

SEARCH FOR TRUTH

FALL 2025

INSTRUCTOR

Daniel John Sportiello, Ph.D.
Welder Library 103
dsportiello@umary.edu
701-355-8109

OFFICE HOURS

By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the perennial questions of philosophy. It provides a forum in which the most pressing questions of the human mind and heart are discussed and analyzed. Students will be introduced to some of the great minds of history, including Plato and Aristotle, some of the key questions they raised, the solutions they offered, and how their answers help us to understand the meaning and purpose of life. Students learn to develop well-reasoned positions about God, the world, and human nature—thereby joining the search for truth.

COURSE OUTCOMES

This course asks you to do all of these:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the fundamental components of the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition and how it was inherited and advanced by Saint Thomas Aquinas.
- Articulate well-reasoned positions from this tradition on the nature of truth, the immateriality of the soul, the existence of God, the relation of faith to reason, and other enduring philosophical questions.
- Compare and contrast the philosophical positions of the above tradition with opposing positions.

Note that, to measure your attainment of these outcomes, you must do certain assessments.

ASSESSMENTS

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on twenty quizzes, on four tests, on a paper, and on four exams—and, for that matter, by your attendance:

- Twenty quizzes will determine twenty percent of your final grade. You must submit each quiz on Canvas prior to the start of the relevant class.
- Four tests will determine forty percent of your final grade. You must submit each test on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.

- A paper will determine fifteen percent of your final grade. You must submit this paper on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- Four exams will determine twenty percent of your final grade. You must submit each exam on Canvas prior to the end of the relevant day.
- Attendance will determine five percent of your final grade. When your absence is excused, it will be counted as an attendance.

Note that, if you fail to do an assessment by the time that it is due—for any reason—then you may receive a grade of zero on that assessment. Because of this, you should not wait until the last minute to do any assessment! Note also that, to do well in these assessments, you must do certain readings.

READINGS

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

- *A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia*. Second edition. Edited by Patricia Curd. Translated by Richard D. McKirahan and Patricia Curd. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2011. ISBN: 978-1603843058.
- Plato and Aristophanes. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Revised edition. Edited and translated by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998. ISBN: 978-0801485749.
- Plato. *Republic*. Third edition. Edited and translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 2016. ISBN: 978-0465094080.
- Aristotle. *Introductory Readings*. Edited and translated by Terence Irwin and Gail Fine. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996. ISBN: 978-0872203396.

Any other readings are available on Canvas.

BENEDICTINE VALUES

All six of our [Benedictine Values](#) are implicated in this course. At its heart, though, is Hospitality—that is, a sort of vulnerability to the ideas of others.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 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.

I reserve the right to drop you should you miss fifteen classes without an official university excuse. This is in accord with the excessive absence policy, which is available for review [online](#).

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Though laptops, tablets, and smartphones are profoundly useful, they are also profoundly distracting—not only to you but also to others. Therefore, you may not use laptops, tablets, and smartphones in class unless, at your request, I have given you permission to do so.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

It should go without saying that academic dishonesty of any sort is wrong. Worse than that, though, academic dishonesty reveals a serious confusion regarding the reasons that one is in a course in philosophy—or, for that matter, at a university—in the first place. Such dishonesty is occasion for as much pity as anger.

Presenting the work of another as your own is academically dishonest. Whenever you copy the words of another, therefore, you must place those words within quotation marks and cite their source. (This goes for the words of any artificial intelligence, by the way!)

As a deterrent, let me promise that I will prosecute every instance of academic dishonesty. But do not misinterpret this promise: if you feel that you do not understand something well enough to explain it in your own words—whether in this course or in any other—then come to me for help. We will work together to overcome whatever difficulty stands in your way.

COURSE INFORMATION

This course, PHI 10, meets for fifteen weeks on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 1:00 PM in Welder Library XXXXX. It is worth three credits, is required for the core curriculum, and is graded according to the usual scale. (Note that there won't be any rounding.)

STATEMENT ON WORKLOAD

Since this is a three semester-credit undergraduate-level course lasting fifteen weeks, students can expect to spend a minimum of three hours a week instructional time and another six hours a week studying outside of instructional time.

STATEMENT ON EXCUSED ABSENCES

The University has a policy on excused absences related to sponsored or sanctioned activities and events. The policy is available for review [online](#). Students participating in such activities and events are expected to review this policy and comply with it. As long as appropriate prior notification is given according to this policy, students and faculty reach a mutual agreement concerning make-up work, and students complete the work in question, faculty shall not penalize a student for missing a class or exam when they were granted an excused absence from the university. Any questions concerning the policy may be referred to the course instructor who may refer the question to the athletic director, the student activities director, or academic affairs for an answer.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to read the University of Mary's [Academic Honor Code and Honor System](#) and abide by all the standards of conduct and requirements contained therein. When a student is in doubt about whether or not an action might constitute an Academic Honor Code violation, he or she should request clarification from the instructor *before* the action in question is undertaken.

