# University of New Mexico-Valencia Campus

*Course syllabus*

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| **Course Title** | Introduction to Philosophy |
| **Course Prefix, Number, and Section** | PHIL-1115-501 |
| **Professor** | Dr. Daniel Murphy |
| **Term** | Fall 2025 |
| **Meeting Times** | Online |
| **Email Address** | dmurphy5@unm.edu |
| **Course Access** | https://canvas.unm.edu/ |

## General Course Information

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| **Welcome to PHIL-1115!** | I'm Dr. Daniel Murphy, I love teaching philosophy, researching, writing, and being able to enjoy academic life, in which I've been working for well over ten years. In this course, our focus is on introducing the history of Western philosophy. As we advance in the course, we will be able to explore and learn about the work of many important figures in the history of Western philosophy, as well as main areas in philosophy, and I hope we will also be able to see how it can help us to think about many problems and issues that we have today as well.<br><br>On a more personal note, I also like reading the great works in world literature (as time permits), and inevitably, the ideas in those great novels connect with many important philosophical ideas and issues. But things indeed get busy, so there is often not enough time to squeeze it all in! |
| **Course catalog description** | *PHIL-1115: Introduction to Philosophy*. In this course, students will be introduced to some of the key questions of philosophy through the study of classical and contemporary thinkers. Some of the questions students might consider are: Do we have free will? What is knowledge? What is the mind? What are our moral obligations to others? Students will engage with and learn to critically assess various philosophical approaches to such questions. Meets New Mexico General Education Curriculum Area 5: Humanities. This is a three credit-hour course delivered in an entirely asynchronous online modality during the Fall 2025 semester. |
| **Learning outcomes** | By the end of this course, students should be able to:<br><br>1. Identify some of the perennial problems and issues of philosophy as found in classical Greek sources (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), and compare and contrast certain positions in this tradition.<br>2. Explain and critically discuss philosophical problems, issues, and arguments as found in later philosophy, particularly in modern philosophical sources and texts, and compare and contrast certain key philosophical positions. |
| **Textbook and readings** | *The Great Conversation: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy,* by Norman Melchert and David R. Morrow. 8th edition, Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-067061-0<br><br>This text almost all of the required readings for the course. All readings are from *The Great Conversation*, unless otherwise indicated (there will be one required reading toward the end of the course that is freely downloadable from UNM Canvas). |

## Academic Calendar

| Week/Date(s) | Brief description of topics and readings – see UNM Canvas for assignments, pages to read and study, due dates, .pdf readings, and other details for each weekly cycle |
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| Week 1: 8/18 – 11:30 pm on 8/24 | Introduction to course, ancient Athens, the Sophists, and Socrates |
| Week 2: 8/25 – 11:30 pm on 8/31 | Socrates and Plato's *Apology*; Plato's philosophy |
| Week 3: 9/1 - 11:30 pm on 9/7 | Plato's philosophy (cont.) |
| Week 4: 9/8 – 11:30 pm on 9/14 | Elements of Aristotle's philosophy |
| Week 5: 9/15 – 11:30 pm on 9/21 | Transition from medieval era to modernity |
| Week 6: 9/22 – 11:30 pm on 9/28 | Descartes and rationalism |
| Week 7: 9/29 - 11:30 pm on 10/5 | Descartes and rationalism (cont.) |
| Week 8: 10/6 – 11:30 pm on 10/12 | The Enlightenment, empiricism, and Hume |
| Week 9: 10/13 – 11:30 pm on 10/19 | Empiricism and Hume |
| Week 10: 10/20 – 11:30 pm on 10/26 | Empiricism and Hume (cont.) |
| Week 11: 10/27 – 11:30 pm on 11/2 | Modern philosophy and the self |
| Week 12: 11/3 – 11:30 pm on 11/9 | Modern philosophy and the self |
| Week 13: 11/10 – 11:30 pm on 11/16 | Modern philosophy and the self; elements of contemporary philosophy of mind |
| Week 14: 11/17 – 11:30 pm on 11/23 | Elements of contemporary philosophy of mind (cont.) |
| Week 15: 11/24 – 11:30 pm on 11/30 | *As this week is Thanksgiving week, there are no new assignments or readings.* |
| Week 16: 12/1 – 11:30 pm on 12/7 | Last week of course (final exam-essay due on 12/7) |

