



Course Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy (08/17/2026-12/10/2026)

PHI 2010 / 85423 (WEB) / Fall 2026 Session A

Credit Hours: 3

Pre-requisites: ENC 1101

Contact Information

Instructor

Name: Dr. James Simpson
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Office Hours: T, 9:50 AM-11:50 AM
Response Time: 24 - 48 Hours

Division Chair

Name: Dr. Robert Saunders
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Division Administrative Assistant

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Course Information

Catalog Description:

Catalog Description: Prerequisite: ENC1101 with a minimum grade of "C." (Meets Philosophy/Religion Humanities requirement.) Students in this course will be introduced to the nature of philosophy, philosophical thinking, major intellectual movements in the history of philosophy, including topics from the Western philosophical tradition, and various problems in philosophy. Students will strengthen their intellectual skills, become more effective learners, and develop broad foundational knowledge. PHI 2010 requires that students produce extensive college-level writing and complete the course with a minimum grade of "C."

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

- Students will develop critical thinking skills.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of classical Western philosophical views
- Students will analyze, explain, and evaluate foundational concepts of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

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Course Materials & Resources:

Technology Requirements

Canvas is where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course, so you will need to be able to reliably access Canvas.

Textbook & Reading Materials

The textbook for the course: [Beginning Philosophy](#), Ryan Hubbard (free to students through Canvas). All other required readings will be made freely available on Canvas as accessible PDFs.

Delivery Method:

This is a web-based course. All online courses at GCSC utilize the Canvas Learning System. Students should read all information presented in the Canvas course site and should periodically check for updates--at least every 48 hours. **Remember:** This course is not one in which students may work at their own pace. Each week, there are learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with due dates. Refer to the schedule within this syllabus for more information.

Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or Zoom,

assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions promptly. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

Course Schedule

8/17: Arguments. *Reading:* Bergmann et al, 'Introduction to Deductive Reasoning'.

8/24: Ontological Argument. *Reading:* Anselm, 'Ontological Argument'.

8/31: Contingency Argument. *Reading:* Aquinas, 'Five Ways'.

9/6: Fine-Tuning Argument. *Reading:* White, 'The Fine-Tuning Argument'.

9/13: Problem of Evil. *Reading:* Mackie, 'Evil and Omnipotence'.

9/20: Pascal's Wager. *Reading:* Excerpt from Pascal's Pensees.

9/27: Gettier Problem. *Reading:* Gettier, 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?'.

10/04: Metaethics. *Reading:* Metcalf, "Ethical Realism".

10/11: Normative Ethical Theories. *Reading:* Mill, 'Utilitarianism'. Short excerpts from Kant and Aristotle.

10/18: Charity. *Reading:* Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality".

10/25: Abortion Part 1. *Reading:* Thomson, 'A Defense of Abortion'.

11/01: Abortion Part 2. *Reading:* Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral".

11/08: Ethics of Meat Eating. *Reading:* Norcross, 'Puppies, Pigs, and People'.

11/15: Writing Week. No Reading.

11/22: Thanksgiving Break.

11/30: Paradox of Horror. *Reading:* Hume, 'Of Tragedy'.

12/06: Final Exam Review and Final Exam

Assignment of Grades:

- Discussion posts: 10%
- Short Writing Assignments: 20%
- Argumentative Paper: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Quizzes: 20%

Assessment Detail:

- *Short Writing Assignments:* There will be two 300-word writing assignments during the semester. They will be short expository essays on some topic or view discussed in the class. They cannot be made up. If you believe there are extenuating circumstances, then please contact me.
 - *Due dates:* 9/21 and 11/04
- *Quizzes:* Most weeks, there will be a quiz on that week's readings. It will be a simple true-false quiz. These are very easy quizzes if you have done the relevant readings. Quizzes cannot be made up. If you believe there are extenuating circumstances, then please contact me.
- *Discussion:* There will be five discussion assignments throughout the semester. You will be required to ask a single but genuine question about that week's readings or to make a single critical comment about that week's readings.
- *Paper:* You will be required to write one five-page argumentative essay (1200-2000 words). Paper topics will be assigned. The paper will test your understanding of the course material and your skill at writing philosophical essays in the analytical style. More details will be provided later in the semester. Papers will not be accepted late.
 - *Due date:* 11/30
- *Final Exam:* The final exam will be cumulative and multiple-choice, true-false. You will take it online.
 - *Due date:* 12/10

Grading

GCSC Grading Scale

90 – 100 = A

80 – 89 = B

70 – 79 = C

60 – 69 = D

Below 60 = F

Calculation of Grades

- Discussion posts: 10%
- Short Writing Assignments: 20%
- Argumentative Paper: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Quizzes: 20%

GRADES FOR ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED WITHIN TWO WEEKS.

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete in any Social Sciences course can only be assigned to students who have an emergency arise during the last two weeks of the course.

To receive an Incomplete, students must:

- Submit a written request to the instructor before the last face-to-face class meeting. For online courses, a written Incomplete request must be received no later than the week before the Final Exam period begins.
- Have completed no less than 60 percent of the course requirements and be passing the course at the time the request for an Incomplete is submitted.

Important Note: The Incomplete option provides 30 days from the date grades are due to make up any missing work; if work is not submitted during this period, the grade will automatically change to an “F.”

Course Policies

Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

Make-Up Work Policy

- Assignments will not be accepted late unless there are properly documented extenuating circumstances. Please contact me if this applies to you.

Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.). There are two kinds of withdrawals---student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.
- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy in which case the student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

Academic Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report

every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student's records.

Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating"

includes but is not limited to the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"Plagiarism"

includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines on AI material.

"Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or a considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion that they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images, or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

Sanctions for incidents of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incident and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or 0) for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

Classroom Recording

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook.

Prohibited Use of AI

The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, coursework, and throughout all stages of the work process, such as brainstorming, outlining, or drafting. This includes but is not limited to tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Grammarly's AI function. Use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of the course.

Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.