

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy II**  
**Course Outline**

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**PLEASE NOTE: LAPTOP COMPUTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN CLASS.**

**Course Description:**

A continuation of the first semester's introduction to the field of philosophy. We shall examine classic texts from the modern period forward that draw together deep insights into recurring philosophical topics such as human nature, metaphysics, knowledge, logic, value, art, ethics, and politics. The course aims to continue the work done at familiarizing the student with logical ways of thinking, appreciating the value of philosophical enquiry in their own lives, and providing a basic understanding of some fundamental philosophical questions (and answers). Most of our texts were chosen in order to emphasize the on-going nature of the philosophical project: philosophy is a grand discussion about all aspects of reality that you are invited to join in. All of the texts used in this course have an ability to marry literary distinctiveness with profundity, and we shall investigate how both of these aspects work together.

**Assignments:**

Students will be required to complete three short essays to the ideas presented in the texts and a final exam. Students will also be required to fill out and hand in argument outlines form for each of the written essays; failure to do so will result in a loss of 10% from their grade on the essays. Each response will be worth 20% of the final grade. The final exam will be worth 30%. Students will also be evaluated on their participation in the class (10%).

A short essay will consist in an answer to the question provided for the texts that we study. We shall be looking for slightly longer analyses than in the first semester, and each response should be no less than 3 pages in length. Any shorter and your response will seem superficial; any longer and I might question the conciseness of your response.

**Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1 Jan 3	Epistemology, Certainty	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 1-2
2 Jan 10	Dualism	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 3-4
3 Jan 17	Proof for God's Existence	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 5-6
4 Jan 24	Perception	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> Dialogue
5 Jan 31	Idealism	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dialogue
6 Feb 7	Skepticism	Berkeley, <i>Dialogues</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dialogue
7 Feb 14	Atomism	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (1-30)
8 Feb 28	Perception	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (31-60)
9 Mar 7	Possible Worlds	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> (61-90)
10 Mar 14	Skepticism, Enlightenment	Kant, <i>Cosmopolitanism</i>
11 Mar 21	Alienated Labour	Marx, <i>Economic Manuscripts of 1844</i>
12 Mar 28	Pragmatism	Pierce, <i>How to Make Our Ideas Clear</i>
13 Apr 4	Review	

### Short Assignments:

#### #1: due Jan 31<sup>st</sup> (Argument Outline due Jan 24<sup>th</sup>)

In the *Meditations*, Descartes uses the example of a wax block to support his position of not trusting the senses. Provide your best argument against Descartes' use of the wax block, showing that the senses may be trusted.

#### #2: due Feb 28<sup>th</sup> (Argument Outline due Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>)

How would Berkeley assess Descartes' distinction between mental and physical stuff?

#### #3: due Mar 21<sup>st</sup> (Argument Outline due Mar 14<sup>th</sup>)

When such a thing becomes economically feasible, should humans begin ordinary habitation (i.e. non-research driven habitation) in the Antarctic continent?

### Technical Considerations for Written Assignments:

1) All written assignments must be typed (black ink, please) and double-spaced in Times New Roman font on pages with at most 1 inch margins. No extra line spaces between paragraphs. Indent the first line of a paragraph. Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper is quite acceptable.

2) Please no title pages. Also no "Works Cited" or "Bibliography" pages referring to one work; do bibliographic references in a footnote if you must. Please no enormously large-fonted things like titles, names, dates, course numbers, student numbers, phone numbers, or due dates that take up half a page of space. Your title, name, and student number at the top of the first page is quite sufficient. Please visibly number any multiple-page assignments. If for some reason you must hand in the assignment to the office, please include my name at the top of the assignment as well.

3) No duo-tangs, folders, binders, or paperclips. Loose sheets are acceptable, but do remember to number them.

4) Under no circumstances will emailed assignments be accepted. Please hand in your assignments at the start of class on the day they are due.

5) For help on writing humanities papers, please consult the handout, "The Logic of Essays".

6) The final page of this outline is the evaluation form that will be used in the assessment of your writing. This evaluation form provides the clearest explanation of my requirements for an essay. Please, study it carefully before you write your work.

7) The late policy is a deduction of 3% per day that the assignment is handed in late. This course outline lets you know when assignments are due, and you have been given plenty of time to complete them. Consequently last minute excuses for not completing assignments on time will be met with skepticism.

7) Many of the above requirements are arbitrary demands on my part, but they really do facilitate the assessment of your work. If you do not follow these guidelines, YOUR MARK FOR ORGANIZATION ON THE EVALUATION FORM WILL SUFFER DRASTICALLY.

8) Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. If you make use of an idea that is not of your own devising, you must cite the source of that idea. Failure to properly cite sources may result from removal from the course and expulsion from the school.

**EVALUATION FORM**  
**(Late assignments will not receive comments)**

Style:

Grammar: Are the sentences understandable? Are there any spelling mistakes? Is the diction clear and concise? Can the thought behind each sentence easily be grasped?

/10

Organization: Do the ideas logically follow each other, or were they haphazardly strewn together? Do the ideas flow from each other, with explicit premises deductively producing conclusions? Are the arguments connected at all, showing a chain of reasoning?

/10

Content:

Argument Outline: Are proper arguments as laid out in the handout used? Are the arguments valid? Is there a variety of argument types? Are they readable?

/10

Thesis: Does the assignment give an answer to a question or problem put forward? Is the answer more than a simple "yes" or "no"? Is the answer insightful, being an interpretive idea itself? Is the thesis explicitly stated?

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Arguments: Are there arguments presented in the paper? Are the arguments interesting or banal? Are the arguments incisive or superficial? Do the arguments explicitly outline broad premises that act as guides to understanding and reveal the unquestioned perspectives adopted in the paper?

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Originality: Does the student provide input into the conceptual debates the text engages in? Is there evidence of insight on the student's part into the topic? Are there any new ideas being explored in the assignment? Is the student able to go beyond ideas raised in class discussion?

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Evaluation: Does the student give a fair summation of the ideas contained in the texts used? Are passages from the text cited? Does the use of these ideas meaningfully contribute to the thesis of the essay, or is the use of material a mere addendum to the main arguments of the paper?

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