## Course Components: Required Assignments

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| **6 Tests (40%)** | The maximum credit (total point value) that can be earned for each test is 100 points. Each test is worth approximately 6.66% of the overall grade for the course.<br>Some tests are shorter, and some are longer. The grading system for these tests will be as follows:<br>90 - 100 points: "A" range<br>80 - 90 points: "B" range<br>70 - 80 points: "C" range<br>60 - 70 points: "D" range<br>Fewer than 60 points: "F" |
| **1 Final Exam-Essay (15%)** | The maximum credit (total point value) that can be earned for the final exam, which will be an essay assignment, is 100 points. The essay is worth 15% of the overall grade for the course. For additional rubric and grading information, see below. |
| **9 Discussion Forum Assignments (45%)** | The maximum credit that can be earned for each forum assignment is 100 points. Each forum assignment is worth 5% of the overall grade for the course. For additional rubric and grading information, see below. |

## Grading Rubrics for Final Exam-Essay and Discussion Forum Assignments

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| **Grading rubric for final exam-essay assignment** | *The final exam-essay will be evaluated using the criteria listed below. Study these criteria carefully. Simply putting in time and doing all of the work will not guarantee a high grade. Quality is what counts!*<br><br>**Criteria for "A" range grades:** Students show that they understand the material very well and are able to construct an essay which expresses the relevant ideas, concepts, and arguments in their own words, which incorporates their own insights, and which is presented in a clear, well-organized form. The essay has a well-supported thesis, incorporates relevant distinctions, definitions, and other issues raised by the materials covered. The essay has solid supporting evidence and arguments. The essay is well-written and has few or no grammatical mistakes and/or mechanical errors. The assignment directions have been followed, and the essay has been submitted on time.<br><br>**Criteria for "B" range grades:** Students show that they understand the material well but their own contribution is more limited. The arguments and/or evidence provided are not as convincing, and the materials covered are less well incorporated. There may be a few issues regarding the clarity of writing, grammar, syntax, and/or other mechanical errors, but generally, the essay is still easy to follow. All assignment directions have been followed, and the essay normally has been submitted on time.<br><br>**Criteria for "C" range grades:** The essay reflects that students understand some issues, but miss some important points. The essay is not as well-written and lacks some clarity, but it can still be followed. The arguments and/or supporting evidence are unconvincing, perhaps because key issues are missed or because the writing (grammar, syntax, etc.) is poor enough to significantly affect the content of the essay. Some assignment directions were not followed. The essay may have been submitted late. |

