**PHIL 161 Introduction to Philosophy**

Dr. Christopher E. Franklin

M/W/F 11–11:50am, HAL 304

Spring 2021

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?”

——Jesus (Mark 8.36–37)

“Teach us to number our days

that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

——Moses (Psalm 90.12)

“So we also must consider that a contest, the greatest of all contests, lies before us, for which we must do all things, and, in preparation for it, must strive to the best of our power, and must associate with poets and writers of prose and orators and with all men from whom there is any prospect of benefit with reference to the care of our soul.”

——St. Basil the Great (To Young Men)

“Because philosophy arises from awe a philosopher is bound in his way to be a lover of myths and poetic fables. Poets and philosophers are alike in being big with wonder.”

——St. Thomas Aquinas (Commentary, *I Metaphysics, lect. 3.*)

**Contact Information**

Office: HAL 300J

Office Hours: M 8:50–9:50, T 11–12 & 4–5, W 3-5 (by appt.), R 10–12 (by appt.) & 4–5

Phone: 724-458-2199

Email: cefranklin@gcc.edu

Mailbox: 3086

**Course Description**

The aim of this course is to cultivate our love of, and facilitate our growth in, wisdom. We will pursue this aim by nurturing ourselves on five of the greatest texts in the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian wisdom traditions: Plato’s *Apology* and *Phaedo*, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, and Dante’s *Purgatorio*. These works will force us to wrestle with questions, among others, about the nature God, the relationship between the body and soul, the nature and kinds of human virtue, the relationship between free will and divine providence, the wise use of leisure, how to be an excellent friend, and the proper use of pagan wisdom traditions. A theme running through and framing our inquiry we will be Socrates’s conception of philosophy as the art of dying. Nothing more than death can forcibly precipitate the question: what matters? Our hope is that by practicing dying, we might learn to truly live.

You should become a philosophy major! Don’t believe me: [here’s the proof](https://sites.google.com/site/whystudyphilosophy/).

**Texts**

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, translated by G.M.A Grube and revised by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing CO, 4th Century BC/2002).

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 340BC/2009).

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated P. G. Walsh (New York: Oxford University Press, c. 524 [2008]),

Dante Alighieri, *Purgatory*, translated Anthony Esolen (New York: Modern Library, c. 1324 [2004])

(Some of the course readings will be available through hyperlinks below under the course schedule or on my.gcc)

N.B. For every day of lecture, you should bring to class all course readings due that day.

**Learning Outcomes**

Through the course, students will:

1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Plato’s *Apology* and *Phaedo.* (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exams, reading reflection questions)
2. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; exams, reading reflection questions)
3. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*. (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; final, reading reflection questions)
4. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of Dante’s *Purgatorio*. (Department objectives 2, 3, 7; final, reading reflection questions)
5. Develop critical analysis and reasoning skills (Department objectives 4, 6, 8, 9; reading reflections, paper)

**Department of Philosophy: Learning Goals**

1. Demonstrate the ability to understand and evaluate philosophical questions from a Christian theistic framework. This will require the student to see the relationship between faith and learning and how such a perspective applies to the critical and analytical questions posed by humans in the great search for wisdom.
2. Demonstrate ability to read, comprehend, and evaluate the thought of great philosophers of the past and present in terms of the presuppositions and historical contexts of their claims about the philosophical task as well as the implications of such thought in terms of ethical and social practice. This will require observation of and interaction with primary source texts that approach the great questions and concerns that philosophers have been asking for many millennia.
3. Demonstrate ability to comprehend the major issues in philosophy from the aforementioned Christian theistic perspective as well as the ability to interact with the concerns and perspectives of other philosophies, religions, and worldviews in order to develop the skills necessary to think through what one believes and why. This will require the development of skills necessary to evaluate an argument or a belief critically in terms of strengths and weaknesses.
4. Demonstrate basic and maturing research skills. This will include the ability to state theses, show those theses through analysis of primary texts, discuss the possible weaknesses of one’s own analysis, and test those theses against the best scholarship.
5. Articulate a worldview that integrates knowledge of philosophy with other disciplines in order to see the consequences of a consistent Christian theistic worldview. Students will recognize the tensions in this integration process rather than accepting simplistic answers and thus will be helped to grow into mature and thoughtful persons.
6. Demonstrate basic research and writing skills. This ability will be assessed through the evaluation of the assigned paper, both in draft and completed versions.
7. Demonstrate basic knowledge of philosophical concepts.
8. Demonstrate ability to research, write, and speak in the content area of Philosophy.
9. Be competitive and prepared for graduate school and seminary opportunities, as assessed by placement data and alumni surveys.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance:** Each student will be allowed 3 unexcused absences. Beyond this, each unexcused absence will result in a 2% loss of the student’s total course grade. Excessive or frequent tardiness will count as an unexcused absence. If the student arrives late, it is his responsibility to make sure he is marked ‘present.’ Excused absencesare restricted to authorized college activities, loss of immediate family member, and illness/injury. See the Academic Policies Section of the *College Bulletin* for more information.

