

PHI 2010: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2019 SYLLABUS

Instructor Information:

Mr. James Simpson, MA, PhD Candidate, simpson.james@ufl.edu

Office Hours:

M, 8:30am-9:30am, T, 8:30am-9:30am, W, 8:30am-9:30am, OBA, RM: FLO 318

Course Time and Location:

Lecture: T/TH Period 7 & 7-8, T: 1:55pm-2:45pm. TH: 1:55pm-3:50pm. Rm: MAT 0116.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Content. The course introduces students to philosophy by engaging, in a critical and substantive way, with various readings and arguments, both classical and contemporary, in the history of philosophy. The course will have a four-part structure. The first part will cover the central question in the philosophy of religion: "Does God exist?" We will concentrate on critically examining two rather prominent arguments for God's existence—the ontological argument and the contingency argument—and one rather prominent argument against God's existence—the argument from evil (the problem of evil). The second part of the course will focus on epistemology (theory of knowledge), specifically on epistemic justification, skepticism, and analyses of knowledge. The third part of the course will be concerned with action, primarily intentional actions, and moral responsibility. The fourth part of the course will focus on normative ethics, in particular we will examine three ways (utilitarian, deontological, and virtue-theoretical) of characterizing whether or not an action is morally right and standard difficulties that each standard of right action must face.

Method. This course also has significant goals in building skills of philosophical thinking, speaking, and writing.

The General Education Student Learning Outcomes.

CONTENT: students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline.

COMMUNICATION: students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline.

CRITICAL THINKING: students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Nota bene, this course fulfills the Gordon Rule Writing Requirement and the Humanities Requirement for General Education. NOTE: The Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning AND a minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Required Materials:

Available in the UF Bookstore: Rosen et al, *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* 2nd Edition ISBN: 9780393624427

New: 84.25, Used: 63.25, Rental New: 63.19, Rental Used: 33.70

Note: Some required readings will also be made available on our course Canvas site, under “Files.”

You are expected to bring a copy of the current reading with you to class every day.

Assessment:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

(1) To do well in this course you must come to class on time and be prepared to engage the assigned material. This includes: keeping current on the reading assignments, bringing the current reading with you to class, and being aware of the course schedule and activities as discussed in class and posted on the course web page. You are responsible for regularly checking your UF email. Important announcements are often made at the beginning of class and are not repeated.

(2) Attendance in lectures is required. I will keep record of your presence or absence. Also, quizzes will sometimes be unannounced, so missing class could result in missing a quiz.

(3) Most people who do well on writing assignments for this course begin writing well in advance of deadlines. You should plan to meet with me to discuss your plans for your papers, and you should expect to write and revise drafts of your essays. However, note two things. First, **I do not read drafts.** I am happy to discuss your paper, help you work through your argument, etc, but I will not be reading drafts. Second, let me disabuse you of a common misconception: **visiting me during office hours doesn't result in an automatic A for any assignment or for the course.** That said, please come to see me during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions or to talk with me about your papers or the course, and feel free to email me with any questions you may have about the content of the course or some administrative aspect of it.

(4) Writing assignments will be on assigned topics.

(5) In grading your work, I will hold you to a standard that assumes you have been doing the readings and attending lecture.

(6) In grading your work I'll be using both a list of grading shorthands and a grading rubric. Both the list and the rubric are available on our Canvas site under “Files”.

(7) Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher for the course and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Points:

1. Attendance and Participation: 10 points.
2. 2:20-Q In-class Multiple Choice and True/False Exams (5 points each): 10 points.
3. 1: 1000-word personal reflection: 10 points. (Due date September 5th, 11: 59pm. Submit on Canvas.)
4. 1: 500-word writing assignment on validity and soundness: 10 points. (Due date August 29th, 11: 59pm. Submit on Canvas.)
5. 1: 500-word in class expository writing assignment: 10 points.
6. 2: 1,000 word take home essay exams (each worth 25 points): 50 points.
 - o Total: 100 points.

Points for all written materials will be posted as soon as they are graded on Canvas.

Late work will be accepted but penalized unless legitimate documentation is provided to me within the appropriate amount of time (see below). For more information about late penalties, contact me via email or schedule an appointment to visit me in my office.

Excused absence(s) require documentation be provided to me within a week of the absence(s). Otherwise, you will lose attendance points for the class(es) you miss and for the assignments you missed. For what constitutes an excused absence see the University guidelines.

Papers are submitted by uploading a pdf or doc of your paper on Canvas.

