PHL 301: Introduction to Philosophy  
*Texas Common Number: PHIL 1301*

PHL 301 is a freshman-level course that explores the definitions, origins, and basic tenets of philosophy. This course also prepares students for taking more advanced coursework in philosophy.

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to philosophy as it has been done historically and as it is done today. Philosophy is valuable in that it promotes (1) independent thinking; (2) critical reading skills; (3) analytical skills; and (4) the ability to think abstractly. Obviously, each of these skills is highly valued in today’s demanding and highly competitive job market. This course also encourages concise writing skills, teaching students to express themselves more clearly, accurately, and thoughtfully.

**Prerequisites**

None.

**Course Organization**

This course is divided into four learning modules containing a total of ten lessons. Each lesson contains a statement of learning objectives, a reading assignment, written instructor commentary, and optional self-assessment exercises. All lessons within a learning module must be completed before moving onto the next module. An instructor is available via a message center to provide feedback and respond to questions.

Topics include:

**Module 1**
- Lesson One: Philosophy, Reasoning, and Argumentation
- Lesson Two: Metaphysics I: The Nature of Reality
- Lesson Three: Metaphysics II: Freedom and Determinism
- Lesson Four: Metaphysics III: Self-Identity and the Mind/Body Problem

**Module 2**
- Lesson Five: Epistemology I: Rationalism
- Lesson Six: Epistemology II: Empiricism

**Module 3**
- Lesson Seven: Ethics I: The Will of God, Conscience, Virtue, and Sentiment
- Lesson Eight: Ethics II: Duty and Utility

**Module 4**
- Lesson Ten: Philosophy of Religion II: The Problem of Evil
**Required Materials**


**Grading**

Students will complete a computer-graded assignment at the end of each lesson. In addition, students are asked to write three essays of roughly 750–1000 words from a given list of topics, to be graded by an instructor. The course includes a midterm and a comprehensive final exam, both of which must be taken in a proctored location, with arrangements to be made by the student.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer-Graded Assignments</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor-Graded Essays</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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In addition to completing all assignments and earning an overall passing grade, students must earn a score of at least 60% on the final exam in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

This course is independent study and is self-paced. Students have five (5) months upon registration in which to complete the course, with an additional thirty (30) days allotted for completion of the final exam.

**University Extension**

For more information about University Extension courses and policies, please visit [www.utextension.org](http://www.utextension.org). Questions may be directed to our office at (512) 471-2900 or [uex@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:uex@austin.utexas.edu). Office hours are M – F, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CST.