**Reading Reflections—20%**

Students will regularly be required to turn in short reading reflections in response to assigned prompts posted on my.gcc. The focus of the prompts will vary, but the intention behind them is to help guide the student through the difficult terrain and prepare them for class discussion. The reading reflection prompts will be posted on my.gcc and their due dates will be announced in lecture.

These assignments will be graded pass/fail and, as we will address all these issues in class, with very little comments. The student must turn in a typed hard copy and all information and ideas that are not the student’s own creation or common knowledge must be cited appropriately. No late work will be accepted.

**Commonplace Book—15%**

A commonplace book—also known as a flora legium—has been a central wisdom practice since antiquity. The aim behind a commonplace book is to enter key passages from one’s reading that one wants to commit to memory so as to be more deeply shaped by them. Each week (14 weeks in the semester) students will be expected to enter into their commonplace book three passages (42 in total) from the reading. Students will turn in their commonplace book on the last day of class (5/5) and I will return them at the time of the final exam.

We will be following John Locke’s method of common placing. Read [this](https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/john-lockes-method-for-common-place-books-1685) to learn how to do it. I encourage you to get a nice journal for this so that you can continue this practice for the rest of your life.

**Paper—20%**

The essence of this assignment can be expressed simply: you will offer wholeminded wisdom gleaned from our readings and class discussions to a troubled soul. Philosophy is intensely practical. All the philosophers we will read aim to set forth fundamental truths about the nature of God, humans, and the world we inhabit *in a way* that will enable us to appreciate those truths, so that we will come to have a wise basis upon which to live. The paper presents you with three main questions: (i) What is the wisdom you will focus on? (ii) What is the problem that that wisdom addresses? And (iii) How will you present it so that your intended audience is moved by it? Perhaps you will draw on Plato’s moving portrait of a philosopher practicing the art of dying in order to speak to modern despair in the face of death. Perhaps you will draw on Aristotle’s deep insights about the nature of moral formation to speak to the person that finds himself daily defeated by temptation. Maybe you will draw on Boethius’s account of providence to impart a blazing hope when all other lights go out. Maybe you will draw on Dante’s portrayal of the ascent of Mount Purgatory to help avoid our attachment to worldly goods. Perhaps you will draw on multiple parts of multiple philosophers to address some problem.

You are encouraged to be creative with this paper. You can present it in dialogue form. You can present it in the form of a letter addressed to a friend. But carefully consider how the form allows you to accomplish your aims or hinders you therein.

Your paper will be graded on the *depth* of your presentation of the relevant wisdom and the *cogency* in which you speak it into the problem you are addressing. Thus, your paper should exemplify both the analytic clarity and appreciation understanding characteristic of wholeminded wisdom. This means your paper will need to evince *both* a strong grasp of the readings and discussion *and* a clear vision of some set of faulty contemporary assumptions that exasperate the human predicament. You will not be expected to offer a direct argument or evidence for the wisdom you are employing (though depending on the problem you address, an important part of your solution *might* involve argument).

The paper is due on 5/5 by 11am and must be submitted in *electronic* form to my email address (franklince@gcc.edu). You mustname the file as follows: Your Last Name Paper (so Jane Doe will name the file of her paper: Doe Paper). ***You also must submit the paper to Turnitin (in our my.gcc course site under coursework tab) by 11am***.

