

# 19th and 20th Century Philosophy

PHIL 3324  
Spring 2021 Syllabus  
Tuesdays 4-6:45pm

**Professor** Matthew J. Brown

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**Office Location and Hours:** Teams or Discord, by appointment

**Appointments:** <https://doodle.com/mm/matthewjbrown/book>

## Course Modality and Expectations

**Instructional Mode** Remote/Virtual - Synchronous online learning at the day and time of the class.

**Course Platform** eLearning and Discord. (If we find Discord doesn't work for us, we may move to Teams or Collaborate.)

**Expectations** All students are expected to do the weekly readings and turn in all assignments, and to participate in class discussion and group projects either synchronously or asynchronously. More details below under "Requirements."

**Asynchronous Learning Guidelines** Asynchronous students will have access to any lecture materials via written or video recorded versions of the lecture. They will be able to participate in asynchronous discussions and turn in all materials online.

## Course Description

This course is an intensive study of texts significant in the history of philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The primary goal of this course is to come to understand philosophy as both an academic discipline and a set of ideas and discourses that crosses disciplinary and academic boundaries. Although schools of philosophy have existed since ancient times in various locations around the globe, philosophy in Europe and North America really only began to professionalize as a discipline in the 18th century, a process that crystallized in the early 19th century in Germany and somewhat later that century in the U.K. and U.S. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, reflection on the nature of philosophy as a discipline has thus been a significant theme. This period also saw the fracturing of philosophy into the disciplines of philosophy and psychology and the distinct movements that we know as analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, American pragmatism, and traditionalist philosophy. In addition, women, people of color, and non-European philosophical traditions, which had been aggressively marginalized in the nineteenth century, began to have increasing influence over the discipline throughout the course of the twentieth, leading to the increasing visibility of, e.g., feminist and Africana philosophy.

In order to understand the development of philosophy over this crucial span, we will closely examine a wide variety of philosophical texts from the period covering many of these traditions. Closely reading and analyzing these texts is also a philosophically valuable goal in its own right, sharpening

our interpretive and argumentative skills as well as expanding the breadth of our understanding of the landscape of philosophical problems and views.

The third major course goal is to create, expand, and nurture a sense of intellectual community within the class and more broadly in the Philosophy program, in order to support our mutual growth and learning in and beyond this course.

## Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate close reading skills that allow them to understand the argument and deep structure of a text.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to articulate and defend, as well as recognize and critique, philosophical claims and arguments.
3. Students will engage with central philosophical concepts and ideas that were developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and make effective use of them in addressing contemporary problems.
4. Students will display a broad knowledge of contemporary philosophical traditions and the historical movements in the time period that influenced them, and the reasons for the significance of these traditions and movements.
5. Students will develop skills of collaboration and communication with peers in pursuit of research and analysis.

## Schedule of Topics

Readings and assignment due dates available via eLearning.

Date	Topic
1/19	Introduction and Background
1/26	John Stuart and Harriet Taylor Mill
2/2	Karl Marx
2/9	Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche
2/16	Gottlob Frege
2/23	Edmund Husserl
3/2	William James and Anna Julia Cooper
3/9	Jane Addams and Emma Goldman
3/16	<i>Spring Break</i>
3/23	John Dewey
3/30	W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin
4/6	Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Carnap
4/13	Susan Stebbing
4/20	W.V.O. Quine and Morton White
4/27	Herbert Marcuse and Angela Davis
5/4	John Rawls and Judith Jarvis Thompson

## Video Lectures

This course will have short, weekly, pre-recorded video lectures that you should watch before attending the synchronous class discussion. These lectures provide important context about the readings and situate them within the larger historical movements of philosophy in the period. The first 30 minutes of our “official” class time will be set aside so you have time to watch the lecture.

## Synchronous Class Discussion

Class discussion will begin at 4:30pm, half an hour after our “official” start time, to provide time to watch and engage with the video lecture. The primary purpose of class discussion will be to collaboratively dig more deeply into the ideas and arguments from the reading, as well as to interrogate the broader historical and philosophical context. We will engage in several types of activities in this part of class, including small-group breakout sessions, full group discussion, and “hot seat” roleplaying of different philosophers.

## Requirements and Grades

### Main Graded Assignments

1. Perusall Reading and Annotation
2. Argument Diagrams
3. Group Research Annotated Bibliography
4. Class Participation

### Grading

This course uses a form of grading based in adult learning theory called “specifications grading.” On that theory, adults learn better in a flexible and low-threat but interesting and challenging learning environment. High expectations are important for your success. This course creates such an environment and expectations, allowing you to direct your learning in a way that meets your personal learning objectives. Every assignment is simply graded “satisfactory/unsatisfactory,” though “satisfactory” here is more closely associated with competence or mastery than barely passing (more like 80% than 50%). The conditions for satisfactory work will be clearly specified for each assignment. There will be *no partial credit*. Every passing grade shows some level of genuinely competent work.

Assignment / Grade	A	B	C	D
Perusall assignments	16	13	10	6
Participation points	12	10	6	0
Argument diagrams	3	2	1	0
Group bibliography				
- Primary sources w/ annotations	5n	4n	3n	2n
- Secondary sources w/ annotations	5n	3n	2n	0
- 450 word introduction	Yes	Yes	No	No

## **Tokens**

Some flexibility is added to the course via the “token” system. You each begin the semester with 2 tokens. At the end of the semester, tokens can be *spent* in the following way:

- Free credit on one Perusall assignment
- Free participation points
- 1 unsatisfactory annotation counted as satisfactory
- For 5 tokens, 1 unsatisfactory argument diagram counted as satisfactory
- 5 tokens convert to a + grade.

