



# PHIL 1106: Non-western & Comparative Philosophy

**Class Time:** [REDACTED]  
**Class Location:** [REDACTED]  
**Instructor:** Chris Rahlwes  
**Email:** [chris.rahlwes@uconn.edu](mailto:chris.rahlwes@uconn.edu)  
**How to reach me:** Please drop by my open office hours ([REDACTED]) or email me to make an appointment (either in-person or online). Always include PHIL 1106 in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday.



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## Course Description:

This course is an introductory course to non-European philosophies that meets the CA 1 and CA 4-INT General Education requirements. In meeting these requirements, the course highlights multiple traditions and cultures that demonstrate the diverse approaches in philosophy as well as the interconnection of these approaches into answering some of the most fundamental philosophical questions. More specifically, we will engage with two main philosophical questions: (1) Who am I? (2) What does it mean to be rational? In so doing, we will work through Islamic, Indian, Chinese, Mesoamerican, Africana, and Latinx answers and approaches to these questions. This course will be divided historically between (1) classical philosophical answers that were developed before European colonization of the Middle East, India, China, and the Americas and (2) Africana and Latinx decolonial theories of post European colonization. For the classical systems of India, China, and the Islamic world we will look at the contrast between rationalist accounts, non-rationalist accounts, and/or accounts that synthesize the rationalist's and non-rationalist's positions. We will then turn to the Mayan and Aztec accounts of a correlative self. Finally, we will arrive at the critique of rationality and its implications on the self in Africana and Latinx philosophy.

## Course Goals

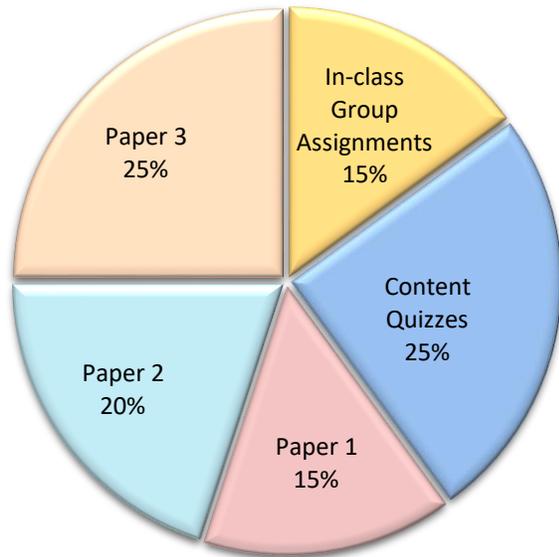
By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. To communicate (orally and in writing) the ideas and arguments presented in the readings as well as your own. This will require you to critically reflect on your own viewpoints and how they relate to others.
  2. To determine what philosophy is and what type of arguments that constitute philosophical arguments.
  3. To identify key non-Western philosophical positions and philosophers.
  4. To describe and summarize the decolonial (Africana and Latinx) critique of the Anglo-European philosophical account of rationality.
  5. To critically reflect on the nature of the self, the nature of rationality, and their intersection. In so doing, you will reflect on your own nature.
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## Means of Evaluation

- **In-Class Group Assignments (15%).** These are weekly in-class group assignments that require both a discussion element as well as a writing element. These cannot be made up under normal circumstances, but you can miss up to four in-class group assignments without it affecting your grade. Some circumstances may go outside the scope of “normal”; as such, you may make up missing group assignment through a one-on-one discussion with me (either in-person or online) with an included writing element.
- **Content Quizzes (25%).** You will have seven take home quizzes biweekly throughout the semester. You will have one week to complete each quiz, in which you may attempt the quiz five times. Extensions to the quizzes will be granted per email request, but all quizzes must be submitted before we discuss them in class. After discussing the quiz in class, you are allowed to correct your quiz for half credit. To receive this half credit, you will need to not only list the correct answers but to also explain why the answers are correct. The half credit is determined by your explanation. It should be noted that the lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
- **Paper 1 (15%) 750 Words.** This paper focuses on your ability to clearly and precisely explain a passage from one of the primary texts. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the passage as well as how convincing your explanation is.
- **Paper 2 (20%) 750 Words.** This paper focuses on your ability to create a philosophical argument, in which you must convince the reader that your position is correct regarding a philosophical question or problem (e.g., what is the self?). Your grade is determined by how convincing your argument is.
- **Paper 3 (25%) 1500-2000 Words.** This paper should be a revision of Paper 1 or Paper 2, in which you further develop your explanation, ideas, and/or argument. This paper is the culmination of the course and will be graded along the lines of Paper 1 and Paper 2 both with stricter criteria.

