

# Philosophical Inquiry (PHIL 1800) Syllabus

## Spring 2022

**Core Area:** Philosophical Inquiry

**Flags:** None

**Recommended Background:** None

**Course Number:** PHIL 1800, section 22

**Class Meeting Schedule:** Tuesday & Thursday, 2:40-4:10pm (PST)

**Class Location:** University Hall 1866

**Professor:** Dr. Carissa Phillips-Garrett

**Email:** [Carissa.Phillips-Garrett@lmu.edu](mailto:Carissa.Phillips-Garrett@lmu.edu)

**Office Phone Number:** (424) 568-8372 (or x88372 from a LMU phone)

### Student Meetings

- In-Person Student Drop-By Hours: T/Th, 4:30-5:30pm; W, 1-3pm
- Student Meetings on Zoom are by appointment (sign up here at least 24 hours in advance: <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/na@lmu0.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>)
- Zoom Meeting Link: <https://lmula.zoom.us/my/cpg.lmu>

### Course Description

In this course, we will explore how philosophy can help us to think about what kind of life to live and what is true. *Philosophia* (the Greek word from which we get the English word “philosophy”) means “love of wisdom,” and we will explore together how loving and pursuing wisdom shapes our vision of who we are, what we should pursue, and what the world can be.

We will do this examining several fundamental philosophical problems: whether and what we can know, what the nature of human persons is and how we should think about our own identities, the relationship between free will and moral responsibility, and the nature of goodness and meaning. Among the questions to be examined are:

- How do we know anything about the world, and particularly, how do we know anything about what human beings are?
- What makes you the person you are, and in what ways will you be the same (or a totally different person) 50 years from now?
- Do we have free will, and is free will necessary for moral responsibility?
- What makes a life meaningful for human beings?

### Learning Outcomes

As a class that fulfills the LMU Philosophical Inquiry Core requirement, the most important course objective is developing the capacity for individual philosophical inquiry and self-reflection. Students who successfully complete the course will:

- (1) Reflect on how the questions and problems raised by metaphysics (the study of reality and what is true), epistemology (the study of knowledge and how we come to know things), and ethics (the study of what is good and right) should shape how we think about ourselves as human persons.
- (2) Engage in conversations that seek to understand and analyze the philosophical claims and conclusions.
- (3) Understand how to develop philosophical questions and arguments.
- (4) Examine how philosophical considerations relate to your own beliefs, values, and actions.

## **Required Materials**

All readings will be posted on Brightspace, either as a PDF or a link to online material. I highly recommend printing the PDFs, for a couple of reasons:

- We all are more likely to skim when we are reading in an electronic format vs. reading a printed work, and reading philosophy requires careful and thorough reading (see [this article](#) in *Scientific American* on the difference between reading in digital format vs. print format; a literature review of the relevant studies is found [here](#)).
- Our eyes are more likely to get tired when reading online, and especially now that we are having classes in an online format, we are all spending more time staring at a screen than we used to.
- When discussing texts during class, it is easier to flip between pages if you have a physical copy vs. a digital copy.

You will get the most out of the texts if you make sure to set aside enough time to read through the text prior to class several times (we will discuss specific techniques) and annotate the texts as you read. We will use the texts in class, so come prepared to further annotate and refer to the text in class by bring all readings to class in hardcopy. If you did not bring your hard copy format of the text for that day, you may be unable to complete in-class assignments; since laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted in class, electronic access is *not* a substitute for having a hard copy.

Since we will be meeting initially on Zoom and you will be submitting work electronically, you must also have a computer/tablet capable of using Zoom, Internet access that is capable of using video, and a quiet space free of distractions during our twice per week meetings for the first few weeks.

All LMU students have access to Office 365 and Zoom accounts free of charge. The best way to access these tools is by logging in through myLMU. For Zoom, you will need to create a Zoom account by logging in through myLMU first.

## **Workload Expectations**

General expectations of work outside of the class is 2-3 hours per unit of college credit, so for this 4-credit class, that equals 8-12 hours every week outside of the classroom. Of course, some weeks this

will be less and some weeks it will be more, but this should be the course average expectation over the course of the semester.