The word count is between 1800–2500 words (excluding notes and bibliography). Too many or too few words will be penalized by how many words over or under you are.

See the handout **Minimal Standards for Written Work** posted on my.gcc concerning formatting requirements. Any work that fails to meet *any* of the minimal standards will automatically receive a third of a letter grade penalty and will receive an additional third of letter grade penalty for each 24 hour period from the time the student is informed of the problem until the student turns in a properly formatted work.

**Exams—45%**

There will be two exams, one midterm worth 20% of the student’s total course grade, and a cumulative final, worth 25% of the student’s total course grade. The midterm exam will cover everything up through Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. The final will cover everything.

**No electronics of any kind are permitted during the exam for any reason. If you access an electronic device in any way for any reason, you will receive a 0 on the exam. Students are also not permitted to leave the classroom while taking the exam.**

**In case students have to take any of the exams (midterms or final) in an online format due to Covid, students are not permitted to use any resources while taking the exam: not their notes, textbook, internet, etc.**

Consult the exam schedule now, and make appropriate travel preparations in light of the exam schedule published by the Registrar’s office. College policy is that final exams may only be administered during finals week, in accordance with the times scheduled by the Registrar’s office, and may not be changed or eliminated to suit the convenience of either the instructor or the students. Students who have 3 exams on a particular calendar day during the final exam period may request permission to change the exam time, but I cannot guarantee that there will be a time that will work for the student.

**Computer Policy**

Computers are not allowed. Digital technology *is* how Socrates *appeared* to the Athenians: corruptor of the youth and creator of false gods. As Socrates was meant to be, so digital technology will be in my classroom, banished. However, if you have a concern about this policy, please contact me.

**Honesty**

College policies with regard to honesty in taking tests and writing papers will be strictly followed. The college administration and faculty are very concerned about cheating and take active steps to prevent it. **Any student caught cheating on or plagiarizing any assignment will receive an F for the course.**

See the college’s policy on Academic Integrity in the 2020–2021 college *Bulletin.* The use (or possession) of former examinations from this course in preparing for tests is considered a violation of the GCC honesty in learning policy as stated in the college *Bulletin*.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

**Preamble**

Grove City College is deeply invested in upholding academic integrity and honesty. Three of the college’s five core values, faithfulness, excellence, and community, directly relate to academic integrity because any violation of academic integrity is a form of theft and deceit that affects the one stolen from, as well as the community of students and faculty at the college. In addition, cheating is a violation of three of the Ten Commandments: the prohibitions against stealing, lying, and coveting. However, as the Ten Commandments and the totality of Scripture demonstrate to us, we are fallen creatures who at times do what we ought not do.

Accordingly, the college has created a policy both to define what cheating is and to describe our process for dealing with allegations of cheating in order to discourage cheating and provide an opportunity for meaningful repentance and restoration when students do cheat.

**Pledge**

As a student of Grove City College, I pledge to do my work faithfully with honesty in accordance with my calling as a student working for Christ’s glory.

**Cheating and Plagiarism may be present in many areas, including (but not limited to) the following:**

1. Doing Papers, Outside Work. Work done out of class, which a student submits as his/her own work to a professor, should be his/her own and should not contain that which has been obtained from another, other than properly credited references, sources, and citations.
2. Taking Exams, Tests, Quizzes. Work done on a test, exam, or quiz, which a student submits to a professor, should be his/her own and should not contain that which has been knowingly obtained from another. By default, no resources are permitted unless explicitly allowed by the instructor.
3. Preparing for Exams. A student should not seek to gain an advantage on an exam he/she is about to take by obtaining advanced access to particular questions or advance copies of a professor's exam, or by giving access to other students. This includes access to exams from prior semesters.
4. Group Work. In courses where group work or teamwork is allowed, the members of the group may collaborate and share resources among themselves, but not with other groups or prior and subsequent classes.
5. A student should not cooperate with, aid, or encourage another student’s violation of the above rules, even though he or she receives no direct benefit. Any student who does so is also guilty of cheating, and can have their grade from current or past semesters (if relevant) reduced.
6. Instructor-Imposed Limitations. Faculty may add (via syllabus, assignment instructions, or verbal instructions) additional rules and limitations pertaining to cheating in their particular discipline, class, and assignment.

