



PHIL 210: Ancient & Medieval Philosophy

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3.0

Lecture Times & Location: Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m., Lovell Hall 140

Modality: In-Person

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Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Miriam Adler (Assistant Professor of Philosophy)
- **Email:** madler@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office:** Lovell Hall 244
- **Office Hours:**
 - Tuesday & Thursday: 3:30–5:00 p.m. (In person, Lovell Hall 244)
 - Monday: 4:00–5:00 p.m. (Virtual via Zoom; link posted in Canvas)
 - Also available by appointment.

Course Description

The Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Hellenistic schools, Augustine, and Aquinas, examining metaphysics, ethics, and the relationship between faith and reason. PHIL 210 surveys the development of classical Western philosophical thought from the Presocratic inquiries into the fundamental nature of the cosmos through the Hellenistic schools and the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish scholastic syntheses of the High Middle Ages. Students engage deeply with primary texts from Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, the Stoics, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas. The course investigates enduring questions concerning metaphysics, teleology, epistemic certainty, human flourishing (eudaimonia), the problem of evil, and the profound reconciliation of faith with classical philosophical reason.

Prerequisites

PHIL 101.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of PHIL 210, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze Presocratic and Socratic Thought:** Examine the shift from mythic cosmologies to rational philosophical inquiry in Presocratic natural philosophy and Socratic elenctic dialogue.
2. **Examine Platonic and Aristotelian Systems:** Compare Platonic metaphysical idealism (the Theory of Forms) with Aristotelian hylomorphism, teleology, substance ontology, and virtue ethics.
3. **Evaluate Hellenistic Philosophies of Life:** Contrast Epicurean atomism and hedonism with Stoic cosmopolitanism, virtue theory, and Pyrrhonian skepticism as systematic ways of life.
4. **Critique Medieval Faith and Reason Syntheses:** Analyze how Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas integrated classical philosophical frameworks into monotheistic theology, addressing creation, free will, and evil.

5. **Execute Close Textual Philosophical Exegesis:** Compose rigorously argued papers grounded in close exegetical reading of ancient and medieval primary texts, defending interpretive claims against objections.

Required Course Materials & Approximate Costs

1. **Forrest E. Baird, ed. *Philosophic Classics, Volume I: Ancient Philosophy*. 6th ed., Routledge, 2010.**
Approx. \$40 print purchase.
2. **Forrest E. Baird, ed. *Philosophic Classics, Volume II: Medieval Philosophy*. 6th ed., Routledge, 2010.**
Approx. \$35 print purchase.
3. **Total estimated cost:** \$75.

Generative AI Policy (AI Level 1: AI Not Permitted for Graded Work)

In accordance with Alkimi University Academic Policies (Student Handbook §5.8), PHIL 210 operates under **AI Level 1**.

- **What is permitted:** You may use generative AI tools to look up Greek and Latin etymologies of philosophical terms or review historical chronological timelines of the ancient Mediterranean.
- **What is prohibited:** You may not use generative AI to write close textual analyses, compose thesis statements, draft paper paragraphs, or answer examination essay questions.
- **Disclosure:** All submitted papers must include a signed academic integrity statement certifying: 'I declare that this essay represents my own independent scholarship and composition without generative AI assistance.'

Grading Components and Weights

- **Midterm Examination:** 20% (In class, Thursday, October 8)
- **Textual Analysis Paper 1: Ancient Metaphysics:** 20% (Due Friday, September 25 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Research Essay 2: Medieval Faith and Reason:** 25% (Due Friday, November 20 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Primary Text Reading Responses:** 15% (Weekly close-reading reflections submitted in Canvas on Mondays at 11:59 p.m.; lowest score dropped)
- **Seminar Discussion & Textual Exegesis:** 5% (Active, prepared participation in seminar dialogue and primary text analysis)
- **Comprehensive Final Examination:** 15% (Wednesday, December 16, 2026, 1:30–3:30 p.m.)

Grading Scale (Alkimi University Standard)

- **A:** 93–100% | **A-:** 90–92%
- **B+:** 87–89% | **B:** 83–86% | **B-:** 80–82%
- **C+:** 77–79% | **C:** 73–76% | **C-:** 70–72%
- **D+:** 67–69% | **D:** 60–66% | **F:** Below 60%
- **Extra credit:** No extra credit assignments are offered in PHIL 210. Grades reflect dedicated scholarship on assigned essays, reading reflections, and examinations.

