

Oakton College
Syllabus for HUM-127-0C1 and 0C2, Fall 2023
(Intro to Philosophy with Modules on African
Philosophy)
Online, Asynchronous Class

Prof: Carlos Briones, Ph.D.

Office: Des Plaines 2514;

Email: cbriones@oakton.edu;

D2L [email preferred](#)

Des Plaines office phone number: 847-376-7163

Skokie Faculty Office: 847-635-1435

Student Support Hours:

At Des Plaines 2514:

Mondays from 9 to 9:20 AM and 11 AM to 12 PM

Wednesdays from 9 to 9:20 AM, 11 AM to 12 PM, and 2 to 3:30 PM

At Skokie

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 10:50 AM and from 12:30 to 1 PM

Online through the Zoom link under “Zoom Student Support Hours” on the D2L “Content” tab:

Mondays from 4:50 to 5:40 PM.

Wednesdays from 6 to 6:50 PM.

Friday from 8:30 to 9:20 AM

Feel welcome to use the office hours just to check in or if you are having any difficulties with the course. Please ask me for an appointment if you cannot make any of these times.

I.	<u>Course Prefix</u>	<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Lab</u>
	HUM	127	Intro to Philosophy	3	3	0

II. Prerequisites

None

III. Course (Catalog) Description

Course focuses on the most fundamental questions that human beings have always asked. Topics include a critical examination of theories about reality and truth, moral values and social justice, personal identity and free will, aesthetic values, and systems of religious beliefs.

IV. Learning Objectives

After completing this class, students will be able to do the following:

- A. Identify philosophical problems and concepts.
- B. Outline at least four selected philosophical approaches to these problems.
- C. Analyze philosophical texts.
- D. Apply the methods of critical analysis used by philosophers to a variety of topics.
- E. Evaluate criticisms from a variety of perspectives of the philosophical arguments and positions they study, both orally and in writing.
- F. Develop and debate alternative arguments and approaches both orally and in writing.
- G. Integrate the philosophical approaches to thinking about their own lives.
- H. Derive ethical implications from the philosophical theories covered and apply them at the personal, national, and global levels.
 - I. Demonstrate an awareness of the rich diversity of global philosophical traditions.
- J. Exhibit values related to teamwork and collaboration, fostered by the pedagogy of shared-inquiry and critical dialogue appropriate to the humanities and philosophy.
- K. Describe the debate among African philosophers of what should count as African philosophy and the implications for a general understanding of philosophy.**
- L. Illustrate the relevance of practical applications of philosophy and its connections to culture through the particular case of the Asante culture.**

V. Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Students and employees at Oakton College are required to demonstrate academic integrity and follow Oakton's Code of Academic Conduct. This code prohibits:

- cheating,
- plagiarism (turning in work not written by you, or lacking proper citation),
- falsification and fabrication (lying or distorting the truth),
- helping others to cheat,
- unauthorized changes on official documents,
- pretending to be someone else or having someone else pretend to be you,
- making or accepting bribes, special favors, or threats, and
- any other behavior that violates academic integrity.

There are serious consequences to violations of the academic integrity policy. Oakton's policies and procedures provide students a fair hearing if a complaint is made against you. If you are found to have violated the policy, the minimum penalty is failure on the assignment and a disciplinary record will be established and kept on file in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for a period of 3 years.

Please review the Code of Academic Conduct and the Code of Student Conduct, both located online at <https://www.oakton.edu/pdfs/student-handbook.pdf>

Statement on the Inappropriate Use of Generative AI

Learning requires work. It is the cognitive effort and work that helps you learn the material or develop the skills you will need in your professional career and life. It also requires the courage to risk being wrong or defending your ideas. To maximize your learning and development, it is important that the cognitive and creative work be your own. When you use AI in assignments and present the work as your own, you rob yourself of the opportunity for academic, intellectual, and personal development. Any words, writings, or ideas that are not your own need to include full attribution to their source. This is true whether those ideas came from a textbook, professional journal, popular website, or a Generative AI program such as Chat GPT or Google Bard. Failure to include proper attribution or authorization is a form of academic dishonesty and will be reported. When in doubt, cite your sources! This protects you! Correctly citing sources is part of the learning that you should do in college, and I am here to help you.

