



15800 Calvary Rd.  
Kansas City, MO 64147

## Syllabus

**Course:** RP339D/DN/DCN Introduction to Philosophy (blended\*)  
**Credit:** 2 Semester Hours  
**Semester:** Fall 2020 (Cycle 3)  
**Time:** 1:00 P.M.–2:15 P.M., Thursday, March 12–May 9  
**Location:** Calvary University, East Education 105 and online classroom  
**Instructor:** Joel T. Williamson, Jr., Th.M.  
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### I. DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Philosophy presents the historical philosophical movements that have been influential on contemporary worldviews. This introductory course focuses on some of the major ideas foundational to Western philosophy. This course also includes an examination of a variety of philosophers who have contributed to beliefs such as naturalism, idealism, pragmatism, existentialism, etc. Moreover, the course compares and contrasts these secular views to a biblical worldview.

\* This is a blended class, meaning that both campus and online students take this class together. Campus students attend the classes in person, online students attend the classes via the online classroom. All interaction and assignments for campus and online students are done in the online classroom.

### II. OBJECTIVES

- A. Competencies to be achieved.** The basic goal of this course is not knowledge, but knowhow. “Knowledge is not knowhow until you understand the underlying principles at work and can fit them together into a structure larger than the sum of its parts. Knowhow is learning that enables you to *go do*.”<sup>a</sup> When you have knowhow, you are ready to explore the implications of the ideas for yourself. At the very least, knowhow involves the following skills:
1. Tracing the development of the major Western philosophical systems from ancient times to the present and explaining their impact on the modern worldview. (PLO’s: 1, 4) (Assignments: B, C, D, E)
  2. Defining “philosophy” and the terms basic to its study. (PLO’s: 1, 4) (Assignments: B, E)
  3. Constructing logically consistent arguments using both deductive and inductive reasoning. (PLO’s: 2, 4) (Assignments: B, E)
  4. Identifying (and correcting) fallacious arguments in your own thinking and that of others. (PLO: 4) (Assignments: B, D, E)
  5. Critiquing philosophical arguments using an accurate understanding of biblical teaching. (PLO’s: 1, 4) (Assignments: A, C, D)

<sup>a</sup> Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press, 2014), 158. (The emphasis comes from the authors themselves.)

*Our Mission: “... to prepare Christians to live and serve in the church and in the world according to the Biblical worldview”*

### III. REQUIREMENTS

The assignments you complete for this course will be used to calculate your final grade, but their primary purpose is to help you develop knowhow—a skill that is essential to your spiritual development. With it, you will be able to extract truth from God’s word and infuse it into your life; without it, you never will. Of course, knowhow doesn’t just happen; you must cultivate it. So take out your hoe, and let’s get started.

- A. Worldview Project (5%).** In the first two weeks of this course, you will work your way through Anderson’s *What’s Your Worldview?* On April 2, you will submit a three to five-page report on that work. In it, you will do the following: 1) Identify the worldview that the book assigned to you. 2) Using argument and/or evidence, explain whether you believe the book’s diagnosis is correct. 3) Identify the worldview that you think is most prevalent in the modern evangelical church, justifying your opinion with argument and/or evidence. 4) Identify the worldview that you believe dominates our secular society, justifying your opinion with argument and/or evidence. You may submit your paper in class, attach it to an email, or upload it in Canvas. Projects submitted after 11:59 P.M. on the due date will receive a grade of 50 points (out of 100).
- B. Quizzes (45%).** To help you retain what you learn, you will be quizzed in Canvas (online) over the material each week as shown in the Proposed Course Schedule. These quizzes will be cumulative and cover all previous material from both Tuesday and Thursday classes. Still, each will focus primarily on the material covered since the last quiz. Furthermore, the form of the quiz will vary from week to week. (Understanding, rather than rote memorization is the best guarantee of a good grade.)
- C. Reading Journals (30%).** Knowhow cannot develop without facts. Therefore, one of your primary responsibilities is to gain familiarity with the major thinkers in Western philosophy by reading selections from actual philosophers throughout the semester. You will read these selections before the due date (shown in the Proposed Course Schedule) and write a one or two-page journal tracing your thoughts about the selection. Your journal should note how the material has changed your understanding of the issue, list any questions it has raised, and summarize any insights it has prompted. The professor will grade each of these journals according to the following scale:
- 0% *Incomplete Reading.* If you do not complete all of an assigned reading, you receive no credit for it at all.
  - 50% *Reading without a Journal.* Whether you completing the reading on time or late, if you do not submit a journal about it, you receive only half-credit.
  - 65% *Late Reading with a Journal.* If you complete the reading late, but submit a journal about it, you will receive a D (65).
  - 75% *Nonreflective Reading.* If your journal merely reports or describes the content of a reading, but does not question or interact with it, your journal will receive a C grade (75).
  - 85% *Reflective Reading.* If, however, your journal shows evidence that you are attempting to learn the reading, it will receive a B grade (85). In this case, your journal goes beyond the mere reporting of information and shows your attempt to analyze and understand the ideas developed in the passage read.
  - 95% *Critically Reflective Reading.* In critically reflective reading, you go even further; you attempt to integrate the contribution of the assigned material into your own

understanding and belief system. In your journal, you evaluate your own ideas, assumptions, or values in light of the reading. If you submit such a journal, it will receive an A grade (95).

