

McLennan
C O M M U N I T Y
C O L L E G E

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

AND

INSTRUCTOR PLAN

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

PHIL - 1301 – F80

DR. LEWIS PEARSON

NOTE: This is an online 8-week course.

COVID 19 Notice:

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID 19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website at <https://www.mclennan.edu/crisis-management/coronavirus-updates/index.html> on any changes to these guidelines.

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Course Description:

A study of major issues in philosophy and/or the work of major philosophical figures in philosophy. Topics in philosophy may include theories of reality, theories of knowledge, theories of value, and their practical applications.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

None

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

An Online Class Means it is Being Offered Online; It Doesn't Mean That it is Easier!

Many students take online classes because of over-full personal and professional schedules. This is very understandable! However, this does not mean that online classes are easier, or have less work in them than face-to-face classes. (In fact, those of you who have taken online classes before know that the online format often takes more work!)

Online classes appear on a student's transcript with the same course number and credit as face-to-face classes. Because of this, every form of the class should be equal in rigor and content, or else there is inequality and injustice done to the students. Making an online class "easier" or "less work" would be unfair to students in face-to-face classes because they would have to work harder to earn the same grade, and at the same time it would be unjust to students in the online classes because in an easier class with less work students wouldn't receive the full training in the skills and content that they would have received if they had taken the class face-to-face.

What does all this mean? It means that when college classes are difficult, they will be difficult both online and face-to-face! (And the busier you are, the harder it will be!) But you probably know that already. You're no whiner; you're a college student. The college credits you earn through online classes aren't being given to you out of pity, just because you don't have as much time as you would like to have. (Who does?) Rather, you are EARNING your college education, one semester, one class, one hard-fought assignment at a time. You are rising to a challenge that you have decided to undertake, so set your focus and follow through!

How to Stay on Track with the Class Schedule

Due to the cumulative nature of the material in our class, for the sake of your optimal understanding we will have a rigid semester schedule. I try to allow for as much flexibility as possible, since many students have over-full personal and professional schedules, in addition to their studies. That said, years of teaching online classes have made it clear to me as a teacher that even though most students prefer more flexibility in submission due dates, if they are given as much flexibility as they desire, most students also suffer in their assimilation of the concepts and material we cover in Introduction to Philosophy.

Of course, you may submit work early if you wish (but never late)! For those of you who may wish to work ahead: I prefer that you submit your work during the week it is due, and ALSO that you wait at least a day in between submissions of work, so that I have time to respond to

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and/or grade your work, and give you feedback, correction, and encouragement. This is for your advantage: if, for example, you misunderstand a concept in one reading, waiting to receive my feedback will allow you to correct any mistakes you may have made in your work for the next reading. That said, if you still wish to turn in your work even further ahead of the scheduled deadlines than I recommend, please contact me and we can correspond about your situation.

To reiterate my previous comments: I designed our class schedule to be somewhat flexible to accommodate your scheduling needs as much as I could, but the reason there are so many guidelines and deadlines for our class is because I know from years of teaching experience that a student cannot succeed in this class by doing all the reading and writing for each week of class in one cram session per week.

Becoming proficient in philosophy is like learning math, or a foreign language, or a musical instrument. The material builds on itself, and regular practice is necessary for progress. Likewise, pacing is necessary for becoming proficient in this field of study. And I want you all to become proficient in the material we will be studying!

Contingency

Every class is different, and “the best laid plans of mice and men oft go awry.” I may change things to fit better your needs as a student, or clarify something that a given student may misunderstand, so this syllabus may change during the semester at my discretion. I will give advance notice about any significant changes (like if there are changes in assignment deadlines).

If schedule conflicts cause a student to miss assigned work, it is the student’s responsibility to consult with the instructor *prior to the absence or due date* and make alternative arrangements for turning in work. Missed work due to serious illness or prolonged emergencies must be supported with documentation if the student wishes to make up any late or missed work.

I know how life goes, and I know that life can get full, and fast! If things pop up, just keep me in the loop, and I’ll do what I can to keep you on track, whether make-up work is an option given what happened, etc. Just e-mail me and tell me what’s going on!

How To Succeed In This Class

Evaluation in this class is based on your ability to think and write about the texts that we will be reading together during the semester. Since deep understanding builds gradually, you will need to stay on top of the material on an assignment-to-assignment basis. To do this, you must do each of the following, all of which are of equal importance:

1. Do the readings carefully and thoughtfully. This is a reading and writing intensive course which requires a commitment on your part to keep up with the assignments.
2. Do the written assignments on time, every time. (They are 80% of your grade!)