I want you to be successful in this course, and I am here to help you reach your personal academic goals. Sometimes students are tempted to violate academic integrity rules when pressed for time or feeling desperate. PLEASE reach out to me at any time you are feeling stressed, unsure, or confused.

VI. Outline of Topics

Most readings come from the textbook *Philosophy* by Manuel Velazquez. **The readings on African Philosophy are under “Files” in the D2L “Content” menu, and are in bold in the schedule below.** The episodes come from the video series *The Examined Life*, which you find through “Content” on the D2L page or in MindTap.

Week	Class Topic	Reading, Activity or Assignments Due (text to read or video to watch before posting in the discussion board)
Week 1 Aug 21-27	Introduction	Syllabus and introductions. Watch episode 1, What Is Philosophy? Read 1.1 What is Philosophy. Read: What is a Philosopher by Simon Critchley, on the internet: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/05/16/what-is-a-philosopher/ Take Quiz 1

<p>Week 2 Aug 28 - Sep 3</p>	<p>Meta-philosophy: The Nature of Philosophy and Traditional Division of Philosophy</p> <p>A Philosopher in Action: Socrates and The Value of Philosophy</p>	<p>Read 1.2 The Traditional Divisions of Philosophy</p> <p>Take Quiz 1b: Divisions of Philosophy and Philosopher in Action</p> <p>1.3 A Philosopher in Action: Socrates. Focus on the sections: <i>The Republic: Is Justice Whatever Benefits the Powerful? The Apology: Socrates’ Trial</i>;</p> <p>Read the section Thinking Critically, and</p> <p>1.4 The Value of Philosophy</p> <p>Take Quiz 1c Crito and the Value of Philosophy</p>
<p>Week 3 Sep 4-10</p>	<p>Human Nature</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>2.1 Why does your view of human nature matter?</p> <p>2.2, What is Human Nature? The Rationalist Version of the Traditional Western View of Human Nature and</p> <p>2.2 The Judeo-Christian Version of the Traditional Western View of Human Nature</p> <p>Watch Episode 2, What is Human Nature? Additional reading: Excerpts from <i>The Phaedrus</i></p> <p>Take Quiz 2, What is Human Nature?</p>
<p>Week 4 Sep 11-17</p>	<p>Meta-philosophy</p>	<p>Philosophy and an African Culture by Kwasi Wiredu</p>
<p>Week 5 Sep 18-24</p>		<p>What is Philosophy? And On an African Orientation in Philosophy, by Kwasi Wiredu</p> <p>PAPER 1 DUE FEB 16</p>
<p>Week 6 Sep 25- Oct 1</p>	<p>The Feminist Challenge</p>	<p>Read: 2.2 The Feminist Challenge, and Lord’s Transformation of Silence (available under Files in the D2L Content menu)</p> <p>EXAM 1</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct 2-8</p>	<p>Metaphysics; The Self</p>	<p>Read 2.5, Are We Independent and Self- Sufficient Individuals?</p>

		<p>The individual and the social order; Communalism as a social theory by Kwame Gyekye</p> <p>Watch episode 5, Are We Social Beings?</p> <p>Take Quiz 3, Are We Social Beings?</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 9-15</p>	<p>Phenomenology</p>	<p>Watch episode 7, How Do We Encounter the World?</p> <p>Read 3.1 What is Real?</p> <p>Read 3.6 Encountering Being: Reality in Phenomenology and Existentialism (available under Files in the D2L Content menu)</p> <p>Take Quiz 4; How Do We Encounter The World?</p>
<p>Week 9 Oct 16-22</p>	<p>Epistemology; Introduction and Rationalism</p>	<p>Read: 5.1 Why is Knowledge a Problem? And 5.2 Is Reason the Source of Knowledge?</p> <p>Take Quiz 5: Is Reason the Source of Knowledge?</p>
<p>Week 10 Oct 23-29</p>	<p>Epistemology; Empiricism</p>	<p>Read 5.3 Can the Senses Account for All Our Knowledge? (Focus on Hume)</p> <p>Watch episode 13, Does Knowledge Depend on Experience?</p> <p>Take Quiz 6; Does Knowledge Depend on Experience?</p> <p>PAPER 2 DUE MAR 23</p>
<p>Week 11 Oct 30- Nov 5</p>	<p>Epistemology; Transcendental Idealism</p>	<p>Read 5.4 Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World? The Basic Issue, and Space, Time and Mathematics.</p> <p>Read 5.4 Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World?</p> <p>Watch episode 14, Does the Mind Shape the World?</p> <p>Take Quiz 7, Does the Mind Shape the World?</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov 6-12</p>		<p>EXAM 2</p>

