**PHIL 311 Metaphysics**

Dr. Christopher E. Franklin

T/R 1–2:15pm, HAL 323

Spring 2021

“To the one who orders his way rightly

I will show the salvation of God.”

——Psalm 50.23

“It is right to think then, gentlemen, that if the soul is immortal, it requires our care not only for the time we call our life, but for the sake of all time, and that one is in terrible danger if one does not give it that care. If death were escape from everything, it would be a great boon to the wicked to get rid of the body and of their wickedness together with their soul. But now that the soul appears to be immortal, there is no escape from evil or salvation for it except by becoming as good and wise as possible, for the soul goes to the underworld possessing nothing but its education and upbringing, which are said to bring the greatest benefit or harm to the dead right at the beginning of the journey yonder.”

——Plato (*Phaedo*,107c–d)

**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**

Metaphysics examines such basic questions as “What is real?” “What is the nature of basic reality?” and “What is the nature of human beings?” This course will examine some influential discussions of metaphysics arising from these basic questions. Some topics we may discuss include the nature of identity, the relationship between mind and body, free will, and other topics that arise in answering basic metaphysical questions.

**Texts**

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, translated by G.M.A Grube and revised by John M. Cooper (Hackett Publishing, 4th century B.C. [2002])

Plato, *Phaedrus*, translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff(Hackett Publishing, 4th century B.C. [1995])

Titus Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, translated by Anthony Esolen (Johns Hopkins Press, 1st century B.C. [1995])

St. Augustine of Hippo, *On Free Choice of the Will*, translated by Thomas Williams (Hackett Publishing, 387-389 [1993])

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

(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.

**Course Outcomes**

Through the course, students will:

1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the central arguments for God’s existence (#2, 3, 7; final seminar reflections)
2. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the mind-body problem (#2, 3, 7; final, seminar reflections)
3. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of realism and nominalism (#2, 3, 7; final seminar reflections)
4. Demonstrate detailed knowledge of theories of free will ((#2, 3, 7; final seminar reflections)
5. Develop critical analysis and reasoning skills (Department objectives 4, 6, 8, 9; paper)

**Department of Philosophy Departmental Objectives:**

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 2 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 Log—20%**

Students will be required to keep a reading log indicating the percentage of the reading assignments completed *carefully, without skimming*, *and on time*. (Note: if there are multiple readings on a day, then they count as distinct reading assignments.) An easy way to do this is as follows. For each assignment, assign yourself a number between 0–100 that accurately represents the amount of the reading assignment that you completed *carefully, without skimming, and on time*. At the end of the course, add those valuesand divide by the total number of reading assignments. The log you turn in should include the percentage of reading completed for *each* assignment and the *total* percentage of reading completed. At the bottom of the log, you will include the following prompt with your name filled in and signature under the prompt: “I [blank] pledge that this log is, to the best of my ability, an accurate reflection of the percentage of readings that I completed carefully, without skimming, and on time”. A hard copy of this log is due at the beginning of lecture on 5/4, This document can be handwritten.

**Seminar Reflections**—**20%**

8 of our class sessions will be seminar style (see schedule below). For each of these 8 sessions students will complete before the beginning of class a reflection that addresses each of the following four questions about the reading due that day:

1. What seemingly important part of the reading confused you?
2. What is one thing that struck you as importantly right about the readings?
3. What is one thing that struck you as importantly mistaken about the readings?
4. What is one thing in the readings that is importantly consonant or dissonant with Christianity.

A couple of words of explanation about these four questions. First, these are meant to be informal, not your final, thoroughly pondered, and defended judgments. Think carefully about these but don’t over think them. Second, by ‘importantly’ I am trying to direct your focus to central issues. Don’t be pedantic. Moreover, ‘importantly’ does not mean novel. Third, in addressing question 4 we might discover that we have disagreement about what Christianity involves. Don’t worry about that.

For each question, you should offer a few brief words explaining or motivating your answer. For questions 2–4 give us the why and for 1 give us a clear description of why the relevant claim or passage is puzzling you and why it seems important. The purpose of this assignment is to provide launching off points into discussion of the readings. So, be prepared to be called on for your answers.

The assignment should be 400–600 words, typed, doubled-spaced, with appropriate citation, and in hard-copy form. I will collect these after lectures, but students need to have completed them prior to lecture. Each reflection will be worth 2.5% of the student’s overall course grade.