Journals submitted after 11:59 P.M. on the due date will receive a grade of 50.

- D. Term Project (10%).** On May 7, you will submit a 5 to 10-page, typewritten non-research paper, comparing of the perspective in Francis Schaeffer's *Escape from Reason* with that in Benjamin Wiker's *10 Books That Screwed up the World*. In this paper, you should summarize the main points each author makes, identify the significant similarities and differences between them, evaluate how true and valid the arguments are, and assess how useful the material is. You may submit your paper in class, attach it to an email, or upload it in Canvas. Projects submitted after 11:59 P.M. on the due date will receive a grade of 50.
- E. Cumulative Final Examination (10%).** The final exam is cumulative and so will evaluate your mastery of the ideas and skills presented in the entire course. While I may supply you with a study guide, you will probably not need it. The cumulative effect of all the quizzes and journals will prepare you much better than last minute cramming. The exam will be administered in Canvas and will be available only during Finals week.

#### IV. METHODS

##### A. Teaching

1. *Lecture.* As instructor, I will avoid the use of lecture except when introducing or clarifying historical or philosophical facts and background. As much as possible, I will involve you actively in the learning process. Rather than forcing you to endure lengthy lectures on the history of western philosophy, I will provide you with written summaries of its major developments. You are expected to read and understand each before I present the material in it in class. These summaries will serve as bases for class discussion and weekly quizzes.
2. *Discussion.* As the basic teaching method, discussion is intended to help you wrestle with profound or difficult issues and to help the instructor analyze the needs of the class. But these ends can be attained only if you come to class both spiritually and intellectually prepared.

##### B. Grading

1. Worldview Project ..... 5%
2. Quizzes ..... 45%
3. Reading Journals ..... 30%
4. Term Project..... 10%
5. Cumulative Final Examination ..... 10%

##### C. Academic Issues and Support

1. *Plagiarism.* Plagiarism is defined as copying any part of a book or paper without identifying the author. This also includes taking another person's ideas and presenting them as your own.
2. *Style.* All class papers must follow the Turabian style according to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition and the Calvary Style Guide, 2019 update.

3. **Assistance.** The Clark Academic Center ([learning@calvary.edu](mailto:learning@calvary.edu)), located in the library building, is dedicated to providing free academic assistance for all students. Student tutors aid with all facets of the writing process, tutor in various subject areas, prepare students for exams, and facilitate tests. Please take advantage of this service.
4. **Grading.** See grading scale in the university catalog.
5. **Disabilities.** Students with disabilities have the responsibility of informing the DSS Coordinator ([dss@calvary.edu](mailto:dss@calvary.edu)) of any disabling condition that may require support.

## V. MATERIALS

**A. Holy Bible.** The Bible is a required textbook in every course at Calvary University. To facilitate academic level study, students are required to use for assignments and research an English translation or version of the Bible based on formal equivalence (meaning that the translation is generally word-for-word from the original languages), including any of the following: New American Standard (NASB, English Standard Version (ESV), New King James (NKJV), or King James (KJV). Other translations and versions based on dynamic equivalence (paraphrases, and thought-for-thought translations like NLT and NIV) may be used as supplemental sources. Please ask me if you have questions about a particular translation or version.

**B. Other Textbooks.**

Anderson, James N. *What's Your Worldview? An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. [ISBN: 978-1433538926 — \$10.99]

Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape from Reason*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968 [ISBN: 978-0877845386— \$8.00].

Wiker, Benjamin. *10 Books that Screwed Up the World*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2008 [ISBN: 978-1-59698-055-6 — \$27.95].

Wolff, Robert Paul, ed. *Ten Great Works of Philosophy*. New York: Mentor Books, 1969 [ISBN: 978-0451528308 — \$8.95].

**C. Class Notes.** I will make class notes and assignment helps available on your student portal.

## VI. PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

SESSION 1	SESSION 2	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week I Ideas, Words, and Things	Bible and Philosophy	None
Week II Propositions	Defining Philosophy: Plato	<i>Quiz #1</i> <i>Journal #1: Apology</i>
Week III Deductive Reasoning (1)	Theism and Atheism	<i>Worldview Project</i> <i>Journal #2. Anselm &amp; Aquinas</i>

Week IV

SESSION 1	SESSION 2	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Deductive Reasoning (2)	Continental Rationalism: Descartes	<i>Journal #3: Meditations . . .</i>
Week V Inductive Reasoning	British Empiricism: Hume	<i>Quiz #3 Journal #4: An Inquiry . . .</i>
Week VI Kant	Utilitarianism: Mill	<i>Quiz #4 Journal #5: Utilitarianism</i>
Week VII Faulty Reasoning	Pragmatism: James	<i>Quiz #5 Term Project</i>
Week VIII Postmodernism	Proverbs 2	<i>Journal #6: Will to Believe Final Exam</i>