Tokens can be *earned* in the following ways:

- Exemplary performance on an argument diagram or on group bibliography
- 1 token per 2 excess Perusall assignments above grade level
- 1 token per 3 excess Participation points above grade level

Examples:

- A. You have 15 satisfactory Perusall assignments, 7 participation points, 2 satisfactorily argument diagrams, and your 4-person group had 16 primary and 12 secondary sources with satisfactory annotations and a satisfactory introduction. Your extra Perusall assignments earn you 1 token, for a total of 3 tokens. These are used for 3 free participation points, giving you the minimum needed to meet the specifications for a B.
- B. You have 10 satisfactory Perusall assignments, 15 participation points, 1 argument diagram, and a solidly C-worthy group bibliography. Your extra participation points above a C give you 3 extra tokens, for a total of 5. You use these to earn a C+ rather than a C for the class.

Your tokens will be assigned automatically in whatever way gives you the highest possible grade for the class.

## **Assignment Descriptions**

### **Perusall Reading and Annotation**

All readings will be posted via Perusall, typically one or two readings per week. To get credit, you will need to make at least 4 annotations on each reading, make high-quality annotations, and respond to your peers’ annotations. It helps if you go through each reading more than once.

Your annotations should focus on four types of thoughts about the reading: (a) Drawing attention to passages you find particularly valuable, insightful, or thought-provoking, and explaining why. (b) Expressing agreement or disagreement with certain arguments, and explaining what is strong/weak about the argument. (c) Asking significant questions about the reading aimed at gaining deeper understanding. (d) Drawing connections to other ideas and other readings.

### **Argument Diagrams**

This assignment will require you to pick an assigned reading and attempt to understand the deep structure of its argument. While the nature of philosophical writing (and speaking) is typically linear, the relationship of ideas thus communicated, the way that claims are presented by premises and

assumptions, are typically not so linear. In this assignment, you will devise your own conventions for representing an argument visually, and non-linearly. Will include a key explaining the representations, as well as an explanation of the diagram and what we learn from representing the argument in this way.

### **Group Research Project: Philosophical Traditions**

Early in the term you will sign up for a group research project based on the various philosophical traditions that emerged during the period under study. The group options will include (a) analytic, (b) continental, (c) pragmatism, (d) psychology, and (e) feminist and Africana philosophy.

Each group will meet separately work together to research and discuss their tradition, its origins and development, and its relation to other traditions. (These groups will also be used for in-class breakout sessions to discuss the daily readings.) The final product of this project is a collaborative annotated bibliography.

**Stage 1** Sign up for groups

**Stage 2** 10 initial primary source

**Stage 3** 10 initial primary sources

**Stage 4** Final Product:

- At least 5n primary sources (where n = number of group members)
- At least 5n secondary sources
- Each source annotated, at least 50 words
- 450+ word introduction to the bibliography

### **Class Participation Points**

Your class participation grade will be based on points for the following activities:

**Participation in class discussions** (1 point per class) for high-quality contributions

**Discuss material in class chat channel** (1 point per week) asynchronous version of class discussion

**Contribute to collaborative note-taking** (1 point per week) Each week there will be a shared note-taking space, where you can earn points for contributing to the note-taking about synchronous class discussion. A good option for those who have trouble speaking on their feet.

**Role-Play a Philosopher (3 points)** Sign up ahead of time; requires doing additional research on the life and work of a particular philosopher. Spend a few minutes introducing yourself to the class, and then answer questions they have.

Note that typically you can only earn one category of point per week of class, though for particularly high-quality participation on two axes, you might earn two points in the same week.

## Course and Instructor Policies

### Class Meeting expectations

You are expected to have **read the assignments *before* class**, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to have the readings for each day's class open to refer to during discussion. You are expected to **listen respectfully** to the professor and your fellow students, and **participate** in class discussions and activities.

### Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't do it! If you incorporate any work that is not your own into any project that you do, and you do not cite the source properly, this counts as plagiarism. This includes someone doing the work for you, taking work done by another student, verbatim copying of published sources, *paraphrasing* published work without citation, and paraphrasing in an inappropriate way even with citation. Re-using work created for another course also counts as plagiarism in most contexts. Unless group work is *explicitly* permitted or required, it is expected that all of the work that you turn in is original and your own, and that any sources that you make use of are correctly cited. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, it is absolutely mandatory for me to turn you in to the Dean of Students Office of Community Standards and Conduct.

### What to Call Me, Other Faculty, and TAs

I prefer to be called "Matt," "Matthew," "Professor Brown," or "Dr. Brown." My preferred pronouns are he/him or they/them. For future reference, all faculty members regardless of gender should be referred to by title or degree, "Professor X" or "Dr. X," unless they specifically tell you otherwise. Visitors to class, teaching assistants, and others who have not obtained a doctoral degree or hold a relevant academic title should be referred to as "Mr. Y" or "Ms. Z," never using "Miss" or "Mrs," unless you are explicitly told otherwise.

### University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

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*A syllabus is a living document. This descriptions, timelines, and policies contained in this syllabus are subject to change in the interest of improving the quality of the course, at the discretion of the professor. Adequate notice will be provided for any changes, and in many cases they will be discussed with the class.*