## **Assessments**

Class Contribution (20%), Reading Quizzes (20%), Argument Exercises (20%), Philosophical Apology (35%), Self-Reflection (5%)

### Class Contribution

Philosophy is an interactive discipline, so this class offers the opportunity to create a learning community in which we all have a responsibility to push the discussion forward by co-creating the philosophical community that we build together. Active participation requires preparation for the class (the kind of careful, charitable, and critical engagement with the readings that prepares you to discuss the ideas and arguments presented) and your full focus while in conversation so that you can listen well to what others are saying, respond helpfully to your fellow participants, and develop your own ideas. Since our class time will typically be split into a number of blocks of discussion (both in our whole group and in smaller groups) and interactive activities, excellent contribution will demonstrate excellence in each of those realms. I recognize that some students are less comfortable than others speaking in class, but reading and thinking carefully and critically allows you to reflect on the ideas prior to class. Contributions can take many forms, such as:

- Asking careful and critical questions about the ideas and arguments put forward in the text or fellow class participants
- Helping other participants to work out their ideas through careful questions
- Criticizing, correcting, or responding to the arguments presented in the text and by other class participants
- Developing a positive interpretation of the arguments or ideas in the text
- Connecting the current text or questions to ideas explored elsewhere, either earlier in the class or in the world outside of the classroom

Class contribution includes both our class hours together as well as online discussion on Brightspace that will continue the rest of the week, and will include the frequent short pre-class activities designed to prepare you for class. Active participation in both mediums will be part of measuring contribution.

### Reading Quizzes

Before most classes, there will be a short reading quiz (plus one extra quiz completed during week 1 on the syllabus). You will have 15 minutes to complete your quiz on Brightspace, and you must begin your quiz by 11am on the day of class; this allows me the chance to review the quiz results before our time together. You may make use of your own class/reading notes and the assigned text, but no other materials during the quiz. The expectation is that you should do well on these if you have done the reading carefully and critically (this means that you have not merely read the material but you have thought about it beforehand). I do not write questions to be tricky or ambiguous, but a quick skim of

the reading will not generally lead to success on these. Reading quizzes cannot be made up, but the four (4) lowest scores will be dropped.

### Questions and Argument Exercises

There will be three argument exercises designed to help you develop the skills to develop philosophical questions and arguments.

### Philosophical Apology

This writing assignment will be a defense of your philosophical beliefs in a sustained, coherent essay form, integrated with application to how it is you think it is philosophically defensible to live your life.

### Self-Reflection

This assignment will reflect on your learning over the course of the semester in a creative way.

## **Grading Scale**

A+ = 97-100, A = 93-96, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D = 60-69, F = 0-59

## **Late Assignment Policy**

I know that life happens, so you have one free, no-questions-asked, no-excuse-needed late submission allowed per semester that extends your assignment due date for 48 hours (though you do need to communicate via email that you are doing that prior to the submission deadline and when you submit your assignment, remind me that you are using your late pass; this late assignment policy also does not apply to the discussion posts since your classmates depend on those being submitted in a timely fashion). If you have particular extenuating circumstances that might justify an extension of longer than 48 hours, please let me know that you will be requesting an extension of more than 48 hours. For any other late assignments, please see the rubric for that assignment.

To be counted as being submitted on time, the file must be received in the appropriate, working format; it is the student's responsibility to verify this. If there are technical issues, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor immediately in an email with the file/content that they are attempting to submit and a screenshot of the problem. This allows us a chance to resolve the issue prior to the deadline. If this is done before the deadline, a one-time exception may be made to the late policy, but no other exceptions will be made.

## **Electronics Policy**

Due to the distractions caused by electronic devices, all electronic devices (including laptops) should be **silenced and put away** for the duration of in-person classes. Any electronics during the class that are not put away may be temporarily confiscated, and your contribution mark for that class will be negatively impacted since the use is not only distracting for yourself but distracting for others around you.

The primary reason for this policy is that the use of personal electronics in the classroom undermines learning, both for the student using the device and for others in the class. For example:

- 1) Almost no one can multi-task well (e.g., according to [this study](#), approximately 2% of the population is decent at it, and it is significantly lowers performance for everyone else), and [multi-tasking impairs long-term retention of material](#).
- 2) There is a lot of evidence (e.g., [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) that taking notes by hand is much more effective than typing for retention of material. If you want a digital version of your notes, scan them or, better, type them out after class since interacting with the material once again will help with long-term retention and engagement.
- 3) Using electronic devices in the classroom is distracting to other students, and [lowers grades for everyone](#) (to read about two other studies that show this, see [here](#) and [here](#)).