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| | **Criteria for "D" range grades:** The essay does not show sufficient understanding of the key issues. The content that the essay was meant to treat is substantially missing. The supporting evidence and/or supporting arguments for the thesis are missing, sparse, or of poor quality. The writing itself is generally of poor quality, with numerous clear flaws and errors in grammar, syntax, and/or other mechanical errors, so that the essay runs the risk of being unintelligible. Some or most of the assignment directions were not followed. The essay may have been submitted late.<br><br>**Criteria for an "F" grade:** The essay shows little understanding of the key issues. The content that the essay was meant to cover is largely or entirely missing. Supporting evidence and supporting arguments are very sparse, of very poor quality, or not present at all. Writing is very disorganized, with many significant flaws and errors in grammar and syntax, to the point that the essay cannot be understood at all. Most or all of the essay assignment directions were not followed. The essay may have been submitted late.<br><br>'Perfect' A essay will be recorded as 100/100 points – well-done!<br>A essay (but a bit less than 'perfect') will be recorded as 95/100 points<br>A- essay will be recorded as a 91.5/100 points<br>B+ essay will be recorded as 88/100 points<br>B essay will be recorded as 85/100 points<br>B- essay will be recorded as 81.5/100 points<br>C+ essay will be recorded as 78/100 points<br>C essay will be recorded as 75/100 points<br>C- essay will be recorded as 71.5/100 points<br>D+ essay will be recorded as 68/100 points<br>D essay will be recorded as 65/100 points<br>F essay will be recorded as 50/100 points or 0/100 points (incomplete or violating academic integrity) |
| **Grading rubric for discussion forum assignments** | *Forum posts made on UNM Canvas by the assignment deadline will be graded using the criteria listed below.*<br><br>A range: Posts have substantial content. They are well organized and very well written, with conciseness, style and insight. Posts normally have at most one grammatical, spelling, or punctuation mistake. Posts stand out as short written pieces.<br>B range: Posts have substantial content which reflect and respond to the forum topic, are relatively well organized, and are acceptably written. Posts likely contain one or more grammatical, spelling or punctuation mistakes. Posts are satisfactory for the demands of the assignment, but do not stand out.<br>C range: Posts have a little more substantial content, but drift off topic and/or suffer from weak organization, and also likely have several grammatical, spelling or punctuation mistakes. Post are marginally acceptable as short written pieces. Posts may be missing.<br>D range: Posts have a bit of substantial content. However, they make only marginal reference to course content, readings, or forum topic, and contains several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation mistakes. They likely suffer from a combination of these kinds of deficiencies, and posts are also poorly organized. Posts are mostly unacceptable as short written pieces. Posts may be missing.<br>F: Posts have very little substantial content, do not seriously reflect the course content, readings, or forum topic, contain numerous significant |

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| | grammatical, spelling or punctuation mistakes, and likely suffer from a combination of these kinds of deficiencies. Posts are very badly organized. Posts may be missing. Overall, posts are unacceptable as short written pieces.<br><br>'Perfect' A forum will be recorded as 100/100 points- well done!<br>A forum (but a bit less than 'perfect') will be recorded as 95/100 points<br>A- forum will be recorded as a 91.5/100 points<br>B+ forum will be recorded as 88/100 points<br>B forum will be recorded as 85/100 points<br>B- forum will be recorded as 81.5/100 points<br>C+ forum will be recorded as 78/100 points<br>C forum will be recorded as 75/100 points<br>C- forum will be recorded as 71.5/100 points<br>D+ forum will be recorded as 68/100 points<br>D forum will be recorded as 65/100 points<br>F forum will be recorded as 50/100 points or 0/100 points (incomplete or violating academic integrity) |

## Course Policies (1): Submitting Assignments Online; Missed and Late Assignments

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| **Submitting online assignments: general remarks** | Above is the list of the assignments that will receive grades, and as well the basic week-by-week plan of the course (academic calendar). More specific information about the pages for the readings will be found on UNM Canvas. On UNM Canvas, you will also find the graded assignments for each week, with specific due dates. In order to be able to receive full credit for the graded assignments, you will have to complete the graded assignments by their specified deadlines. Here are a few additional details regarding each of the different kinds of assignments:<br><br>**For tests:** You will submit your replies to test questions on UNM Canvas directly, which normally will automatically grade the test and present you with your score out of 100.<br><br>**For discussion forum assignments:** Please make sure that you follow the instructions for each assignment, and that you post in the appropriate forum on UNM Canvas (do not attach a separate document which contains your forum assignment, and do not email your forum assignment to me). There are prompts and instructions for each discussion forum, along with a due date for each post that you are required to make in a forum assignment.<br><br>**For the final exam-essay:** You are to write or cut/paste your essay directly into the appropriate place on UNM Canvas for the essay assignment (you should not attach a separate document which contains the essay, and you should not email your essay to me).<br><br>*For all assignments, please make sure you click on the appropriate buttons on UNM Canvas when you are ready to submit the assignment, in order to complete the submission of the assignment properly! Not doing this properly may result in the assignment getting to me late or in not getting to me at all, and in that case you are likely to lose credit.* |