Week 13 Nov 13-19	African Epistemology; Rationality	Philosophy, mysticism, and rationality, by Kwasi Wiredu.
Week 14 Nov 20-26	Knowledge and Truth	Read 6.1 Knowledge and Truth, and 6.2 What is Truth? Take Quiz 8, Knowledge and Truth (6.1, 6.2)
Nov 23,24	THANKSGIVING RECESS	COLLEGE CLOSED
Week 15 Nov 27- Dec 3	Rationality, Science and Traditional African Societies	“Old Gods, New Worlds” by Kwame Anthony Appiah (available under Files in the D2L Content menu)
Week 16 Dec 4-10	Hermeneutics	Read 6.4, Can Interpretations Be True? Watch episode 17, Are Interpretations True? Take Quiz 9, Can Interpretations be True? PAPER 3 DUE MAY 4
Week 17 Dec 11 -13		FINAL EXAM Last opportunity to submit paper 3

Important Dates to Remember

9/18	Last day to withdraw from course and have it dropped from record
10/23	Last day to withdraw with a W. Students will receive a grade in all courses in which they are enrolled after this date.

VII. Methods of Instruction

Learning will require:

Reading

Watching videos and films

Participating in an online discussion several times a week

Writing three essays

VIII. Course Practices Required

Video Notes: From time to time, I will upload short videos to give instructions, introduce what you will be reading in the week, and clarify or elaborate on concepts we discuss in the discussion board. Make sure to listen to them.

Discussion entries: In this class, participation is extremely important. You will earn participation points by posting on the Discussion Forum. For 100%, you should post at

least three **SUBSTANTIAL** posts a week. The maximum number of points per post will be 7. Thus, three substantial and appropriate posts will give you 21 points.

- The first post should respond to one of the questions I provided in the discussion that has not yet been answered.
- The second post should be one question of your own out of the reading. For this question, you should cite the text and give an interpretation (or an evaluation) of what it says and a possible objection to that interpretation (or evaluation). Find a sentence or passage that is interesting to you, cite it, and explain what it means and why you find it interesting. For an interpretation, It could take a form like: "On page XX, Author writes 'blah blah blah.' I think that means *that* x, but I am unsure of this because of such-and-such a reason. Do you think this is a valid reason against the interpretation? Explain"
- The third post should be a response or comment to a classmate's posting, either to their response to one of my questions or to one of their own questions.

All responses should:

- **Answer the question asked.**
- **Be clearly connected to the text we are reading,**
- **Be significant**
- **Be properly threaded or connected.**
- **Form at least a paragraph with several clearly connected sentences. (Your three weekly responses should add to at least half a page of double spaced 12 font of writing)**

Responses to someone else's comment should add something to the original post. Simply saying you agree or disagree or that you like or dislike the other's answer does not add substance to the discussion. Such posts will not count for any points.

If comments do not meet this standard, less than full credit will be given. I will notify you by private email if your comments are not meeting this standard. Also, you may not compensate for absence from the Discussion Forum by posting responses to topics from earlier weeks.

You should post your first comment by **Wednesday**, the second one by **Friday**, and the third one by **Sunday noon**. If you miss these deadlines, you will lose 1 point each day a posting is late. I want you to start early so that you allow others the opportunity to read what you write and respond to it. The discussion forum for each topic closes at Sunday midnight of the week we read and discuss that topic and no post will be accepted after that. Although I only ask for three posts, you can always post more, which should help your grade. I would love to see real discussions developing through chains of entries.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences from the Discussion Forum. However, if an illness or family emergency means that you are absent from the discussion, I will make every effort to ensure that you have ways to earn extra credit that will compensate for your absence.