During our virtual class periods, the use of an electronic device will obviously be essential to participate, but using such devices can create a temptation to multi-task during class time. This can be distracting to other students and disrespectful to the person speaking during this time, be it the professor or a classmate, so please refrain from using technology for anything other than our current course material.

## **Communication**

- For questions about the course generally (where the answer may benefit other students), please post your question in the “Questions about the Class” forum on the Brightspace discussion space.
- If you have other questions or comments, I encourage you to reach out to me by email at any time, but please first check that the answer is not found in the syllabus or on Brightspace.
- I will respond to emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. I aim to respond within 12 hours during normal business hours, but do not depend on this; I encourage you to begin assignments early and contact me/post on Brightspace as soon as you recognize you have a question.
- I am also available to talk in-person during drop-in office hours or on Zoom by appointment. To make an automated booking for a Zoom meeting with me, please go to the following link: <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/na@lmu0.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>. It will ask you to select your meeting length (30 minutes, 45 minutes, or 1 hour), select a time to meet, and then add in any details I should know (for example, if you want to discuss a particular assignment you have already submitted, letting me know in advance allows me a chance to review it before we meet). Please schedule any meetings 18 hours in advance so that I can plan my day accordingly (e.g., if you want to meet at 10am, please schedule by 4pm the day before). If you want to meet more urgently than that, please email me directly.
- All meetings will be conducted via Zoom, using my personal meeting room; the Link Name for this is cpg.lmu, and the Zoom link is <https://lmu0.zoom.us/j/cpg.lmu>. If you are put in a waiting room when you arrive to the link, this is not a technical problem; this is just because I am in a meeting with someone else and will be with you in a minute.

- Brightspace and your official LMU email will be used for all communication, so it is your responsibility to check both on a daily basis. You can also set your Brightspace settings so that you receive notification when something new is posted, but I also encourage a habit of logging in each day as well.

## **Attendance Policy**

The default assumption is that you will be present and engaged at all class sessions. As conversational partners together, we all have a responsibility to participate in pushing the discussion forward in the classroom. This only happens if we are all engaged, however, and a necessary (but not sufficient!) condition of this is being present for the discussion. As a result, attendance is required, and I will keep track of it for every class. You are, nevertheless, free to miss up to three class periods with no questions asked (there is no need to inform me or explain why). After the three absences have been exceeded, each further absence will lower your class contribution grade. To avoid this situation, it would be wise to reserve absences for unexpected problems that may unexpectedly happen (e.g., falling ill or getting a flat tire on the way to class). Since three absences are permitted for any reason, I rarely excuse further absences. However, in rare cases, I may make further exceptions. Except in the case of a medical emergency affecting you or your family, you must receive approval from me before the missed class, so please speak with me as soon as possible. While no supporting documentation is required for the three freebie absences, I may ask for it in the case of any additional excused absences.

## **Class Participation Expectations**

- Come to our class discussions prepared to talk about the readings assigned for that day. Preparing for discussion means that you should have read and annotated the text carefully and thought about what questions you have and in what ways you can contribute to the discussion.
- Please arrive prepared to focus for the duration of the class period. Behaviors that distract and interrupt the learning environment are inappropriate. Sometimes unexpected things come up that may require you to leave (e.g., an emergency phone call that could not be rescheduled or a sudden and acute illness), but prepare for the things that you can (e.g., plan to use the restroom prior to class, not during our time together). Missing our synchronous class time together should be rare and only for a very good reason, not a regular occurrence, and it will be reflected in your attendance record and participation grade.
- Use language that is respectful and inclusive. It is perfectly fine to disagree with views expressed (either by the readings or other students), but target the argument you disagree with, not the person.

## **Technology Challenges**

- If you have any technical challenges with Brightspace, please email me immediately, along with a screenshot of the problem. Please also contact the ITS Service Desk (310-338-7777 or 213-736-1097; [helpdesk@lmu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@lmu.edu)) immediately to get your issue resolved.

- If you have technical issues with Zoom, first try re-starting (especially if you have just come from another Zoom session).
- If restarting doesn't work, please email both me and ITS immediately and try your phone; you can register your phone through the same link that you registered initially, so you shouldn't have any problems adding to the class. You may not have access this way to all of the class features, but it would be better than nothing.