**Paper—30%**

The student is to select an idea, argument, or puzzle covered in any part of the course reading that he or she so chooses. *The topic must come from the reading,* though you are welcome to engage primarily with works outside of the course reading. Here is a brief description of the assignment, but you *must* see the handout **How to Write a Philosophy Paper** on my.gcc for clearer guidelines concerning what the paper requires, how best to satisfy these requirements, and how I will grade the papers. The first part of the paper should set out to explain the central argument or puzzle that the student is engaging. The second, and most important, part of the paper should, in the case of an idea or argument, seek to defend or critique the idea or argument or, in the case of a puzzle, offer a solution or explain why you think there is no solution. This part of the paper is not to be a summary of someone else’s thought/argument, but is to be something of *your own creation*. This is difficult and success requires time. Thus, you should select your topic as soon as possible and consider and cultivate your response over a couple of weeks. If you wait to the last minute it will be impossible for you to articulate any *well-developed* thought of your own. You are welcome and encouraged to discuss all parts of this paper with me in office hours.

The paper is due on 5/10 by noon and must be submitted in *electronic* form to my email address (franklince@gcc.edu). You *must* name 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 noon***.

The word count is between 2000–2500 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.

**Final—30%**

There will be a final cumulative exam given on May 8. Prior to the exam I will post *the exam* on my.gcc. The exam will consist of 10 numbered (1­­­–10) essay questions. On the day of the final exam, I will roll a ten-sided die twice: whatever numbers the die lands on will be the essay questions students write on. If I roll the same number twice, there will be a surprise.

**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**[[1]](#footnote-1)(schedule subject to change)

1. **Introduction**

1/26 Introduction to Metaphysics

Reading: Syllabus; How to Write a Philosophy Paper

1/28 Wisdom

Reading: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI (my.gcc); Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, selections from Book I (my.gcc.); St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, selections (my.gcc)

1. **Pagan Supernaturalism**

2/2 Plato on the Fall and Redemption

Reading: Plato, *Phaedrus*227a–257b

2/4 Plato on the Fall and Redemption (cont.)

Reading: N/A

2/9 Forms: Realism and Nominalism

Reading: *Phaedo* 57–77a

2/11 Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul

Reading: *Phaedo* 77b–95b

2/16 Portrait of the Philosopher

Reading: *Phaedo* 95b–118a

1. **Pagan Naturalism**

2/18 On Metaphysics

Reading: Lucretius, Book I (skip 635–894); Book II, 1–294 and 865–end

2/23 On the Soul

Reading: Lucretius, Book III

2/25 On the Gods and the Good Life

Reading: Lucretius, Book V; Book VI, 1089-1285

1. **Christian Developments**

**Freedom of the Will**

3/2 Theories of Free Will

Reading: Franklin ‘Freedom Is not Compatible with Determinism’ (my.gcc)

Augustinianism

3/4 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: Augustine, Book I

3/9 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: Augustine, Book II, 1–17

3/11**\*Seminar\***

Reading: Augustine, Book II, 18–20, Book III, 1–10

3/16 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: Augustine, Book III, 11–25

**Mind-Body problem**

3/18 Introduction and Dualism

Reading: René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, Principles 60-62 and *Meditations of Philosophy*, Meditations 2 and 6(my.gcc)

3/23 Physicalism

Reading: J. C. C. Smart ‘[Sensations and Brain Processes](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2182164?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)’

3/25 Descartes’s Revenge

Reading: Saul Kripke, selections from *Naming and Necessity* (my.gcc)

**DeYoung’s visit**

**3/29-4/2 Easter Break**

4/6 Problem of Consciousness

Reading: Thomas Nagel ‘[What Is It Like to Be a Bat?](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2183914?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)’

4/8 Aristotle/Aquinas or Plato/Augustine?

Reading: Eleonore Stump ‘[Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism](https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol12/iss4/5/)’ (my.gcc)

**God**

4/13 Cosmological Arguments

Reading: Leibniz ‘On the Ultimate Origination of Things’ (my.gcc); William Lane Craig ‘Philosophical and Scientific Pointers to Creation *ex Nihilo*’ (my.gcc)

4/15 Teleological Arguments

Reading: Robin Collins ‘God, Design, and Fine-tuning’ (my.gcc)

4/20 Argument from Reason

Reading: Alvin Plantinga ‘Is Naturalism Irrational? (my.gcc)

Boethius: The Argument from Happiness

4/22 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: TBA

4/27 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: TBA

4/29 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: TBA

5/4 **\*Seminar\***

Reading: TBA

**Reading Log Due**

5/6 Study day

**Final Exam Saturday May 8, 6-8pm**

**5/10 Paper due by Noon**

1. Note that, in general, I list the readings in the order that they should be read. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)