes will determine thirty percent of your final grade. Every class with a reading assignment will begin with a quiz on that reading assignment. If you miss a quiz for any reason, then you will receive a grade of zero on that quiz.
- Three tests will determine thirty percent of your final grade. A test will be administered in class at the end of each unit. If you miss a test for any reason, then you will receive a grade of zero on that test.
- Three reflections will determine fifteen percent of your final grade. You must submit these reflections on Blackboard. See the relevant assignments for the relevant prompts.
- A paper will determine twenty-five percent of your final grade. You must submit this paper on Blackboard. See the relevant assignment for the relevant prompt.

Note that, to do well in these assessments, you must do certain readings.

Grading:

The course will be graded according to the usual scale:

- A: 90–100

- B: 80–89
- C: 70–79
- D: 60–69
- F: 0–59

Note that there won't be any rounding.

Attendance/Makeup:

Because discussion plays a crucial role in this course, it is crucial that you not only attend class but also listen attentively and contribute seriously to that discussion—not just occasionally but every time that we meet. You should, in other words, be present at and participating in every class—unless, of course, you provide an official university excuse.

Were you to miss class, you would receive a zero on the relevant quiz or test. Worse, though, you would remain bound in darkness: the human condition would remain a mystery to you—and so you would remain a mystery to yourself.

For what it is worth, I intend this course to be one in which you are excited to attend class.

Policies and Procedures:

Academic Honor Code: Students at BSC are expected to be honorable in behavior and above reproach in pursuit of their academic achievements. Cheating, plagiarism, or collusion in class work, laboratory performance, shop work, or test taking is unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action. More information can be found at <https://bismarckstate.edu/uploads/resources/356/studentacademichonorcode.pdf>.

Accessibility: If you have a disability that may limit your ability to fully participate in this class, please contact the Student Accessibility Office (SAO) at 224-5671. Personnel from the SAO will work with you and your instructor to arrange for reasonable accommodations after you have completed the registration process and it has been determined that you qualify.

Camera/Video Recording: Photographic, audio, and video recording of this class and/or the instructor are prohibited unless specifically requested by a student and approved/authorized in writing by the instructor or the Student Accessibility Office.

Email: Please note that I will only correspond with students through their **BSC email account**. Student Email Policy states: “In an effort to protect student privacy and better ensure student authenticity, official email exchanged between registered students and BSC personnel requesting a response shall require the response be exchanged from the student’s official email address (i.e., [NDUS ID@bismarckstate.edu](mailto:NDUS_ID@bismarckstate.edu)). This policy is for the protection of faculty, staff, and students.” More information can be found at <https://bismarckstate.edu/uploads/resources/1197/studentemailpolicy.pdf>.

Military/Veteran Statement: If you are currently or have served in the military, please contact the Veterans Services Office at 224-5779 regarding services/benefits to which you may be entitled.

Drop/Withdrawal Deadlines: Term dates can be found on Campus Connection in the class details. Drop and withdraw dates for each term can be found at <https://bismarckstate.edu/academics/records/calendarsdeadlines/>.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Student rights and responsibilities along with student policies can be found at https://issuu.com/bismarckstatecollege/docs/bsc_student_rights_and_responsibili?e=19734813/52188116.

Title IX: For more information on sexual misconduct/Title IX please go to the BSC home page (www.bismarckstate.edu), scroll to the bottom and click on Title IX.

Guest Speaker Statement: Bismarck State College is committed to presenting timely, innovative educational opportunities for its students. As part of those efforts, BSC faculty may invite guest speakers to address the student members of this course. Under FERPA regulations, such guest speakers are considered volunteers who serve a legitimate educational interest to institutional services or functions. Guest speakers will be informed by the faculty member of their responsibilities under FERPA to ensure student privacy. For more information, please visit the Department of Education’s FERPA Student Privacy webpage at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>.

Course Outline:

1	Tuesday	August 21	Introduction		
	Thursday	August 23	Introduction		
2	Tuesday	August 28	Descartes		
	Thursday	August 30	No Class		
3	Tuesday	September 4	Descartes		
	Thursday	September 6	Epistemology	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 1–2	Quiz 1
4	Tuesday	September 11	Epistemology		
	Thursday	September 13	Epistemology	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 3–4	Quiz 2
5	Tuesday	September 18	Epistemology		
	Thursday	September 20	Epistemology	<i>Meditations</i> , §§ 5–6	Quiz 3
6	Tuesday	September 25	Epistemology		
	Thursday	September 27	Epistemology		Test/Reflection 1

7	Tuesday	October 2	Plato		
	Thursday	October 4	Plato		
8	Tuesday	October 9	Ethics	<i>Republic</i> , § 2	Quiz 4
	Thursday	October 11	Ethics		
9	Tuesday	October 16	Ethics	<i>Republic</i> , § 3	Quiz 5
	Thursday	October 18	No Class		
10	Tuesday	October 23	Ethics		
	Thursday	October 25	Ethics	<i>Republic</i> , § 4	Quiz 6
11	Tuesday	October 30	Ethics		
	Thursday	November 1	Ethics		Test/Reflection 2
12	Tuesday	November 6	Metaphysics	<i>Republic</i> , § 5	Quiz 7
	Thursday	November 8	Metaphysics		
13	Tuesday	November 13	Metaphysics	<i>Republic</i> , § 6	Quiz 8
	Thursday	November 15	Metaphysics		
14	Tuesday	November 20	Metaphysics	<i>Republic</i> , § 7	Quiz 9
	Thursday	November 22	No Class		
15	Tuesday	November 27	Metaphysics		
	Thursday	November 29	Metaphysics		Test/Reflection 3
16	Tuesday	December 4	Conclusion		
	Thursday	December 6	Conclusion		
17	Tuesday	December 11	No Class		Paper
	Thursday	December 13	No Class		