## **Academic Honesty**

All students will be expected to follow LMU's Academic Honesty Policy, found at <https://academics.lmu.edu/honesty/>. This document outlines the university's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. While it is expected that you will discuss the issues in the course with other students both in and out of class, all written work you turn in must be *your own*. Please come talk to me if you have questions about what this means! Passages taken from another source must be *explicitly quoted and cited*. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be addressed prior to handing in your written assignments. Ignorance of what is required will not be accepted as an excuse. Also, even if it your own work, work submitted for credit in this course cannot have been submitted for another course. Finally, unless it is explicitly allowed, work written up for an earlier assignment in this course also cannot be used wholesale for a later assignment and all work must be submitted according to the assignment directions in a working file. Again, please ask prior to submission if you have any questions.

One tool I may use this semester is Turnitin. Loyola Marymount University has partnered with the third-party application Turnitin to help maintain our standards of excellence in academic integrity. Turnitin is a suite of tools that provide instructors with information about the authenticity of submitted work and facilitates the process of grading for instructors. Submitted files are compared against an extensive database of content comprising of over 165 million journal articles, 1 billion student papers, and 62 billion current and archived websites. Turnitin produces a similarity report and a similarity score. A similarity score is the percentage of a document that is similar to content held within the database. A similarity report gives the instructor more information about any potential matches and their sources. Turnitin does not determine if an instance of plagiarism has occurred. Instead, it gives instructors the information they need to determine the authenticity of work as a part of a larger process. All submissions to this course may be checked using Turnitin.

## **The Academic Resource Center at LMU**

An important part of improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your writing projects in progress. The Writing Center offers free online consultations in which you can get feedback from a peer writer at any stage in your process. For more information, including hours of operation, check out the Writing Center's website: <https://academics.lmu.edu/arc/writingcenter/>. To make a writing tutoring appointment or find a course study group, please see instructions and links at <https://academics.lmu.edu/arc/coursetutoring/>.

## **Special Accommodations**

Students with an identified disability who require accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing academic accommodations should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 310.338.4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit [www.lmu.edu/dss](http://www.lmu.edu/dss) for additional information.

## **On Campus Resources**

I am available to help you with this class or with anything related to your experience at LMU more generally, so I hope that you will always feel free to speak with me if you have any problems. However, I also encourage you to make use of specialized resources on campus as well. Those include:

- [Academic Resource Center](#) (Daum Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 310.338.2847)
- [Disability Support Services](#) (Daum Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 310.338.4535)
- [Campus Ministry](#) (Malone Student Center 210, 310. 338.2860)
- [Student Health Services](#) (Burns Recreation Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, North, 310.338.2881)
- [Student Psychological Services](#) (Burns Recreation Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, North, 310.338.2868)
- [LGBTQ Student Services](#) (Malone Student Center 201, 310.258.5482)
- [Title IX Office](#) (Sara Trivedi, UHall 1900, 310.568.6105, [strivedi@lmu.edu](mailto:strivedi@lmu.edu))
- [Food Pantry](#) (adjacent to St. Robert's Annex, [lmufoodpantry@lmu.edu](mailto:lmufoodpantry@lmu.edu))

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications announced in class or posted on Brightspace.

## **Reading & Assignment Schedule**

*Module 1: Philosophical Methods & Aims*

### **Week 1**

Tuesday, January 11: Introduction

Thursday, January 13: Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman, “Key Philosophical Questions” (Ch. 5, pp. 76-92); Anthony Weston & Stephen Bloch-Schulman, “Questioning-Centered Classes” (pp. 118-122 & 127-129)

Sunday, January 16 (11:59pm): **Quiz 1**

### **Week 2**

Tuesday, January 18: Mara Harrell, “Thinking Philosophically”; “Introduction to Plato’s *Apology*” Video; Plato, *Apology*; **Quiz 2**

Thursday, January 20: David Concepción, “How to Read Philosophy”; Bertrand Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”; **Quiz 3**



*Module 2: Doubt, Certainty, & Disagreement*

**Week 3**

Tuesday, January 25: René Descartes, *Meditations* I-II; Mara Harrell, “8.1: René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*”; **Quiz 4**

