



The mission of Concord University is to provide quality, liberal arts based education, to foster scholarly and creative activities, and to serve the regional community (<http://www.concord.edu/academics/>).

---

# PHIL 440 Independent Study

Spring 2019 • Time & Place TBA • CRN 20431 • 3 Credit Hours

## Instructor Information

Thomas J. Mc Kenna, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of History and Philosophy  
231 Marsh Hall (ADMIN)  
(304) 384-5280  
[timckenna@concord.edu](mailto:timckenna@concord.edu)

Department of Humanities  
305 Marsh Hall (ADMIN)  
(304) 384-5268  
<http://www.concord.edu/academics/humanities/>

Office Hours: 11:00 A.M. – 12:15 P.M. Monday through Thursday

## Description

This course introduces the current standards for research in philosophy and the history of ideas, and guides you in the preparation, planning, and production of an original research project for presentation at Concord's Undergraduate Research Day.

## Outcomes

The successful completion of this course will enable you to demonstrate your command of the current standards for research in philosophy and/or the history of philosophy required for the successful completion of each stage of the research process listed in the course schedule.

## Alignment with the Educational Goal(s) of Concord University

The learning outcome of this course aligns with the following educational goal of Concord University: 1.3. An ability to employ appropriate methods and technologies for conducting empirical and scholarly research, to interpret research findings, and to use insights gained from such research as a basis for informed decision making.

## Pre-Requisites

This course requires the successful completion of PHIL 101 and PHIL 102 or the permission of the instructor.

## Required Texts

The course requires the following text(s): L. Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy* (Oxford, 2005).

## Course Management System, Hardware, and Software Requirements

This course utilizes the [Blackboard Course Management System](#) and other Internet resources listed in this syllabus. (Blackboard is compatible with most, but not all, browsers; see Blackboard's [Browser Support](#) for more information.) You will also need access to Word, Pages, or other word processing software that enables you to submit your work in a Portable Document Format (PDF) and Microsoft Power Point or other presentation software that allows you to view Power Point Files.

## Attendance and Participation

I require attendance in order to help you do well in this course: regular, active participation in class is the single most effective thing that you can do to improve your performance. If you miss more than two classes, you must provide a satisfactory explanation for your absence. If you fail to do so, I will withdraw you from the course in conformity with the Academic Policies and Procedures in the current edition of the Academic Catalogue (<http://catalog.concord.edu/>).

## Assessment of Student Performance

I will assess your performance on the basis of the following assignments: (1) a series of twelve posts to the discussion forum (5% each for a total of 60%) and your final paper (40%).

## Grading Scale

I grade all assignments on a standard scale: A (90-99/100), B (80-89), C, (70-79), and so on.

## Missed Deadlines

If you miss the initial deadline for an assignment, you must provide a satisfactory explanation for missing the deadline to reschedule. If not, you will fail the assignment. The final deadline for all assignments is the last day of regularly scheduled classes for the semester, without exception.

## Extra-Credit and Corrections

I do not provide extra-credit; however, you may correct any assignment scheduled prior to the week of final exams to improve your grade. The deadline for all corrections is the last day of regularly scheduled classes for the semester—without exception. (Note: I grade late work as time permits, so I may not grade late work in time for you to meet this deadline.)

## Communication

I will maintain a professional line of communication with you through your university email account, the current standard for professional communication; not your personal email, social media, or texts. You are solely responsible for checking your university email on a regular basis; failure to do so is not a legitimate excuse for missing deadlines.

## Professional Conduct and Academic Honesty

Concord University requires its students to conform to the standards of professional conduct and academic honesty published in the relevant portion of the Academic Policies and Procedures in the current edition of the Academic Catalogue (<http://catalog.concord.edu/>). Plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty violate these standards. I will penalize your first offense with a failure for the assignment. But I believe in second chances: if you resubmit your work, I will reevaluate your grade. I will penalize your second offense with a failure for the course. I will also inform the Vice President of Academic Affairs of your second offense, who may review your case for further discipline.

## Course Schedule

The course schedule lists the topics for the lectures and discussions for each day of the course throughout the semester, the assignments, and due dates. Changes to the schedule are rare; but if there are changes, I will inform you of them through Blackboard. You are solely responsible for checking this schedule, as well as for checking Blackboard for any changes, to prepare for class each day the course meets.

### Week 1 Introduction to the Course

2 Research and Writing: L. Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy* (Oxford, 2005)

3 Topic Selection

#### Discussion Assignment no. 1

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

#### Netiquette

Your conduct online must conform to the same standards as the traditional classroom: you must engage one another in a polite, respectful, professional discussion. If you fail to do so, I will issue a warning. If you fail to do so a second time, I will withdraw you from the course in conformity with the Academic Policies and Procedures on Classroom Conduct published in the current Academic Catalog (<http://catalog.concord.edu>).

#### Criteria

##### 1. Expression

You must express yourself in a polite, respectful, and professional manner. (See the Statement on Netiquette for more information) Your prose does not need to be as polished as it does for your essays; nevertheless, if your prose is not clear, then your grade will naturally suffer.

##### 2. Content

The content of your posts must satisfy the relevant criteria listed in the research guide for this course: L. Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy* (Oxford, 2005).