If you do each of these things, you should do well in this course and on the final exam. Finally, remember to please e-mail me if you want to talk about anything whatsoever. I’m here to help, and I want you to succeed!

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Contacting Me

Always please feel free to e-mail me. Each day from Monday to Friday I devote at least a half-hour to responding to e-mails (that time is listed on our class' Brightspace site). I may also sometimes check e-mail on Saturdays, but it's not guaranteed. I don't check e-mail on Sundays. My e-mail address is [LPearson@McLennan.edu].

If you telephone, any voice message you leave will be converted to an electronic file and sent to my e-mail, so it will take longer to reach me than if you had started by e-mailing me. **When e-mailing me, please use your official MCC e-mail account.** Many other e-mails from different servers will get caught by the MCC server filter and not make it to my inbox.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Dr. Lewis Pearson

MCC E-mail: lpearson@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: (254) 299-8471

Office Location: N/A (online class)

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: See our class' Brightspace site for my online e-mail hours.

Other Instruction Information: See our class' Brightspace site for any additional information.

Required Text & Materials: The following are **all required**. [MCC Bookstore Website](#)

Title: *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*

Author: John Perry

Edition: 1978 (copyright year)

Publisher: Hackett

ISBN: 0915144530

Title: *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Author: Rene Descartes (translated by Donald A. Cress)

Edition: 3rd

Publisher: Hackett

ISBN: 0872201929

Title: *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*

Author: Aristotle (translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins)

Edition: 2011 (year published)

Publisher: The University of Chicago Press

ISBN: 0-226-02675-2

Title: *The Republic of Plato*

Author: Plato (translated by Allan Bloom)

Edition: 2nd OR 3rd

Publisher: Basic Books

ISBN: 0-465-06934-7 OR 978-0-465-09408-0

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Methods of Teaching and Learning:

What is expected of you this semester? Here's a quick summary for you right at the beginning:

This semester, **you will have 26 written assignments** to turn in, as follows:

- 9 Journal entries (minimum 400 words each)
- 9 Discussion Board posts (minimum 400 words each)
- 8 Discussion Board comments (minimum 200 words each)

You will also have a Final Exam, made available in Brightspace during Final Exam week.

Written Assignments

Journal entries (30% of the Final Grade)

Over the course of the semester you will write and submit Journal entries (minimum 400 words each), following the instructions given for each particular entry.

Discussion Board posts (30% of the Final Grade)

In addition, you will write and submit Discussion Board posts (minimum 400 words each), following the instructions given for each particular reading.

Discussion Board comments (20% of the Final Grade)

Finally, over the course of the semester you will write and submit a number of Discussion Board comments (minimum 200 words each).

A full schedule of all the assignments may be found below under the "Course Schedule" subheading. On Brightspace, the schedule may be found under the "Semester Schedule" link.

For more detailed instructions regarding the expected format and content of the Journal entries, Discussion Board posts, and Discussion Board comments, click on the "Journal" and "Discussion Board" links on our class' Brightspace site.

Any assignment submitted after its specified deadline will earn a grade of 0, except in cases of emergency or excusable circumstances at the discretion of the instructor. Since this is an online course, missing a deadline for a class assignment means missing that class, which also means missing the class "lecture," which includes any feedback, comments, guidance, summary, videos, and/or tips I may make accessible or post in response to your work.

Final Exam (20% of the Final Grade)

A final exam will be given on Brightspace at the end of the semester. Instructions for taking and submitting the exam, along with the exam itself, will be available through a link on the class' Brightspace site during final exam week. The Final Exam may not be made up except in cases of emergency or excusable circumstances at the discretion of the instructor.

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Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

- **Critical Thinking (CT)** -- to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Communications Skill (COM)** -- to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- **Social Responsibility (SR)** -- to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- **Personal Responsibility (PR)** -- to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Read, analyze, and critique philosophical texts. (CT, SR, PR)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, major arguments, problems, and terminology in philosophy. (CT, COM, SR)
3. Present logically persuasive arguments both orally and in writing. (CT, COM)
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in evaluation and application of philosophical concepts to various aspects of life. (CT, COM, SR, PR)
5. Evaluate the personal and social responsibilities of living in a diverse world. (CT, SR, PR)

All of the above learning outcomes are taught through video lectures, assigned reading, written essays, and discussions in written form. The learning outcomes are assessed by objective exams and/or writing assignments.

