

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2026

PH1010 (A2): Introduction to Philosophy: Values and Society – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Tina Strasbourg	PHONE:	780-539-2237
OFFICE:	C408	E-MAIL:	tstrasbourg@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Tuesday 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm or by appointment.		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This is an introduction to the classical problems of philosophy through study and critical discussion of selected philosophical classics and contemporary works. Emphasis will be placed on questions of moral and other values and on the nature of society and justice.

PREREQUISITE(S): None

COREQUISITE(S): None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 2026 Release. New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2026.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The learning outcomes stressed in this course are Communication Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, and Ethical Reasoning.

1. Students will use Communication Skills in

- Communicating clearly and concisely while employing written and verbal skills appropriate to class assignments and discussion.
- Demonstrating interpersonal skills by listening effectively, establishing rapport, and monitoring non-verbal signals.
- Expressing awareness of and respect for self and others.
- See section on Philosophical Etiquette for a further description.

2. Students will use Critical Thinking Skills in

- Learning how to understand and charitably interpret others' arguments and developing the ability to rearticulate arguments in a philosophical form.
- Analyzing theoretical concepts and examining the connections between them.
- Developing written arguments with strong logical inferences to show support for your claims.
- Critically assessing philosophical theories and arguments in support of these theories.

3. Students will use Ethical Reasoning in

- Applying ethical reasoning to practical situations.
- Recognizing and examining multiple perspectives.
- Analyzing and discussing issues from an ethical perspective.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Participation	10%	
Comprehension Quizzes x 5 (10% each)	50%	Quiz due dates will be posted on myClass
Midterm Exam	20%	Thursday, October 22 nd
Final Exam	20%	TBA

(The final exam is due during the final exam period. Please check the registrar's posting for a schedule of final examinations.)

Expected Statutory Holidays and Breaks: (no class on these days)

September 30th—National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

October 12th—Thanksgiving Day

November 9th to 13th—Fall Break

Participation:

Participation is more than just speaking in class. Being an engaged listener is to participate in a meaningful way. Participation also consists in engaging in your responsibility to find essential information on the course outline, keeping track of due dates, submitting material on time, and keeping up with course content when you are unable to attend class. Of course, it also entails finishing the reading beforehand and preparing any questions you might have about the material. One benefit of participation is that it better enables you to understand difficult philosophical concepts, get clarity on others' arguments, and offers the opportunity to practice developing our own arguments. Your grade will be based on a combination of all these aspects of participation.

Quizzes and Exams:

The quizzes are take-home and should be completed through myClass prior to the due date. The exams are on campus. The purpose of the quizzes and exams is to give you the opportunity to illustrate your understanding of the course material and how it is applied to real world moral problems. The "course material" includes course readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. Thus, it is to your advantage to attend and actively participate in every class.

Exam and quiz deferrals may only be granted in extenuating circumstances such as extreme illness or other serious circumstances beyond the student's control. Work commitments, holidays, or forgetfulness are not considered legitimate reasons for missing assigned deadlines.

Contesting Grades:

How you do on an assignment has no bearing on you as a person. One of my priorities in this class is to help you learn, and the assignments and my comments on your work are aimed at this goal. I do not expect perfection, and neither should you. I expect you to do your best and to use the assignments to help guide you on how you can improve.

If you wish to contest your grade, please do the following:

1. Double check the assignment instructions and the grading criteria.
2. Thoroughly read all the comments in a charitable manner.
3. Make an appointment to discuss your grade. Please do not ask me to go over your individual assignment in class.
4. Come to the appointment prepared. After looking over the comments and the assignment requirements, you should be able to articulate why you think your answer should have earned more marks.
5. Please remember I can only give you grades for the content represented on the assignment. In the meeting, you may be able to verbally articulate what you meant to say, but if that meaning is not clearly illustrated in the assignment content, I cannot give you grades for it.
6. Language is very important. I am happy to listen to your well thought out reasons for adding marks. Please do not approach me in a combative, disrespectful manner. For example, it is better to approach the discussion from the perspective that marks are earned rather than the view that marks are taken away. This perspective allows us to go through the comments together and to make clear how you earned your marks. This process will better enable you to show me how you think you met the requirements, and if you can do so I will have no problem with changing your grade.

GRADING CRITERIA

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is less than C-.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Introduction:

Introduction to Philosophy, Logical Fallacies, and Ethical Theories

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 1— “What is Morality?”

Relativism:

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 2— "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism"

Morality and Religion:

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 4— “Does Morality Depend on Religion?”

Virtue Ethics:

Aristotle, “The Nicomachean Ethics”—myClass

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 12— "Virtue Ethics"

Utilitarianism:

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 7— “The Utilitarian Approach”

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 8.1— “The Debate Over Utilitarianism”

Jeremy Bentham, “Pleasure as the Good”—myClass

John Stuart Mill, “Utilitarianism”—myClass

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 8.2 to 8.6

Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"—myClass

Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine"—myClass

Deontology:

Immanuel Kant, "Morality and Rationality"—myClass

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 9— "Are There Absolute Moral Rules?"

Contractarianism:

John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"—myClass

Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan"—myClass

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 6— "The Social Contract Theory"

Feminist Ethics:

Rachels & Rachels, Chapter 11— "Feminism and the Ethics of Care"

Virginia Held, "The Meshing of Care and Justice"—myClass

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Please do not be late for class.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class. Do not fall behind in the assigned readings because it is difficult to catch up.

If students miss class, it is their responsibility to obtain the information they missed.

Policies regarding final exams are governed by institutional policy. Students should consult the Examinations policy in the NWP Calendar. Students should consult the NWP Calendar for any questions regarding deferred exams but note that students are required to be available to write exams during the entire final exam period.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

Philosophical Etiquette

Contrary to popular belief philosophy is not a blood sport. A philosophical discussion should not be thought of as an opportunity to participate in arguments that are meant to crush one's opponent. Rather it is an opportunity, first and foremost, to gain an understanding of philosophical concepts. Second, it should inspire critical analysis of philosophical concepts. And finally, it should facilitate fruitful discussion. I expect all students to show good philosophical etiquette, which is to exhibit mutual respect for each other's ideas and comments, and that people not be *purposefully* offensive.

Pet Peeves

- Cell phones that ring during class or use of cell phones during class (this includes texting).
- The sound of binders closing and people packing-up books before I've indicated that the class is over.
- Trying to talk over people who are discussing their weekend plans during class time.
- Use of laptops or other electronic devices that disrupts other students.