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| **Policy for final exam-essay not turned in** | As a general rule, if the final exam-essay is not turned in then it will receive a grade of 0 points, and a student could receive an F for the course if the essay is not turned in. All final decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, but do note that this policy is normally maintained. |
| **Policy for forum assignments not turned in** | As a general rule, any forum assignment not turned in will receive 0 points, and a student could receive an F for the course if one or all of the forum assignments are not turned in. All final decisions regarding forum assignments not turned in will be made on a case-by-case basis, but do note that this policy is normally maintained. |
| **Policy for forum assignments turned in late** | I reserve the right to subtract five points for each day that any part of a forum assignment is late. If any part of the forum assignment is late, then students have 48 hours after the forum assignment deadline to submit the forum assignment. Once the 48 hours are up, the student normally receives a 0 for the forum assignment, and normally the forum assignment will no longer be accepted. All final decisions regarding late forum assignments will be made on a case-by-case basis, but do note that this lateness policy is typically maintained. |
| **Policy for making an empty or nearly empty post in a forum assignment** | If a student makes an initial empty post (a post with no other text or content) or a nearly empty post in a forum assignment, normally the student loses at least 15 points from the final score for the assignment. Also, more credit (up to 50 points) might be deducted from the final score. The student also might end up receiving a 0 for the assignment.<br><br>This policy (see above) will also normally hold for all other posts made in the discussion forum, i.e. empty or nearly empty reply posts and/or any other empty or nearly empty posts the student makes in the discussion forum. |
| **Policy for tests not turned in** | As a general rule, any test not turned in will receive 0 points, and a student could receive an F for the course if several of the tests are not turned in. All decisions regarding tests not turned in will be made on a case-by-case basis, but do note that this policy is normally maintained. |
| **Policy for tests turned in late** | I reserve the right to subtract ten points for each day that a test is late. If the test is late, then students have 48 hours after the test deadline to submit the test. Once those 48 hours are up, the student normally receives a 0 for the test, and normally the test will no longer be accepted. All final decisions regarding late tests will be made on a case-by-case basis, but do note that this lateness policy is typically maintained. |

## Course Policies (2): Grading, UNM Canvas Usage, Communication, etc.

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| **Grading Criteria and Weighting** | **Grade component weighting**<br>Tests 40%<br>Final exam-essay 15%<br>Discussion Forums 45%<br><br>**Final Course Grade**<br>Throughout the course, you can look to UNM Canvas to see your overall percentage to date. This allows you to see how you are doing in the course. The percentage margins that correspond to the final overall letter grade for the course are as follows:<br><br>*Weighted total grade between…*<br><br>93.5% and up to 100% = A |