Civility and Respect. I want to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and respected in the discussion board. While I want to encourage everyone to say what they think and explore their ideas, I also want people to be respectful of others' opinions, belief systems and identities. If anybody does not feel comfortable with something they read in the discussion board, please bring it to my attention.

Papers: You will also be expected to submit three 3-page, double-spaced, 12 font size papers in which you will be asked to analyze or make a point about a topic connected with the assigned readings. For each of these papers, you will also have to submit in advance a document with the thesis you want to defend, and an annotated bibliography with at least three sources. I will explain further these requirements before paper 1 is due. To write each of the papers, you will be able to choose from a list of topics or prompts I will provide under "Paper Topics" in the Content menu.

Late papers will be penalized by 5 points per week. Papers that are more than 4 weeks overdue will get a grade of zero unless you let me know if you are still planning to submit them. The third paper won't be accepted beyond the last day of classes.

The criteria for grading will include: level of understanding, structure (whether it has an introduction, thesis, support, conclusion, and connection or flow of ideas), and clarity. It will also include form or mechanical aspects of writing. So, please make sure to carefully proofread your papers, to avoid grammatical mistakes, misspellings, punctuation errors, and unconnected sentences. In the D2L page, under "Content" you can find a rubric to get an idea of what I will be grading.

Quizzes: There will be two sets of quizzes that you will be taking most weeks:

- Quizzes and assignments in the MindTap platform. You will find these assignments by clicking on the Content menu and then on the week we are covering.
- Quizzes you will take directly as D2L quizzes. You will find these quizzes by clicking on the Quizz/Exam menu.

Exams: There will be 3 exams, including the final, which is exam 3. They will consist of a section of T/F and multiple choice questions, and two or three essay questions. You will take the exams through the system called Honorlock or at any of the two Oakton's testing centers. Each exam will be available for a period of 7 days through Honorlock or 5 days at the testing centers in the weeks indicated in the schedule of topics (Section VI). You will have 90 minutes to take it, although it normally should take you less. I will provide you in advance with a study guide to prepare for the exam.

(Honorlock proctoring has two fee options for students effective 1/1/2022: \$10.00 per exam or \$18.00 per course. It is up to the student to decide which fee option to subscribe to according to course proctoring needs. You can find more information at the Honorlock Proctoring Services at <https://www.oakton.edu/academics/distance-and-online-learning/online-testing-information.php>)

I will give more instructions about how to take the exams as we approach the exam dates.

Extra Credit: I will provide a few extra-credit opportunities to make up for lost participation points. These extra-credit opportunities might involve attending Oakton virtual events and giving me a report or a reaction to it, or watching films or videos and answering some questions about the content. Each assignment will have a value of up to .8% and you can accumulate up to 3.2 points. I will announce these extra-credit opportunities in the news section of the D2L homepage throughout the semester.

Miscellaneous: Please feel free to talk to me about any problems you might have that could be affecting your performance in the class. Knowing this information is the only way I can help you succeed. Email me and set an appointment with me so that we can talk.

Also, you will be able to view your grades online. Only you will have access to them. In unusual circumstances such as hospitalization or family emergencies, I will work with students to determine alternative ways to complete course requirements.

IX. Instructional Materials

- Manuel Velasquez - MindTap Philosophy 1 term (6 months) Printed Access Card for Velasquez's Philosophy: A Text with Readings, 13th ISBN 9781305502062 or 978-1-305-50205-5 for the electronic version.

To buy the book from the D2L site for the class:

1. Log into our D2L site for the class.
2. Click Content at the top of the screen
3. Find the Cengage Learning Resources Module and open it
4. Click on the link for **HUM-127-0C1**
5. Follow the directions there.

To register, I strongly suggest you use your Oakton email address and your myOakton password so that it is the same as your access to D2L.

You will have the option of buying the material immediately or having it free for a couple of weeks. Just know that eventually, you will have to buy it because you will need it to read and to do a big part of your homework.

If you have questions, watch the MindTap Registration Video, which explains the registration process. You can also look at the MindTap User Guide, which describes the steps to register in the first section "Login into a MindTap course". You will find the links for both the video and the guide in the Welcome module in the Content menu.

Note: Current textbook information for each course and section is available on Oakton's Schedule of Classes.