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 1	Aug 27	The Presocratics: Arche, Flux, and Being: From mythos to logos; Milesian natural philosophy (Thales, Anaximander), Heraclitus on flux and logos, and Parmenides' radical monism of Being. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 1–35</i>	<i>First day of classes: Wed Aug 26.</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 2	Sep 1, 3	Socrates and the Early Platonic Dialogues: The Socratic quest for definitions, piety, and virtue; elenchus and aporia in Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> and <i>Meno</i> . <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 36–85</i>	<i>Wed Sep 2: Add/section change deadline.</i>
Week 3	Sep 8, 10	Plato's Metaphysics: The Theory of Forms: The Theory of Forms, the Sun analogy, the Divided Line, and the dialectic of knowledge in Plato's <i>Republic</i> (Books V–VI). <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 150–195</i>	<i>Mon Sep 7: Labor Day (no classes). Wed Sep 9: Census date (last day to drop without a W).</i>
Week 4	Sep 15, 17	Plato's Epistemology and Political Philosophy: The Allegory of the Cave, the education of the philosopher-king, the tripartition of the soul, and justice in the <i>Republic</i> (Books VII–VIII). <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 196–240</i>	—
Week 5	Sep 22, 24	Aristotle: Substance, Categories, and Hylomorphism: Aristotle's <i>Categories</i> , critique of separate Forms, substance (ousia), matter and form (hylomorphism); Paper 1 due Friday. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 280–320</i>	Textual Analysis Paper 1: Ancient Metaphysics due Fri Sep 25 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 6	Sep 29, Oct 1	Aristotle's Physics, Metaphysics, and the Prime Mover: Aristotle's <i>Physics</i> and <i>Metaphysics</i> : the Four Causes, change, potentiality and actuality (dynamis and energeia), and the Unmoved Mover. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 321–365</i>	—
Week 7	Oct 6, 8	Aristotelian Ethics, Virtue, and Midterm Exam: Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : eudaimonia, the function argument, moral and intellectual virtue, the doctrine of the mean; Midterm Exam in class. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 366–410</i>	Midterm Examination (in class).
Week 8	Oct 15	Hellenistic Philosophy: Epicurean Hedonism (Fall Break Week): Epicureanism: material atomism, the swerve, mortal soul, natural and necessary desires, and tranquil mind (ataraxia) (Fall Break week). <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 450–485</i>	<i>Oct 12–Oct 13: Fall break (no classes). Fri Oct 16: Midterm grades due.</i>
Week 9	Oct 20, 22	Hellenistic Stoicism and Virtue as Self-Sufficiency: Early and late Stoicism (Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius): cosmic providence, the ruling center, living according to nature, and the passions. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 486–530</i>	—
Week 10	Oct 27, 29	Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Plotinian Neoplatonism: Pyrrhonian skepticism (Sextus Empiricus), suspension of judgment (epoche), and Plotinian Neoplatonism: the One, Intellect, and Soul. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. I, pp. 531–570</i>	—
Week 11	Nov 3, 5	Augustine: Grace, Free Will, and the Privation of Evil: Augustine of Hippo: <i>Confessions</i> , divine illumination, the nature of time, original sin, and the privation theory of evil. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 1–55</i>	<i>Fri Nov 6: Last day to withdraw (W) or elect Pass/No Pass.</i>
Week 12	Nov 10, 12	Boethius, Providence, and Apophatic Theology: Early medieval thought: Boethius's <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> , divine foreknowledge and human freedom, and Pseudo-Dionysius's apophatic theology. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 56–105</i>	—
Week 13	Nov 17, 19	Islamic and Jewish Scholasticism: Averroes and Maimonides: The Arabic and Jewish renaissance of Aristotelianism: Avicenna, Averroes (the double truth debate), and Maimonides; Paper 2 due Friday. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 150–205</i>	Research Essay 2: Medieval Faith and Reason due Fri Nov 20 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 14	Nov 24	Anselm: Faith Seeking Understanding (Thanksgiving Week): Anselm's <i>Proslogion</i> , the ontological argument, Gaunilo's lost island objection, and Anselm's reply (Thanksgiving week). <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 106–145</i>	<i>Nov 25–Nov 27: Thanksgiving break (no classes).</i>
Week 15	Dec 1, 3	Thomas Aquinas: The Synthesis of Faith and Reason: Thomas Aquinas: <i>Summa Theologiae</i> , nature and grace, the Five Ways to prove God's existence, analogy, and natural law theory. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 260–330</i>	—