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| | 89.5% and less than 93.5% = A-<br>86.5% and less than 89.5% = B+<br>83.5% and less than 86.5% = B<br>79.5% and less than 83.5% = B-<br>76.5% and less than 79.5% = C+<br>73.5% and less than 76.5% = C<br>69.5% and less than 73.5% = C-<br>66.5% and less than 69.5% = D+<br>59.5% and less than 66.5% = D<br>any percentage less than 59.5% earns an F for the course |
| **UNM Canvas Usage** | Especially as this is a fully online course, students need to have regular access to a computer and Internet for email, submitting assignments on UNM Canvas, and accessing all course content on UNM Canvas. The course is run through UNM Canvas, and the course requires that students know how to use UNM Canvas. Use of UNM email by students is required. |
| **Communication and receiving grades and feedback** | Students are welcome to contact me about the course at any time. When a student contacts me by email, he/she can expect a reply within a day or so, including weekends.<br>In terms of receiving grades and feedback, tests are normally graded automatically through UNM Canvas, so students can expect to receive their grade on a test directly after having completed the test. For discussion forum assignments, students can usually expect to receive a grade and some comments on the assignment within a few days after the due date of the last post in the assignment. |
| **PowerPoint notes to guide you, and videos** | On our Canvas platform, you will find several sets of notes (PowerPoint notes) that trace and reflect the readings and course content and are intended to help guide you with respect to the readings and assignments. These notes are recommended for your use as you progress through the course, but they are not required reading There are also a number of videos to guide you as well. |
| **Plagiarism and Cheating** | All issues involving academic integrity and/or plagiarism will be dealt with according to UNM guidelines. As a general rule, a plagiarized essay (or an essay that violates academic integrity in other ways) normally receives 0 points, and more severe penalties (including an "F" for the course, and/or penalties more severe than that) are possible. Plagiarized forum assignments (or a forum assignment that violates academic integrity in other ways) normally receive 0 points, and more severe penalties (including an "F" for the course, and/or penalties more severe than that) are possible. Submitted quizzes that violate academic integrity normally receive 0 points, and more severe penalties (including an "F" for the course, and/or penalties more severe than that) are possible. Also, below is the link to UNM Academic Dishonesty Policy: https://policy.unm.edu/regents-policies/section-4/4-8.html. |
| **Accommodations** | Accommodations: I can make appropriate accommodations that will support you in this class by collaborating with you and the Accessibility Resource Center (https://arc.unm.edu/). It is important that you take the initiative to inform me of your accommodations needs, as I am not legally permitted to inquire. In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. |

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| **UAP 2720 and 2740** | UAP 2720 and 2740. Our classroom and university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. If you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access campus support resources. These include confidential services at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, the Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center. The University of New Mexico prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). UNM faculty and graduate teaching assistants are considered "responsible employees." "Responsible employees" must communicate reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, reporting, and reporting for "responsible employees," please see UAP 2720 and UAP 2740. |

## Course polices (3): Other Policies

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| **Syllabus and auditing** | Any and all parts of the syllabus are subject to change; auditing of the course is not permitted |
| **Deadlines and online coursework** | Odd things happen in cyberspace - computers crash, emails get lost, servers disconnect temporarily, and logins fail. Do not wait for the last minute to do your work. *Allow time to meet deadlines!* Have backup computer access should your computer fail, such as at a neighbor's or friend's place, or at work. As we will be using UNM Canvas for the course, make sure you know how to submit your assignments on UNM Canvas. I will give you the help that I can in terms of UNM Canvas usage, but ultimately, you are responsible for knowing how to use UNM Canvas, and you are responsible for getting any training you need in order to use UNM Canvas. You are also responsible for resolving all technical and IT-related issues that affect your using UNM Canvas for the course, and that affect any aspect of your participation in the course.<br>You are responsible for submitting your assignments on time, no matter what kinds of problems you might have – including (but not limited to) personal problems, time management problems, work problems, family problems, and computer/IT problems. Exceptions for turning in assignments late – for whatever reason – will be made only in the most extraordinary of circumstances, and will be made on a case-by-case basis. |
| **IT/UNM Canvas/email-related technical problems** | You are responsible for resolving any IT/technical issues, including those involving UNM Canvas, so that you can complete your assignments on time and engage with the course normally. If you claim that any kind of IT or UNM Canvas issue has inhibited you from completing the assignments on time and/or submitting them in the correct fashion, then I will do what I can to help. However, there are limitations to how much I can help, and in cases where you need more technical help with UNM Canvas, you are responsible for going to the relevant UNM technical staff and for getting an assessment of the problem and why it inhibited your completing the assignments, and you are also responsible for getting the problem resolved. |
| **Extra credit and end of course** | Opportunities for extra credit assignments are occasionally made available to students. However, if I decide to make extra credit opportunities available to the class, then I will announce this to the |

