

Philosophy 1313: Introduction to Philosophy

This course is an introduction to philosophy and an adventure of the human soul. Across this journey, students encounter towering thinkers – voices that have shaped western civilization and continue to shape the world today. The curriculum, grounded in the Christian tradition, familiarizes students with the principal problems of philosophy and the principal solutions that have been proposed in response to them.

Course Information

- Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, René Descartes, Blaise Pascal, David Hume, and Friedrich Nietzsche are voices that have shaped western civilization and that continue to shape the world today.
- Does God exist? What is a human person? What is virtue, justice, truth, and beauty? Is there life beyond death? These are the questions that are central to this course.
- The verse at the heart of this course is Proverbs 9:10: “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
- Philosophy, at its best, is not a threat to religious faith but a deepening of it. In studying Augustine’s restless heart, Aquinas’s arguments for God, Pascal’s reflections on belief, and even the doubts of Hume, students will sharpen their minds, their souls, and their commitments to truth.
- The journey requires patience and humility. These texts are challenging, but like Scripture, they reward those who linger and reflect. From Plato’s dialogues to Nietzsche’s critiques, from ancient Athens to modern skepticism, this course traces the grand conversation.
- Professors in this course encourage their students to embrace the challenge, to enjoy the struggle, and to seek wisdom with courage. By God’s grace, this introduction to philosophy will be a powerful academic experience and a foundational encounter in the lives of our students.

PHIL 1313 Course Outcomes:

1. Recognize the significance, presuppositions, and purpose of philosophy;
2. Describe what is involved in a distinctively Christian approach to philosophy;
3. Demonstrate awareness of their own presuppositions and worldview by learning to read and understand other philosophers, and to think and reason philosophically;
4. Articulate why it is important to engage in a lifelong pursuit of wisdom by studying the great thinkers;
5. Compare their fears or suspicions of philosophy from the beginning of the course to the end;
6. Show a development in the formation of a moral, virtuous character and way of life;
7. Define wisdom as an end in itself and as a way to recognize the substance and value of your own humanity;
8. Review big questions in the context of a faith-seeking understanding;
9. Observe the university and the classroom not merely as a marketplace where information is bought and sold, but where a student's soul is enriched and transformed.

PHIL 1313 Distinctive Textbook:

- This course uses a Custom Reader, *Wisdom for Life*, compiled and edited by HCU faculty and published by Cognella Academic Publishing.
- A paperback edition has been selected for residential courses (**Print ISBN:** 979-8-2997-1533-0). For online courses, selections from the *Wisdom for Life* Reader have been divided into PDFs and incorporated into the weekly modules.

PHIL 1313 Signature Assignment:

- The Course employs a 'Philosophical Interview Assignment' to give students the opportunity to explore philosophy not merely as an abstract academic subject, but as a living conversation about the deepest questions of human life.
- Philosophers pursue wisdom through dialogue. This assignment invites students to participate in that practice.
- Students will conduct a 20–30 minute philosophical interview with a mentor figure in your life about one major philosophical question.
- The goal of the assignment is not to “win an argument” or persuade the person interviewed. Rather, the goal is to listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and reflect philosophically on the answers that emerge.
- Students then provide a written transcript of their interview (1000 words) and also a reflection essay (1000 words).