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 16	Dec 8	Late Medieval Nominalism and Course Synthesis: Late medieval challenges: Duns Scotus, William of Ockham's nominalism, the decline of scholasticism, and comprehensive final review. <i>Reading: Baird, Vol. II, pp. 400–445 and Review</i>	<i>Wed Dec 9: Last day of classes.</i> <i>Thu Dec 10: Reading Day.</i>
Finals	Dec 16	Comprehensive Final Examination: Wednesday, December 16, 2026, 1:30–3:30 p.m., Lovell Hall 140.	Scheduled during the university final examination period in Lovell Hall 140.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Class discussion in Lovell Hall 140 is the vital core of historical philosophical inquiry. You are expected to attend every session prepared to analyze primary texts. You may take up to two unexcused absences without penalty; subsequent absences lower your final grade by one-third of a letter grade. Missing more than five classes results in a failing grade. Students who miss the first two class meetings without notifying the instructor may be dropped. Students may miss class for religious observance without penalty if they notify the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by Wednesday, September 9, 2026). Absences for university-sponsored activities (athletics, performances, conferences) are excused with a letter from the sponsoring office at least one week in advance.

Late Work Policy

Textual analysis papers submitted late lose one-third of a letter grade per calendar day and will not be accepted after four days past the deadline. Weekly reading reflections must be submitted on time to support class discussion.

Final Exam Policy

The final examination (Wednesday, December 16, 2026, 1:30–3:30 p.m.) is scheduled by the University Registrar and can't be moved without the Dean's written approval (Faculty Handbook §5.5). A student with three or more final exams on the same calendar day may reschedule one of them. Requests go to the instructor of the middle exam by the last day of classes. For this term, send the request by Wednesday, December 9, 2026 (Student Handbook §6.4).

Academic Integrity

Alkimi University is an academic community devoted to rigorous scholarship, open intellectual inquiry, and uncompromising ethical conduct. All students are subject to the regulations of the Alkimi University Academic Integrity Policy. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of empirical data, and unauthorized submission of academic work generated by artificial intelligence—undermines the integrity of the university and carries severe disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a failing grade on an assignment or exam to an administrative course failure recorded as an 'XF' on the official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion. Suspected violations are formally investigated and resolved through the Office of Academic Integrity in accordance with Faculty Handbook §6. For detailed information, consult the Office of Academic Integrity, Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai.

Accessibility Services

Alkimi University is committed to providing equitable educational access and reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities, including physical, sensory, psychological, learning, and chronic health conditions. Students requesting academic accommodations must formally register with the Office of Accessibility Services, Harlan Hall 204, (555) 555-0155, access@university.alkimi.ai. Once approved,

students will receive an official Faculty Accommodation Letter detailing approved accommodations. Students should present this letter to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and at least one week prior to any exam or assignment requiring accommodation. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Your physical health, psychological well-being, and mental health are essential to your academic success. If you experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, personal trauma, or academic burnout, free, confidential counseling and medical care are available through the Hollis Health & Counseling Center, located in the Hollis Center. Routine appointments are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. during the semester by calling (555) 555-0190 or emailing health@university.alkimi.ai. Urgent, 24/7 crisis psychological counseling is accessible immediately at (555) 555-0199.

Campus Student Support Services

- **Academic Advising Center:** Lovell Hall 101 | (555) 555-0158 | advising@university.alkimi.ai
- **Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Free consultations on papers, reports, and research projects at any stage.
- **Whitcombe Library:** Whitcombe Library, Main Floor | (555) 555-0170 | askalibrarian@university.alkimi.ai
- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Hollis Center | (555) 555-0190 | 24/7 Counseling Line: (555) 555-0199 | health@university.alkimi.ai
- **The Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Consultations on primary text exegesis, thesis formulation, and citation formatting.