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| | class toward the end of the course. Do note that the amount of credit to be earned from these possible opportunities is usually rather minimal. So in any case, students should not expect to depend on possible extra credit assignments to boost their grade very much.<br><br>The course ends on **11:30 pm on Sunday, 12/7/25.** Normally, no assignments will be accepted after this deadline. Assignments which have *already* received a grade of 0 due to poor performance, lateness, academic integrity violations, etc. will normally *not* be considered for submission or re-submission before or after the **12/7/25 deadline** (so, any grade of 0 will normally remain a 0). |
| **Tips for Success** | The following is a collection of tips/comments that are meant to assist you in doing as well as possible in online PHIL-1115. Please consider these remarks and let me know if you have questions. Good luck!<br><br>**(1)** *Communicate!* As this course is a fully online course, you need to be willing and ready to communicate with the class online, primarily through UNM Canvas (especially in discussion forum assignments), and you need to be willing and ready to communicate with me online regularly throughout the course.<br><br>**(2)** *Be precise in your study and mastery of the course content*. The course concentrates on a basic study of important concepts in philosophy, at an introductory level. Over the duration of the entire course, skills in reading texts about making and assessing philosophical arguments, concepts and positions, and skills in writing precisely, are quite important. Sometimes, this can be difficult and time-consuming, so be sure to plan accordingly. At all times, be sure to be precise, clear, and consistent in your efforts.<br><br>**(3)** *Know how to use UNM Canvas*. Of course, this is essential for our online course. Know how to find the items and documents for the course.<br><br>**(4)** *Avoid using your cell phone to complete and submit assignments.* LMSs (learning management systems – ours is UNM Canvas) are sometimes difficult to access and work with through cell phones. Trying to complete our course primarily through your phone is risky – assignments might not be submitted properly, etc. Students who do well in the course usually are the ones who are primarily using a laptop, tablet, or other computer – and not a cell phone – for the course. My recommendation is that when you are completing and submitting assignments, use a computer to work with UNM Canvas, and not your cell phone.<br><br>**(5)** *Be sure to read the syllabus carefully and be sure to check your UNM email often (at least a couple of times a week), and to access UNM Canvas often.* The most successful students typically do these things.<br><br>**(6)** *Be sure you have access to the readings.* While we will not be studying every part of the book, most assignments are derived from this book.<br><br>**(7)** *Plan your time accordingly and turn in your assignments on time*. Take into account all of your other commitments and obligations (study, work, family, etc.) and as well possible problems and obstacles (ongoing illness, all sorts of complications due to Covid-19, etc.) There are weekly deadlines for assignments, and the policies for submitting |

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| | assignments by their deadlines will be enforced Students who are quite attentive to their assignments, and who do the work and submit assignments consistently and on time, usually put themselves in a position to do as well as possible.<br><br>**(8)** *Be prepared for a good deal of studying on your own, reading, and self-preparation in order to learn the material and complete the assignments*. To be able to take responsibility for your own studying is part of the nature of all courses, and this is especially the case for online courses.<br><br>**(9)** *Take advantage of help from your classmates (help that does not violate the UNM rules regarding cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity) and from your instructor.* To help guide you in your efforts, there will be PowerPoint notes and discussion forums, etc. But in any case, always feel free to get in touch with me at any time, and I will get back to you directly with your questions and concerns.<br><br>**(10)** *Take advantage of the conditions for the tests.* Note that all the tests are untimed. Also, students can take each test twice. Both attempts must be completed by the deadline for the test. If you submit your test and are not happy with the score, you can take it a second time. Your final score for the test is the higher of the two grades, so you have nothing to lose by taking the test a second time. Once you submit the test a second time, your two attempts for the test are used up.<br><br>**(11)** *Follow the instructions for assignments.* Performing well on assignments demands a range of skills – one of those skills is the ability to follow the instructions for assignments. |