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Course Outline or Schedule:

- 1) This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Notification of any changes will be given in announcements on our class' Brightspace site.
- 2) **Journal entries, Discussion Board posts, and Discussion board comments are all due on or before 8:00 AM (Central) of their deadline dates. Late submissions receive grades of 0 except in excusable cases.** (Late policies are below. E-mail me if you have questions.)
- 3) Journal entries will focus on two of the departmental learning objectives (CT, COM). All other assignments (discussion board posts, discussion board comments, and the final exam) will involve all four of the departmental learning objectives (CT, COM, SR, PR).

J = Journal entry / **P** = Discussion Board Post / **C** = Discussion Board Comment

Due by 8am	Name	Assignment Description
10/17 Mon	N/A	First day of class – Read/view all Brightspace materials (Syllabus, etc.)
10/19 Wed	J1	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book I. p. 3-34.
10/21 Fri	P1	<i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality</i> . 1 st Night. p. 1-18.
10/25 Tue	J2	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book II. p. 35-61.
10/26 Wed	P2	<i>A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality</i> . 2 nd and 3 rd Nights. p. 19-49.
10/27 Thu	C1-2	Comments C1-C2 on someone else's Discussion Board posts P1-P2.
10/28 Fri	J3	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book III. p. 63-96.
11/1 Tue	P3	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> . Letter, Pref., Synopsis, Medit. One. p. 1-17.
11/2 Wed	J4	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book IV. p. 97-125.
11/3 Thu	P4	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> . Meditations Two and Three. p. 17-35.
11/4 Fri	C3-4	Comments C3-C4 on someone else's Discussion Board posts P3-P4.
11/8 Tue	J5	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book VI. p. 163-192. (<u>We're skipping Book V</u>)
11/9 Wed	P5	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> . Meditations Four, Five, Six. p. 35-59.
11/10 Thu	J6	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book VII. p. 193-220.
11/11 Fri	P6	<i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Book 1.
11/15 Tue	C5-6	Comments C5-C6 on someone else's Discussion Board posts P5-P6.
11/16 Wed	J7	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book VIII. p. 221-249.
11/17 Thu	P7	<i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Book 2.
11/18 Fri	J8	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book IX. p. 251-275.
11/22 Tue	P8	<i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Book 3.
11/29 Tue	C7-8	Comments C7-C8 on someone else's Discussion Board posts P7-P8.
11/30 Wed	J9	<i>The Republic of Plato</i> . Book X. p. 277-303.
12/1 Thu	P9	<i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i> . Book 8.
12/6 Tue	Exam	Final Exam (will appear on Brightspace a week before the deadline)

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Course Grading Information:

90% \leq	A	$\leq 100\%$
80% \leq	B	$< 90\%$
70% \leq	C	$< 80\%$
60% \leq	D	$< 70\%$
0% \leq	F	$< 60\%$

Note: If you have questions about the above mathematical symbols (e.g., “ \leq ” means “less than or equal to”), please ask. Also, note that all questions about “rounding” are answered by the precise way in which the grading scale has been defined. (For instance, a 79.99999999 is both greater than or equal to 70 and also less than 80, which means that a 79.99999999 is a C.)

Assignment	Percentage toward final grade
Journal Entries	30%
Discussion Board Posts	30%
Discussion Board Comments	20%
Final Exam	20%
Final Grade for the Course	100%

The final grade is calculated by the above weights, NOT by dividing points earned by points possible. Brightspace’s Grade Center has been set up to reflect the above weights. If you have questions about how to apply the above weights to your assignments, please feel free to ask. Instructions, expectations, and grading criteria for all of the above assignments are provided on our class’ Brightspace site.

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

Since this is an online class, I will take attendance (i.e., keep track of your participation) based on whether or not you turn in your written assignments for each “day” of class. Thus, if you fail to turn in a Journal entry, for example, you will earn a 0 for that missed assignment, and you will also be counted absent for that “class meeting.”

MCC’s official attendance policy (found in the MCC Student Handbook, and linked on the next page of this syllabus module) applies to this class, attendance being evaluated in the form of participation as stated above. If you earn a 0 on 25% or more of the class assignments, either due to missing deadline(s) and/or because submitted work was ineligible for earning credit because it violated a class policy (plagiarism, etc.), you will receive a W or F, depending on circumstances.

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The general policy for our class is that there is no make-up work. Not having the required materials by the beginning of the semester is not a sufficient reason for missing a deadline, and requests for make-up work will not be granted. Neither will requests for make-up work be granted due to student mistakes in submitting work (misreading the schedule, posting the wrong assignment, etc.).