**Special Note: Plagiarism includes**

1. Any direct quotation of another’s words, from simple phrasing to longer passages, without using quotation marks and properly citing the source of those words.
2. Any summary or paraphrase of another’s ideas without properly citing the source of those ideas.
3. Any information that is not common knowledge—including facts, statistics, graphics, drawings—without proper citation of sources.
4. Any cutting and pasting of verbal or graphic materials from another source and representing as one’s own work—including books, databases, web sites, journals, newspapers, etc.—without the proper citation for each of the sources of those materials; this includes any copyrighted artwork, graphics, or photography downloaded from the Internet without proper citation.
5. Any wholesale “borrowing,” theft, or purchasing of another’s work and presenting it as one’s own, whether from the Internet or from another source.
6. Any presentation of “ghost-written” work including—whether paid for or not—as one’s own original work, including papers, computer code, visual artwork, and other forms of written and non-written work.
7. Making one’s work available for copying by others, as well as copying work posted on the Internet or otherwise made available by another.
8. Self-citation: you cannot submit the same work for two different classes. If you use part of an earlier work, or ideas from an earlier work, you should reference it, as with any other source.

**Policy on late assignments:**

Do not ask for exceptions on late work; I accept no excuses except Provost excuses. Without a Provost excuse, late work is assigned a 0. It is crucial that you realize that failure to turn in an assignment you finish before the deadline constitutes turning in the assignment late. Failure to remember to bring the assignment or failure to print out the assignment in time are not excuses: they are confessions of negligence

**Disability**

Accessibility & Accommodations: It is Grove City College’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please let me know immediately so that we may discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the disability services office to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations. The Disability Services Coordinator may be reached at 724-264-4673 or DisabilityServices@gcc.edu

**Counseling**

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk to someone who can help, you should contact the Counseling Center at 724-458-3788 or email Mrs. Hummel, staff assistant, at mhummel@gcc.edu.

**COVID Policies**

1. Grove City College is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak, and we are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy campus community. In order to care for each other, you are required to wear a *face mask in all academic buildings including in all classrooms, labs, studios, hallways, and restrooms*. Additionally:
   1. Students and faculty should maintain social distancing (minimum 6’ distance) to the extent possible during class.
   2. Students should arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before class to reduce contact between students during class change periods.
   3. Students showing any symptoms related to COVID-19 (outlined in the Campus Health and Safety Plan) *must not attend class*. Instead, they should report their condition through the College’s COVID-19 portal, work closely with the College’s medical staff, and not return to class in person until approved by the Zerbe Health Center.  During this time, every effort will be made to provide remote learning opportunities.
   4. Office hours may be held virtually, and if faculty voluntarily elect to hold face-to-face office hours, both students and faculty should wear a face mask.
2. If you feel ill, please report your health status in the portal so that the lectures can be provided to you via Teams.

**Topics and Assignments** (schedule subject to change)

1/25 Welcome

Reading: Syllabus

1/27 Introduction to Philosophy

Reading: N/A

1/29 On the benefits of pagan literature

Reading: St. Basil, from *To Young Man, on How They Might Derive Profit from Pagan Literature* (my.gcc)

2/1 On How to Read

Reading: A. G. Sertillanges, selections from *The Intellectual Life* (my.gcc); Lucius Annaeus Seneca Letter 2 (my.gcc)

***Apology***

2/3, 2/5*,* 2/8

***Phaedo***

2/10, 2/12, 2/15, 2/17, 2/19, 2/22

***Nicomachean Ethics***

2/24, 2/26, 3/1, 3/3, 3/5, 3/8, 3/10, 3/12, 3/15, 3/17, 3/19

3/22 **Exam**

***Consolation of Philosophy***

3/24, 3/26, 4/7, 4/9, 4/12, 4/14, 4/16, 4/19, 4/21

**Easter Break 3/29–4/5**

***Purgatorio***

4/23, 4/26, 4/28, 4/30, 5/3

5/5 Final reflections

**Commonplace book due**

**Paper due**

5/6 Study day

**Final Exam, Monday May 10, 8–10am**