### Grade Weight per Course Component



### Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

### Required Materials:

- All course readings will be available on [HuskyCT](#).
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

### How to Access our Course and Get Started:

- Log into [HuskyCT](#).
- Under “My Courses”, locate PHIL-1106-Non-western and Comparative Philosophy, and click on it.
- This will take you to the course home page. On the left panel, click Course Orientation to get started.

### Course Policies:

#### Submission of Late Work

If you are unable to submit the assignment on [HuskyCT](#) by the schedule due date, extensions can be granted for the quizzes and the papers. If you miss in-class group assignments, these can be made up through a one-on-one meeting with me in-person or online. Quiz extensions will be granted up till the night before we discuss the quiz in class, which typically occurs the following Monday after the quiz is due. For Paper 1 and Paper 2, extensions will be granted and a due date for late work will be established based on your circumstances. If you need an extension for Paper 3, you will have to request an incomplete for the course and we will have to work out a new personalized due date. **Extensions need to be requested via [email](#) before the assignment is due.**

## Cheating & Plagiarism

This course expects you will act in accordance with [the Guidelines for Academic Integrity](#) at the University of Connecticut. Reach out to me if you have doubts about what counts as plagiarism or complete the UConn Library's [Understanding Plagiarism](#). In cases of cheating, I will follow [the Academic Misconduct Procedures](#) per the University of Connecticut's standards.

## Accessibility and Equity

If you have difficulty accessing the course or its materials based on a disability or pregnancy, please contact [the Center for Students with Disability](#). They will confidentially provide me a letter describing accommodations that will help make the course more accessible. If there are other issues that make the course inaccessible, please reach out to me via [email](#).

## Mutual Respect

Differing opinions and arguments are encouraged in this course but must be engaged in a respectful manner. Do not mock someone for their opinion or use slurs. You should never feel embarrassed or ashamed about your opinion, concern, or question. We all come to this class in different ways, and we should feel comfortable in sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Remember that we all (including me) are working towards improving our communication skills in presenting our arguments as well as the arguments from the readings.

## Recording & copyright

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

## Attendance & Participation

Per University of Connecticut's policies, attendance is not graded. Attending class is important as it enables you to work on your skills of oral communication with the in-class group work, which is fundamental for this course. Further, since our class meets only once a week for thirteen weeks, missing any class will be equivalent to missing a week of a "regular" class. Please reach out to me if you find yourself in a situation that requires prolonged absences.

## COVID & Illness

The University of Connecticut [policy regarding masking](#) encourages wearing masks in indoor settings. As such, please consider wearing masks in the classroom. If you do become sick (COVID or otherwise), please do not come to class. Contact me via [email](#) and I will work with you to catch you up on the material and assignments.

## Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Reading	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>8/29</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>  <b>Cartesian account of the self &amp; rationality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The School of Life Video Clip on Descartes</a></li> </ul> <p>Descartes, selections from the <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i></p>	Week 1 In-class Group Assignment
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>9/5</b>	<b>NO CLASS: LABOR DAY</b>	
<b>Module 1: Islamic Accounts</b>			
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>9/12</b>	<b>Falsafa (Philosophy) and its Rejection</b>  <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisnovsky (2005). Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition (pp. 100–121).</li> <li>• Marmur (2005). Al-Ghazālī (pp. 143–145).</li> <li>• Avicenna, selections from <i>al-Shifa</i></li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Avicenna</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Philosophy in the Islamic World</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Into Thin Air: Avicenna on the Soul</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Miracle Worker: Al-Ghazālī Against The Philosophers</a></li> </ul>	Week 3 In-class Group Assignment.