If a Direct Digital Access (DDA) fee has been charged as part of tuition and fees, viewable on myOakton, students have the option to opt out of the e-book(s) and fee(s). Please email ddaoptout@oakton.edu for more information.

X. Methods of Evaluating Student Progress

1. Papers will count for approximately 20% of your final grade. (300 points)
2. Discussion participation will count for approximately 20% of your final grade. (315 points)
3. Quizzes and MindTap will count for approximately 20% of your final grade. (310 points)
4. Exams will count for 40% of your final grade. (600 points)

If a paper shows plagiarism, the student will receive zero points for that paper. Cheating on an exam will result in a 0 for the exam. Plagiarizing a post will result in a deduction of 25 points from the participation grade. All such cases will be reported to the Dean of Students. I have adopted these policies to support students' learning and to make more likely the vast majority of students who do not plagiarize or cheat will receive better grades than students who do violate academic integrity.

The grading scale will be 90-100...A, 80-89...B, 70-79...C, 60-69...D.

XI. Other Course Information Accommodations and Policies:

1. Oakton College values equity and the diversity of learners and community members we serve. We strive to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you encounter a course, program or activity that is not accessible, or you wish to request disability-related accommodations, please contact the Access and Disability Resource Center at accessdisability@oakton.edu or 847-635-1489.
2. Oakton College is committed to maintaining a campus environment emphasizing the dignity and worth of all members of the community, and complies with all federal and state Title IX requirements.

Oakton College is committed to combating sexual misconduct. As a result, college faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the Title IX Coordinator so that all parties involved may be provided appropriate resources and support options. There are two important exceptions to this requirement:

- 1) A list of the college's Confidential Advisors who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: <https://www.oakton.edu/life-at-oakton/health-and-wellness/counseling.php>
- 2) An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the college's Title IX office.

Students who have been subjected to any form of sexual misconduct are encouraged to access these resources:

- Office of Student Affairs: 847-635-1745

- SHARE @ the Wellness Center: 847-635-1885 (8:30 AM TO 5 PM M-F) and 847-635-1880 (after business hours to reach the Counselor on Call)
- Oakton's Title IX webpage: <https://www.oakton.edu/about/policies-and-legal-notice/title-ix.php>

If there is a safety concern, please contact Oakton Police Department, 847-635-1880.

Other reporting information is available here:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?OaktonCC&layout_id=2

Resources and support for:

- Pregnancy-related and parenting accommodations can be found at: <https://www.oakton.edu/about/policies-and-legal-notice/title-ix2/pregnancy-and-parenting.php>
- Resources and support for LGBTQ+ students can be found at <https://www.oakton.edu/life-at-oakton/diversity-at-oakton/lgbtqia2-at-oakton/>

3. Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during class unless the student obtains written permission from the instructor. In cases where recordings are allowed, such content is restricted to personal use only. Any distribution of such recordings is strictly prohibited. Personal use is defined as use by an individual student for the purpose of studying or completing course assignments.

For students who have been approved for audio and/or video recording of lectures and other classroom activities as a reasonable accommodation by Oakton's Access Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC), applicable federal law requires instructors to permit those recordings. Such recordings are also limited to personal use. Any distribution of such recordings is strictly prohibited.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action through the Code of Student Conduct.

4. Oakton Emergency Building Closures. When an Oakton building is closed due to an emergency (e.g., weather-related closings), that doesn't mean instruction stops. Students should check for communications from their instructor via D2L, other learning environments such as myMathlab, or via email or text. If you don't receive communication from your instructor within 24 hours of building closure, please contact them.

Discrimination:

The Oakton College Catalog states: Oakton College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, or marital status in admission to and participation in its educational programs, activities and services, or employment practices. The College does not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual assault by or of its students or employees.

Oakton Values:

- We exercise responsibility through accountability to each other, our , and the environment.
- We embrace the diversity of the Oakton community and honor it as one of our college's primary strengths.
- We advance equity by acknowledging the effects of systemic social injustices and intentionally designing the Oakton experience to foster success for all students.
- We uphold integrity through a commitment to trust, transparency, and honesty by all members of the Oakton .
- We cultivate compassion within a caring that appreciates that personal fulfillment and well-being are central to our mission.
- We foster collaboration within the college and the larger and recognize our interdependence and ability to achieve more together.