

Reasoning

PHI 3114 Spring 2020

Prof. Ray

PHI 3114 - Syllabus

Philosophy is especially concerned with bringing reason to bear on tough questions. Philosophical texts and discourse are rich in reasoned case-making in the form of argumentation and dialogic disputation. In this course, we will develop our skill in the identification and extraction of arguments from philosophical texts. This is primarily a skill-building class. We focus on practical techniques that help us understand, and will make central use of diagrammatic techniques for representing the structure of arguments. We will learn strategies for understanding challenging arguments and developing clear, defensible interpretations/criticisms of them. Finally, we will turn things around and show how these very same techniques make writing a thesis-defense essay dramatically easy. (You will never look on a paper assignment the same way again!) Time permitting, we will also learn about different kinds of case-making and argument, and ways these may characteristically differ in different areas (e.g. law). The skills gained in this class will improve your own reasoning skills and critical discernment. The content of this course will be of value to every student.

Note: This is not a course in logic and no training in logic is presupposed. Students of logic will learn a fundamental complementary skill.

This course will help you develop and exercise many skills that are a goal of the major; in terms of [learning outcomes](#), see especially SLOs 4,5,6 & 7. To wit, improving your skill in reading/understanding complex philosophical and other argumentative casemaking; discerning the structure of arguments and representing them fairly and clearly, evaluating them for cogency; formulating well-targeted original and critical arguments; writing clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters; improving critical thinking skills applicable to a wide variety of intellectual areas.

Course Work:

Regular exercises (40%), two exams (30%), and project (30%).

Be not fooled, attendance will be essential to your success in this class. To help you rise to the occasion, attendance in this class is required. Students who stop attending class regularly may be barred from completing further homework and exams.

Course Materials:

This course requires subscription to a web-based diagramming service for the duration of the course. (Free to you; monthly service fee is paid by us.) There is no required textbook to purchase.

Course materials will be made available in lecture, through this class web site, or via the *Reasoning UF* mapping site. Local documents will typically be in [PDF format](#). These course materials may be password protected. In order to view and print them you need to know a password—which will be given to you in class...

Some homework for this course will be handed in via Canvas (aka e-Learning).

This course does not require a textbook.

Some interactive course materials, like online practice problems and sample demonstrations, will be made available on this class web site. You are strongly urged to make use of these helpers throughout the course.

Rules of Engagement:

1) The materials on this site do not belong to you. You may not give access to or share them with anyone outside the class. 2) You may not use digital devices in lecture or discussion sessions without special permission from the professor. The same applies to the taking of pictures or the making of audio or video recordings of any kind. Violation of the terms of this agreement may be grounds for dismissal from the class. Seriously.

Nota bene:

Academic honesty violations are not tolerated and will result in i) immediate failure in the course and ii) referral to the Dean of Students for further action. All assignments are to be completed on your own. It is your responsibility to know and understand the [UF Student Honor Code](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF General Policy:

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing [online evaluations](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. UF emails students with specific times when they are open. [Summary results](#) of these assessments are made available to students. UF has [specific guidance](#) on how to give professional (and respectful) feedback.

Conformality:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with prevailing [university policy](#).

Grade Points:

Information on how UF calculates grade points from grades can be found [here](#).

Useful Disclaimer:

Our schedule of topics/readings/assignments are subject to change. So, stay informed as we go along.

Personnel & Contact

- [Dr. Greg Ray](#), 300 FLO

Office Hours

- Fri 12:30-3:00
- [And by appt](#)

Topical Schedule:

- 01/08- Introduction.
- 01/10- Elements.
- 01/13- FRAGmenting.
- 01/22- SUPPort Relations.
- 02/03- TIS Mapping.
- 02/10- MYSTery.
- 02/17- EXTraction.
- 02/21- EXAM.
- 02/24- REBUTtal.
- 03/02- [Spring Break]
- 03/09- TBA.
- 03/16- PATHing.
- 03/23- reTEXTing.
- 03/30- reTEXTing Rebuttal.
- 04/06- Projecting.
- 04/13- Projecting.
- 04/20- Last Class.

Tentative Due Dates:

- 01/15- Due: INF.
- 01/22- Due: FRAG.

- 01/29- Due: SUPP.
- 02/05- Due: SUPP2.
- 02/12- Due: SUPP2TIS.
- 02/19- Due: MYST.
- 02/21- Due: EXAM.
- 02/26- Due: EXT.
- 03/11- Due: REBUT.
- 03/18- Due: tba
- 03/25- Due: PATH.
- 04/01- Due: reTEXT.
- 04/08- Due: reTEXTreb.
- 04/13- Due: PROJ #1.
- 04/20- Due: PROJ #2.

Class Meetings:

- MWF 11:45-12:35, MAT 117