Week 4	9/19	<p><b>Mysticism &amp; Philosophical Sufism</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rizvi (2005) “Mysticism and philosophy: Ibn ‘Arabī and Mullāṣadrā”</li> <li>• Rūmī, selections from Akhtarkhavari and Lee’s <i>Love is my Savior</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ohlander (2011) “Sufism”</li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Mulla Sadra</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, A Matter of Taste: Ibn ‘Arabī and Mysticism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Sajjad Rizvi on Mullā Sadrā</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Eyes Wide Shut: Rūmī and Philosophical Sufism</a></li> <li>• Azadibougar and Patton (2015) Coleman Barks’ Versions of Rumi in the USA</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz 1 Due 9/21</b></p> <p>Week 4 In-class Group Assignment</p>
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**Module 2: Indian Accounts**

Week 5	9/26	<p><b>Brahmanism: Nyāya &amp; Advaita Vedānta</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chatterjee (2011). Nyāya-vaiśeṣika Philosophy (pp. 2–5).</li> <li>• Nelson (2007). Krishna in Advaita Vedanta: The Supreme <i>Brahman</i> in Human Form (pp. 309–315).</li> <li>• <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> (Ch. 2 and Ch.15).</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Nyaya</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Advaita</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Where There’s Smoke There’s Fire: Gautama’s Nyāya-Sūtra</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Source Code: Badarayana’s Vedanta-Sutra</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Now Two Ways About It: Śaṅkara and Advaita Vedānta</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, World on a String: The Bhagavad-Gita</a></li> </ul>	<p>Week 5 In-class Group Assignment</p>
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<p><b>Week 6</b></p>	<p><b>10/3</b></p>	<p><b>Buddhism: Madhyamaka &amp; Theravāda</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westerhoff (2010). Abhidharma Philosophy (pp. 3–5).</li> <li>• Dunne (2010). Madhyamaka in India and Tibet (pp. 1–6).</li> <li>• Nāgārjuna, selections from <i>Mulamadhyamakakārikā</i></li> <li>• <i>Milindapañha</i>, selections</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Madhyamaka</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Nagarjuna</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, We Beg to Differ: The Buddhists and Jains</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, It All Depends: Nagarjuna on Emptiness</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Jan Westerhoff on Nagarjuna</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz 2 Due 10/5</b></p> <p>Week 6 In-class Group Assignment</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p><b>10/10</b></p>	<p><b>Jainism: Kundakunda and Umāsvāti</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long (2011) Jain Philosophy (pp. 3–8).</li> <li>• Matilal (1981). <i>The Central Philosophy of Jainism (Anekānta-Vāda)</i> (pp. 19–23).</li> <li>• Kundakunda, <i>Samayasara</i> (pp. 25–30 &amp; 49–50).</li> <li>• Umāsvāti, <i>Tattvārtha Sūtra</i> (pp. 38–43).</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Jain Philosophy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Taking Perspective: The Jain Theory of Standpoints</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Well Qualified: The Jains on Truth</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Paper 1 Due 10/12</b></p> <p>Week 7 In-class Group Assignment</p>

<b>Module 3: Chinese Accounts</b>			
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>10/17</b>	<p><b>Confucius &amp; Ruism</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McLeod (2014). <i>The Analects of Confucius</i> (pp. 14–24 &amp; 35–40).</li> <li>• Ni (2010). <i>Classical Confucianism</i> (pp. 3–9).</li> <li>• Confucius, selections from the <i>Analects</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Confucius</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Mencius</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Xunzi</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The School of Life, Confucius</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Who Was Confucius? Bryan W. Van Norden</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz 3 Due 10/19</b></p> <p>Week 8 In-class Group Assignment</p>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>10/24</b>	<p><b>Mohism &amp; the School of Names</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lai (2008). <i>Early Mohist Philosophy</i> (pp. 59–69).</li> <li>• Lai (2008). <i>The Mingjia and the Later Mohists</i> (pp. 128–131).</li> <li>• Gongsunlong, <i>White Horse is not a Horse Discourse</i>.</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Mozi</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SEP, Mohism</a></li> </ul>	<p>Week 9 In-class Group Assignment</p>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>10/31</b>	<p><b>Daoism: Laozi and Zhuangzi</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xiaogan (2011). <i>Daoism: Laozi and Zhuangzi</i> (pp. 2–10).</li> <li>• Moeller (2006). <i>Indifference and Negative Ethics</i>.</li> <li>• The <i>Zhuangzi</i> (Ch. 3)</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Laozi</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Zhuangzi</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The China History Podcast, Daoism (Part 2)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The School of Life, Lao Tzu</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The School of Life, Wu Wei</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz 4 Due 11/2</b></p> <p>Week 10 In-class Group Assignment</p>