Thursday, January 27: René Descartes, *Meditations* III- IV; **Quiz 5**

**Week 4**

Tuesday, February 1: Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”; C. Thi Nguyen, “Escape the Echo Chamber”;

**Quiz 6**

Thursday, February 3: John Stuart Mill, Ch. 2 (selections) from *On Liberty*; **Quiz 7**

**Week 5**

Tuesday, February 8: José Medina, Ch. 1 from *The Epistemology of Resistance* (pp. 27-55); **Quiz 8**

Thursday, February 10: José Medina, Ch. 4, parts 4.2-4.2.2 from *The Epistemology of Resistance* (pp. 133-150); **Quiz 9**

Sunday, February 13: **Exercise 1**

*Module 3: Identity & the Self*

**Week 6**

Tuesday, February 15: “Overview of Personal Identity” Video; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chapter xxvii: Identity and Diversity, sections 6-12 & 14-21; **Quiz 10**

Thursday, February 17: Thomas Reid, “Chapter 6: Locke’s Account of Our Personal Identity”; Louise France, “The Death of Yesterday”; Oliver Sacks, “The Abyss”; Wearing videos; **Quiz 11**

**Week 7**

Tuesday, February 22: “Identity vs. Survival” Videos; Derek Parfit, “Personal Identity”; Charlie Huenemann, “If I Teleport from Mars, Does the Original Me Get Destroyed?”; **Quiz 12**

Thursday, February 24: Stephen Blatti, “We Are Animals”; **Quiz 13**

Sunday, February 27: **Exercise 2; Class Contribution Self-Assessment for Weeks 1-7; Breakout Group Contribution for Weeks 1-7**

**Week 8**

Tuesday, March 1: NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Thursday, March 3: NO CLASS (Spring Break)

**Week 9**

Tuesday, March 8: “Relational Identity, Autonomy, and Meaning in Brison” Video; Susan Brison, “Personal Identity and Relational Selves”; *Optional*: Susan Brison, “Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity” (esp. “The Embodied Self” section, pp. 41-49); **Quiz 14**

Thursday, March 10: Kwame Anthony Appiah, “ ‘But Would That Still Be Me?’ ”; **Quiz 15**

*Module 4: Free Will & Moral Responsibility*

**Week 10**

Tuesday, March 15: Sarah Lucas, “Free Will and the Anders Breivik Trial”; Ted Chiang, “What’s Expected of Us”; Galen Strawson, “Free Will”; **Quiz 16**

Thursday, March 17: Christian List, “Science Hasn’t Refuted Free Will”; Ching-Hung Woo, “Free Will Is An Illusion, But Freedom Isn’t”; **Quiz 17**

Friday, March 18: Deadline to withdraw or switch to Credit/No Credit

**Week 11**

Tuesday, March 22: Gerald Harrison, “Frankfurt’s Refutation of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities”; Harry Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”; **Quiz 18**

Thursday, March 24: Susan Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”; **Quiz 19**

Sunday, March 27: **Apology Draft (1<sup>st</sup> Part)**

**Week 12**

Tuesday, March 29: Michele Moody-Adams, “Culture, Responsibility, Affected Ignorance”; **Quiz 20**

Thursday, March 31: NO CLASS (Cesar Chavez Holiday)

*Module 5: Meaning & the Good Life*

**Week 13**

Tuesday, April 5: Richard Taylor, “The Meaning of Life”; **Quiz 21**

Thursday, April 7: Susan Wolf, “The Meanings of Lives”; **Quiz 22**

Sunday, April 10: **Exercise 3**

**Week 14**

Tuesday, April 12: Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd”; **Quiz 23**

Thursday, April 14: NO CLASS (Easter Holiday)

**Week 15**

Tuesday, April 19: Laurence Thomas, “Morality and a Meaningful Life”; **Quiz 24**

Thursday, April 21: NO CLASS; **Apology Draft (2<sup>nd</sup> Part)**

Sunday, April 24: **Apology Peer Review**

**Week 16**

Tuesday, April 26: Thomas Nagel, “Death”

Thursday, April 28: Concluding Workshop Wrap-Up

Friday, April 29: **Class Contribution Assessments for Weeks 9-16**

**Finals Week**

Tuesday, May 3: **Apology**

Thursday, May 5: **Self-Reflection**