STATEMENT ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Mary, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and in the spirit of our mission, offers support for disabled students who provide the required documentation. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should apply to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#). For further information, contact Dr. Lynn Dodge, coordinator of Student Accessibility Services, in the Student Success Center. You can reach her at 701-355-8264 or ljdodge@umary.edu.

COURSE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Students should communicate any questions or concerns relating to this course to the following individuals in the order listed below. To learn more about the University of Mary's process for responding to academic concerns, students should read its policy, which is available for review [online](#).

Dan Sportiello, Associate Professor of Philosophy > Hannah Venable, Chair of the Philosophy Program > James Peliska, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences

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|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Monday | September 1 | No Class | | |
| | Wednesday | September 3 | Introduction | | |
| | Friday | September 5 | Introduction | | |
| 2 | Monday | September 8 | World | <i>Presocratics</i> , § 2 | Quiz 1 |
| | Wednesday | September 10 | World | | |
| | Friday | September 12 | World | <i>Presocratics</i> , § 5 | Quiz 2 |
| 3 | Monday | September 15 | World | <i>Presocratics</i> , § 6 | Quiz 3 |
| | Wednesday | September 17 | World | | |
| | Friday | September 19 | World | <i>Presocratics</i> , § 10 | Quiz 4 |
| 4 | Monday | September 22 | World | <i>Physics</i> , § 1 | Quiz 5 |
| | Wednesday | September 24 | World | | |
| | Friday | September 26 | World | <i>Physics</i> , § 2 | Quiz 6 |
| 5 | Monday | September 29 | World | | Test 1 |
| | Wednesday | October 1 | World | | Exam 1 |
| | Friday | October 3 | God | <i>Euthyphro</i> | Quiz 7 |
| 6 | Monday | October 6 | God | <i>Presocratics</i> , § 4 | Quiz 8 |
| | Wednesday | October 8 | No Class | | |
| | Friday | October 10 | God | <i>Metaphysics</i> , § 12 | Quiz 9 |
| 7 | Monday | October 13 | God | <i>Apology</i> | Quiz 10 |
| | Wednesday | October 15 | God | | |
| | Friday | October 17 | No Class | | |
| 8 | Monday | October 20 | God | | Test 2 |
| | Wednesday | October 22 | God | | Exam 2 |
| | Friday | October 24 | Humanity | <i>Republic</i> , § 2 | Quiz 11 |

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| 9 | Monday | October 27 | Humanity | <i>Republic</i> , § 3 | Quiz 12 |
| | Wednesday | October 29 | Humanity | | |
| | Friday | October 31 | Humanity | <i>Republic</i> , § 4 | Quiz 13 |
| 10 | Monday | November 3 | Humanity | <i>Ethics</i> , §§ 8–9 | Quiz 14 |
| | Wednesday | November 5 | Humanity | | |
| | Friday | November 7 | Humanity | <i>Ethics</i> , § 10 | Quiz 15 |
| 11 | Monday | November 10 | Humanity | | Test 3 |
| | Wednesday | November 12 | Humanity | | Exam 3 |
| | Friday | November 14 | Wisdom | <i>Metaphysics</i> , §§ 1.1–2 | Quiz 16 |
| 12 | Monday | November 17 | Wisdom | | |
| | Wednesday | November 19 | Catching Up | | |
| | Friday | November 21 | Wisdom | <i>Republic</i> , § 5 | Quiz 17 |
| 13 | Monday | November 24 | Wisdom | <i>Republic</i> , § 6 | Quiz 18 |
| | Wednesday | November 26 | Catching Up | | |
| | Friday | November 28 | No Class | | |
| 14 | Monday | December 1 | Wisdom | <i>Republic</i> , § 7 | Quiz 19 |
| | Wednesday | December 3 | Wisdom | | |
| | Friday | December 5 | Wisdom | <i>Metaphysics</i> , § 4 | Quiz 20 |
| 15 | Monday | December 8 | Wisdom | | Test 4 |
| | Wednesday | December 10 | Wisdom | | Exam 4 |
| | Friday | December 12 | Wisdom | | |
| 16 | Monday | December 15 | No Class | | Paper |
| | Wednesday | December 17 | No Class | | |
| | Friday | December 19 | No Class | | |