<b>Module 4: Mesoamerican Accounts</b>			
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>11/7</b>	<b>Mayan &amp; Aztec</b>  <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McLeod (2022). "Identity, Self, and Personhood" from <i>Introduction to Mesoamerican Philosophy</i></li> <li>• Maffie (2014). Teotl" from <i>Aztec Philosophy</i>.</li> <li>• Selections from the <i>Popol Vuh</i>.</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Aztec Philosophy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">James Maffie "Aztec Philosophy"</a></li> </ul>	<b>Paper 2 Due 11/9</b>  Week 11 In-class Group Assignment
<b>Module 5: Decolonial Accounts</b>			
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>11/14</b>	<b>Mestiza Feminism &amp; Intersectionality</b>  <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lugones (1987). Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception (pp. 1–14).</li> <li>• Anzuldúa (1987) <i>Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> (pp. 1–13 &amp; 77–91).</li> </ul> <u>Recommended Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SEP, Latin American Feminism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Feminism and Racism</a></li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 5 Due 11/16</b>  Week 12 In-class Group Assignment
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>11/21</b>	<b>NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>	

<b>Week 14</b>	<b>11/28</b>	<p><b>Black Existentialism</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gordon (2008). Three Pillars of African-American philosophy.</li> <li>• Fanon (1967) <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> (pp. 89–119).</li> <li>• Du Bois (1903). <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> (Ch. 1).</li> <li>• Cooper (1892) The Status of Woman in America.</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Lifting the Veil: Introducing W.E.B. Du Bois</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, The Problem of the Color Line: Introducing the Twentieth Century</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HOP, Meeting the Gaze: Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Masks</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Frantz Fanon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SEP, Africana Philosophy</a></li> </ul>	<p>Week 14 In-class Group Assignment</p>
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>12/5</b>	<p><b>Latinx Decoloniality</b></p> <p><u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mignolo (2005). The Americas, Christian, Expansion, and the Modern/Colonial Foundation of Racism (pp. 1–15).</li> <li>• Maldonado-Torres (2012). Epistemology, Ethics, and the Time/Space of Decolonization: Perspectives from the Caribbean and the Latina/o Americas.</li> </ul> <p><u>Recommended Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">IEP, Latin American Philosophy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SEP, Latinx Philosophy</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz 6 Due 12/7</b></p> <p>Week 15 In-class Group Assignment</p>
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>12/12</b>	<p><b>FINALS WEEK</b></p>	<p><b>Quiz 7 Due TBD</b></p> <p><b>Paper 3 Due TBD</b></p>

Resources Available to All Students:

[College is a challenging time in your life.](#)

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at the University of Connecticut, Hartford Campus. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.

[The Writing Center](#)

[Academic Achievement Center](#)

[Academic Advising](#)

[Center for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Food Assistance at Uconn](#)

[Dean of Students \(email\)](#)

[Information Technology Services](#)

[Mental Health – Student Health and Wellness](#)

[Title IX Office](#) – if you are experiencing gender-based violence or discrimination.

[ADA Coordinator and the Office of Institutional Equity](#)

[Student Health and Wellness](#) – if you are sick or injured and need medical care.

[Student Care Team](#)

[African American Cultural Center](#)

[Asian American Cultural Center](#)

[Native American Cultural Programs](#)

[Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center](#)

[Rainbow Center](#)

[Women's Center](#)