Grading Scale is as follows:

Grade Scale	Grade Value
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100-93 = A	A = 4.0
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92-90 = A-	A- = 3.67
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89-86 = B+	B+ = 3.33
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85-82 = B	B = 3.00
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81-79 = B-	B- = 2.67
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78-76 = C+ = 2.33
C+

75-72 = C = 2.00
C

71-69 = C- = 1.67
C-

68-66 = D+ = 1.33
D+

65-62 = D = 1.00
D

61-60 = D- = 0.67
D-

59-0 = E E = 0.00

Classroom Conduct:

Do not be disruptive or disrespectful. No sleeping, no texting, no playing on Facebook, no reading the newspaper, no yelling at classmates or me, no speaking during lecture unless called upon to speak by me, and so on. This should go without saying, really.

Note: computers are allowed, although I discourage you from using them in class. However, if one prefers using a computer to take notes, then I will not prohibit such a thing. But, nota bene, computers are only to be used for the purpose of taking notes or, if one has an electronic copy of the readings, as a way of following along with the readings. If I discover that you're using them for Facebook or whatever, then we will revisit the computer policy. No phones should be out during class.

Academic Honesty:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Plagiarism will result, in the very least, in failure of the course, if not suspension or expulsion from the University. So, don't do it.

Students with Disabilities, Student Counseling Services:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling services: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 392-1575

Online Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Writing Studio:

www.writing.ufl.edu

Important Dates (these are not subject to change):

August 29th: 500-word writing assignment on validity and soundness due.

September 5th: 1000-word personal reflection due.

September 26th: Exam 1.

October 10th: 500-word in-class expository essay.

October 24th: First 1,000 word take home essay due.

November 26th: Second 1,000 word take home essay due.

December 3rd: Exam 2.

Tentative Schedule (could change depending on the pace of the course):

Part 1a: Arguments for God's Existence

August 20th: Review Syllabus. Discuss validity, soundness, and argumentation.

August 22nd: Required Readings: Anselm's Ontological Argument (OA), pages 8-9 of the Norton. Problems for Anselm's view.

August 27th: Cont. Anselm's OA.

August 29th: Plantinga's OA and Martin's criticisms. Both pdfs available on Canvas. 500 word validity and soundness assignment due.

September 3rd: Cont. objections to the OA.

September 5th: Aquinas' Contingency Argument and Objections. Read pages 13-15 of the Norton. 1000 word personal reflection due.

September 10th: Rowe's Contingency Argument. Pdf available on Canvas.

September 12th: Cont. Rowe's Contingency Argument and Mackie's Criticisms. Pdf available on Canvas.

September 17th: Finish the Contingency Argument. Writing Workshop.

Part 1b: Arguments Against God's Existence:

September 19th: Logical Problem of Evil and Evidential Problem of Evil. Mackie's "Evil and Omnipotence" available on Canvas. Norton pages 41-45.

September 24th: Responses to both the logical problem of evil and the evidential problem of evil. Norton pages 47-57.

Part 2: Epistemology:

September 26th: Finish Problem of Evil, if necessary. Start Epistemology. Read Plato's Meno in the Norton, pages 137-142. (First in-class exam today).

October 1st: Gettier Problem. Read Norton pages 143-145. Writing Workshop.

October 3rd: Cont. Gettier Problem. Reliabilism, No False Premises, Causal Account, No False Grounds. Read Clarke. Pdf available on Canvas.

October 8th: Cont. Gettier Problem.

October 10th: Defeasibility Analysis. Lehrer and Paxson. Pdf available on Canvas. (In-class expository essay today).

October 15th: Safety and Sensitivity. Pdf available on Canvas.

October 17th: Knowledge First. Norton pages 149-155.

October 22nd: Finish analyses of knowledge and Gettier Problem. Writing Workshop.

October 24th: Epistemic Justification. Foundationalism and Coherentism. Pdf available on Canvas. (1,000 word take home essay due on Canvas at 11:59pm).

October 29th: Why Foundationalism? Why Coherentism?

October 31st: External World Skepticism. Read Norton pages 264-267 and 278-283.

November 5th: Finish Skepticism.

Part 3: Action and Moral Responsibility

November 7th: Intentions, Intentional Actions, and Moral Responsibility. Pdf available on Canvas and read Norton pages 625-632.

November 12th: Free Acts? Norton pages 600-609. Compatibilism, Libertarianism, and Hard Determinism.

Part 4: Normative Ethics:

November 14th: Utilitarianism. Norton pages 790-798.

November 19th: Finish UT. Kantianism. Norton pages 800-810.

November 21st: Finish Kantianism. Virtue Ethics. Norton pages 813-822. Writing Workshop.

November 26th: Virtue Ethics. Norton pages 824-830. (1,000 word take home essay due today at 11: 59pm on Canvas).

December 3rd: Virtue Ethics. (Last in-class exam today).