That said, there are rare circumstances for which a deadline extension or make-up opportunity may be appropriate, though such is not guaranteed. Whether a given set of circumstances calls for an extension or make-up opportunity is determined on a case-by-case basis, and for all such cases, the following guidelines/timetables apply:

- If there is a foreseeable reason why you may have difficulty meeting a deadline---travel for a wedding or funeral, playing an away game, etc.---please contact the instructor about this reason as soon as possible, and more than 24 hours in advance of a deadline, to discover whether a deadline extension may be a possibility. Also, documentation will be required.
- If there is an unforeseeable reason that makes it difficult for you to meet a deadline---unexpected illness, family emergency, etc.---please contact the instructor about this reason as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours past a missed deadline, to discover whether a deadline extension or make-up work may be a possibility. Also, documentation will be required.

If any issue may have interfered with the submission of your work on time, failure to inform the instructor in a timely manner (as stipulated above) will eliminate the possibility of deadline extensions, make-up work, and the like.

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

For our online class, students are expected to maintain a decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular participation, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the education opportunity. For more on this, please see the introductory videos and series of class assignment instructions on our class' Brightspace site.

* [Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement](#)

(www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)

The link above will provide you information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

Academic Integrity Statement for this Class:

If a student is detected cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment or exam, the student will receive a grade of "0" for that assignment or exam. The student may also receive an "F" for the course at the instructor's discretion. Further, the student may be referred to the appropriate disciplinary officers and/or committees on campus for disciplinary action.

Plagiarism, which is a form of cheating, includes any and all forms of using the ideas and words of another person, without giving that person credit, whether the ideas and words come from a conversation, a book, a website, or any verbal or written medium whatsoever, and whether the ideas and words are copied exactly, or paraphrased, or used as the basis for one's own work.

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This counts as plagiarism: Looking at a website to aid you in completing an assignment when you have been instructed not consult any websites, even if you don't use any of the words from the website. This also counts as plagiarism: Looking at a website to aid you in completing an assignment when you have been given permission to do so, but not mentioning the name of the website or the fact that you looked at it (even if the work you submit is all your own).

Why do these actions count as plagiarism, and why is it such a big deal? Because your assignments are a demonstration of *your* understanding and mastery of a skill, activity, or concept. If you submit someone else's work as your own, your work fails to demonstrate this.

Plagiarism takes subtler forms as well. A student may know better than to turn in someone else's work as his/her own, but a student may choose to secretly consult someone else's work when he/she has been instructed not to do so, believing it's okay because the end product is still the student's own. Still, this, too, is a case of plagiarism, because a student is relying on someone else to complete part of the overall activity that the student has been asked to practice, demonstrate, and master. For instance, if you rely on someone else's summary or commentary on a reading because you can't understand that reading on your own, that is a skill (reading comprehension) you are failing to develop and master. A journal entry that is based in part on something other than the reading (like someone else's summary) is not demonstrating a student's understanding and engagement of the reading, but of a summary.

The assignments in this class are not errands for you to run. They are designed to aid *you* in *further developing skills* in reading, comprehending, thinking, and writing about our course content. As in all things (playing an instrument, learning a trade, etc.), practice makes perfect! If you have questions about the above descriptions of plagiarism, or if you have any other questions about what might count as plagiarism, please ask, and I'll be happy to clarify any doubts you may have. Having been warned duly, please note that ignorance in this matter will not constitute a viable defense if you are guilty of plagiarism.

* [Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)
(<http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html>)

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have guidelines specific to this course.

* *You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Apple Safari) to see or print each link's information.*

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ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

Accommodations/ADA Statement:

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit <https://www.mclennan.edu/disability/>.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu

254-299-8122

Room 319, Student Services Center

Title IX:

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Chief of Staff for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <https://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/incidentLandingPageV2-MCC.asp>.

Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at <https://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/>. It contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you

or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence.

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>.

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu. Students may visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to schedule a meeting with a Success Coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff based on household size. Text (254) 870-7573 to schedule a pantry appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html> to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity/> for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty-and-Staff-Commons/requirements.html> for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy regarding college email, which can be found at <https://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. For more information about your student email account, go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/student-email/>.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- [Email Setup for iPhones and iPads](#)
- [Email Setup for Androids](#)

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to [MCC's Tech Support Cheat Sheet](#) or email helpdesk@mclennan.edu.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.