#### Rubric

A (90-99/100)	Satisfies the criteria to the highest degree
B (80-89)	Satisfies the criteria to a high degree
C (70-79)	Satisfies the criteria to a modest degree
D (60-69)	Satisfies the criteria to a minimal degree
F (0)	Fails to satisfy the criteria

4 Preliminary Literature Review

#### Discussion Assignment no. 2

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

5 Tentative Thesis

**Discussion Assignment no. 3**

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

6 Relevant Background Information

**Discussion Assignment no. 4**

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

7 The Argument in Support of Your Thesis

**Discussion Assignment no. 5**

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

8 Counter Evidence

**Discussion Assignment no. 6**

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

9 Conclusion

**Discussion Assignment no. 7**

Submit a brief summary of your work for this stage of the research process. You must submit your post no later than 11:59 PM on the evening prior to our discussion of them (so I have time to review them). We will discuss them in class. *Be sure to submit your posts in the text box to facilitate our discussion; do not attach a file unless instructed otherwise.*

10 First Draft

**Discussion Assignment no. 8**

Attach a file of your draft in a PDF (Portable Document Format).

11 Revisions

**Discussion Assignment no. 9**

Attach a file of your revisions in a PDF. Indicate omissions with a ~~strike through~~ and additions with an underline.

## 12 Preparation for Undergraduate Research Day

**Discussion Assignment no. 10**

Attach a Power Point file of your poster presentation.

## 13 Undergraduate Research Day

Class will *not* meet this week. Instead, you are *required* to present your research at Undergraduate Research Day. If you fail to do so, I will deduct 10 percentage points, an entire letter grade, from your research project.

## 14 Reflection

**Discussion Assignment no. 11**

Post an answer to the question: what have you learned from Undergraduate Research Day?

## 15 Conclusion

**Discussion Assignment no. 12**

Post an answer to the question: What Have You Learned from This Course?

Finals **Your Final Draft**

## Requirements

1. Your final draft must be at least 2,500 words, approximately 10 pages, in length.
2. It must conform to the expectations in our research and writing guide for this course: L. Vaughn, *Writing Philosophy* (Oxford, 2005).
3. You must submit it in a Portable Document Format (PDF) on Blackboard on Thursday of finals week
4. It must not exceed a similarity score of 24% on the Turnitin originality report.

## Criteria

1. Clarity of expression  
You must express yourself in a polite, respectful, and professional manner, without significant errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.
2. Thesis statement and structure of argument  
You must present a clear thesis statement and a well-structured argument in support of your thesis.
3. Style, format, and citation  
You must conform to the standards for style, format, and citation in the current MLA Style Manual (<https://style.mla.org>) or, as Storey recommends, the Chicago Manual of Style (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>).
4. Quality of information  
You must provide relevant, accurate, and detailed information in support of your thesis.
5. Depth of critical thought and reflection  
You must provide critical reflection on the information you provide in support of your thesis throughout your paper; not merely a summary of the information.

Rubric					
	4 points	3	2	1	0
1. Clarity of expression	Demonstrates the highest degree of clarity of expression	Demonstrates a high degree of clarity	Demonstrates a moderate degree of clarity	Demonstrates a minimal degree of clarity	Fails to demonstrate a minimal degree of clarity
2. Thesis statement and structure of argument	Demonstrates an exceptionally clear thesis statement and a well-structured argument in support of the thesis	Demonstrates a very clear thesis statement and well-structured argument	Demonstrates a moderately clear thesis statement and well-structured argument	Demonstrates a minimally clear thesis statement and well-structured argument	Fails to demonstrate a clear thesis statement
3. Style, format, and citation	Demonstrates the highest degree of conformity to the standards for style, format, and citation	Demonstrates a high degree of conformity to the standards	Demonstrates a moderate degree of conformity to the standards	Demonstrates a minimal degree of conformity to the standards	Fails to demonstrate the minimal degree of conformity to the standards
4. Quality of information	Demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of relevance, accuracy, and detail	Demonstrates a high degree of relevance, accuracy, and detail	Demonstrates a moderate degree of relevance, accuracy, and detail	Demonstrates a minimal degree of relevance, accuracy, and detail	Fails to demonstrate a minimal degree of relevance, accuracy, and detail
5. Critical thinking	Demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of critical thinking	Demonstrates a high degree of critical thinking	Demonstrates a moderate degree of critical thinking	Demonstrates a minimal degree of critical thinking	Fails to demonstrate a minimal degree of critical thinking

## Addendum: University Policies and Procedures

### Accessibility/Accommodations

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at [nellison@concord.edu](mailto:nellison@concord.edu) for assistance.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### Concord University Honor Code

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states: *"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."* The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

### Class/Online Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### Emergency Alert System

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

### Emergency Information

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information: <http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

### Inclement Weather Policy

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

- University Closure: No students or employees are to report.
- Classes Cancelled: Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.
- Inclement Weather Delay: Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See <http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.

### Student Conduct

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

### Technology Services

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail [cuhelpdesk@concord.edu](mailto:cuhelpdesk@concord.edu).

### Syllabus Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please check it regularly.