

Society, Discipline, and Control

Spring 2026

1. Course Basics

PHIL 240:01
CRN: 47073
Spring 2026

2. Instructor Information

Dr. Sarah Vitale
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Department of Psychological Sciences
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

3. Course Information

Course Description

A critical examination of the role of institutional control in contemporary society. Involves philosophical discussion of the impact of institutions such as schools, hospitals, public housing, prisons, and the media on individuals and groups. Also examines the relationships between discipline and control and race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to work independently and/or collaboratively to

- create and critique (verbally and in writing) their own understandings of mechanisms and practices of discipline and control in society, in part by reflecting on their assumptions regarding these issues;
- draw conclusions regarding mechanisms and practices of discipline and control in society by tracing consequences of those views and comparing the plausibility of various positions; and
- make judgments regarding the plausibility of their positions on mechanisms and practices of discipline and control in society by defending the reasoning used to arrive at those judgments in light of the views of other individuals.

4. Course Materials

All readings will be made available through Canvas. To receive full attendance credit, you must print out the readings and bring them to class.

5. Course Assignments and Assessments

Course Assignments

Homework and In-class Activities	155 points
In-class Writing Exams	160 points
Institution Analysis	100 points
Attendance	85 points
Total Points	500 points

Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.

Course Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A	500 - 470
A-	< 470 - 450
B+	< 450 - 435
B	< 435 - 420
B-	< 420 - 400
C+	< 400 - 385
C	< 385 - 370
C-	< 370 - 350
D+	< 350 - 335
D	< 335 - 320
D-	< 320 - 300
F	< 300 - 0

6. University Policies and Statements

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 [or dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

Attendance

You are expected to be an active participant in the course. This course is designed to include discussion and other forms of collaboration and communication. You should be willing and ready to regularly communicate with me and your classmates in the classroom and online. For discussion to work, we need to limit distractions. To that end, I will ask you to keep phones out of sight during class.

The most important requirement of any humanities class is attentive preparation and participation. This is not possible if you do not attend class. Several classroom activities will be graded, and you will not be able to make up these assignments, so missing class will negatively affect your grade.

You will receive two points for attending each class and one additional point for bringing the assigned **printed** reading. Everyone receives 5 free attendance points.

For an absence to be excused, you must contact me in advance with a valid reason. I may need to see documentation. See [this page](#) for reasons for an excused absence. In addition, please try to be on time to class, and do not leave the room during class except when absolutely necessary. I reserve the right to deduct attendance points for lateness.

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI

You may use generative AI applications for some work submitted in this course. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. Any use outside of this permission constitutes a violation of Ball State University's [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

7. Student Support Services

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center. Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: [BallStateLC](#).

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free

appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this [direct link](#) to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

8. Canvas and Student Privacy

Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting the [Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#).

FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

9. Course Expectations and Policies

Feedback Policy

- The best way to reach me is by email. I will attempt to respond to emails during normal business hours within 24 hours. If you write me on the weekend, I may not respond until the next business day.
- I will make every effort to grade your quizzes, assignments, and discussions within two weeks of submission.
- Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

Late Assignment Policy

- All assignments are due by class time on the due dates indicated unless otherwise indicated.
- You are expected to complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the due date. If is late, it loses 1/3 of a letter grade. Then, every three additional days the assignment is late, it loses another 1/3 of a letter grade (3 days late, the highest you can earn is a B+, 6 days late it becomes a B, and so on). Late work must be turned in no more than a week after the unit ends unless an extension has been granted.
- Internet connectivity and technical issues may occur and impede you from turning in work on time. Turn in work early and often, and set up a back-up plan, such as visiting a local library or borrowing a peer's computer.
- Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 11:59 pm EST/EDT on the final day of class.

Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.
- Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module.

Grading Policy

- Assignments in this course will not be graded in the traditional fashion. Instead, they will all be graded as complete/incomplete, with the pass rate set at a "B." To "complete" or "pass" an assignment, you must receive a "B" on it or meet all of the listed specifications. See the course video on Specifications Grading for more information.
- If you are concerned with a grade you have received, please send me an email explaining why you think you should have received a different grade. Please do not approach me in person with such concerns. I will review your assignment again and then consider your comments. I will never lower your grade following such a review.

- Each student will begin the semester with 3 tokens. You may exchange one or more of them throughout the semester. A token will allow you to resubmit an assignment that does not meet the specifications (does not pass).

Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
- **Be respectful.** Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

10. Course Schedule

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

11. Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.