

Spring 2020

PHI 2010

Introduction to Philosophy

Lectures Tuesday and Thursday 6th Period

Friday Discussions (4th, 6th, and 7th periods)

TUR L011

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Office Hours

Discussion Section Leaders

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The study of philosophy is traditionally a part of university education since it concerns fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge, reasoning, and value judgments. Philosophical thought has shaped the Western intellectual tradition, but specifically in terms of how to understand science, human existence, thinking (including language), and morality.

This course has 4 units. First, we discuss theory of knowledge and some efforts to provide an account of knowledge as well as respond to skepticism. Second, we cover disputes about human consciousness. Third, we review the famous philosophical debate concerning whether or not human actions are freely decided upon. Finally, we discuss whether or not moral values are objective.

These readings range from moderately difficult to very difficult. They are explained as well as critically assessed in lectures and then further reviewed in discussion sections. In each section of the course the lectures and readings are the only basis for completing the take home essay exams.

Textbook: The Norton Introduction to Philosophy Second Edition Eds. Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Seana Shiffrin. W.W. Norton (Reitz Union Bookstore)

Grade Requirements: Course assignments include quizzes and exercises used in discussions sections, but the central assignment is four take home essays totaling 4,000 words. The due dates and lengths are specified in the syllabus below. *Therefore, this course fulfills 4,000 words of the Gordon Rule Writing Requirement as well as the Humanities Requirement for General Education.* There will be a rubric provided for essays in class as well as writing guidelines. The penalty for late or missed assignments is not revealed in advance and it falls within the instructor's discretion to not accept a late assignment if the instructor deems it unfair to others in the class. Essays exams are only submitted within Canvas (unless there has been another arrangement made in advance). The weighting of essays and quizzes as well as attendance is covered in this syllabus and will be discussed in class.

If you have questions about your grades or the final grade in the course, then you should meet with the instructor. This course does not use a grade contract system.

Discussion Sections: Your discussion section handles class discussion of the lectures (though discussion and/or Q&A about the lectures), the readings, preparing essay exams, and administering quizzes. **Attendance at both discussion sections and lectures is required and does enter into determining your final grade.** These discussion sections meet on Friday and the period you have is determined by your registration number for the course.

In the syllabus below the pages are to our textbook listed above. The page numbers are in parentheses after the author and title. What this means is that you should read that selection before that lecture date.

Also announcements will occur during the course through Canvas. These are important and may alter the syllabus or due dates for assignments. The instructor may also post within Files material that supplements the lectures.

The quickest way to reach the instructor or your discussion leader is by regular university email addresses. Our email addresses are at the top of this syllabus under the course title. Your discussion leader will announce office hours at the discussion section.

UNIT 1 Epistemology and Skepticism

First Week - Introduction to Course

1/7

1/9 Rene Descartes, "Meditation I" (264-267)

Second Week

1/14 G.E. Moore, "Proof of an External World" (278-283)

1/16

Third Week

1/21 Jonathan Vogel, "Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation" (284-291)

1/23

Fourth Week Problem of Induction

1/28 David Hume, "Sceptical Doubts" (166-177)

1/30

First Essay Exam Questions Posted (1000 words)

Fifth Week

2/4 Gil Harman, "The Inference to the Best Explanation" (201-207)

2/6

First Essay Exam Due 2/14

UNIT 2 Philosophy of Mind

Sixth Week

2/11 John Searle, "Can Computers Think?" (341-347)

2/13

Seventh Week

2/18 Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (356-365)

2/20

Eighth Week

2/25 Patricia Churchland, "Are Mental States Irreducible to Neurobiological States?" (376-383)

2/27

3/1, 3/8 Spring Break

Ninth Week

3/10 David Chalmers, "The Hard Problem of Consciousness" (384-392)

3/12

Second Essay Exam Questions Posted (1000 words)

Tenth Week

3/17 Q&A

3/19 Introduction to Free Will/Determinism Debate

Second Essay Exam Due 3/20

UNIT 3 Metaphysics

Eleventh Week

3/24 Galen Strawson, "Free Will" (600-609)

3/26

Twelfth Week

3/31 Roderick Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self" (610-617)

4/2

Third Essay Exam Questions Posted (1000 Words)

Thirteenth Week

4/7 A. J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity" (618-624)

4/9

Third Essay Due 4/17

UNIT 4 Ethical Objectivity

Fourteenth Week

4/14 J.L. Mackie, "Subjectivity of Values" (850-857)

4/16 Sharon Street, "Does Anything Really Matter or Did We Just Evolve to Think So? (904-913)

Fourth Essay Questions Posted

Fifteenth Week

4/21 Review

Fourth Essay Exam Due 5/29

Course Guidelines: Attendance at discussion sections and lectures is the only way to successfully complete the course work. **If you plan to attend lectures and/or discussion sections sporadically, this course is not recommended.**

Your discussion section leaders **will not repeat the lecture material**, they assume you have done the reading and attended the lectures. The discussion sections provide clarification, a forum for discussion, as well as providing guidance and assistance on essay exams and quizzes.

You may meet with your discussion section leader and/or instructor during their office hours or if that time does not work in your schedule then by appointment to discuss any matter in the course (office hours for your discussion leader are distributed in your section). Do not wait until the end of the course to take advantage of such a meeting, especially if you are having any problems with the course.

It is best to have a draft of at least some of your essay in advance of its due date to take advantage of a meeting with your discussion leader and/or instructor to discuss your work. We will not grade your essay at that meeting, but we will provide comments and suggestions. Do not ask for a review on the day the paper is due.

Do not attempt to write essays at the last minute. These are significant assignments and require the full amount of time given to complete them.

Extensions for assigned work papers are granted only for circumstances of the sort listed under excused absences and only if proper arrangements have been made.

Essays handed in past the due dates set for them will normally suffer a grade penalty. Documentation must be provided to your instructor if you have a medical reason for not completing an assignment when due.

Keep copies of all your essays.

Incomplete in lieu of a final grade for the course requires permission of the instructor and such permission is rare.

Learning Objectives

Students should become familiar with a variety of philosophical questions and arguments concerning the topics we cover. They should learn how to judge and criticize philosophical arguments, as well as understand key concepts in the four areas of philosophy covered in the course. Essay exams involve objective essay questions that do not ask for personal opinions and thus can be objectively graded. The essay exams require critical analysis and responses to, or assessments of, positions and argumentative strategies covered in lectures and readings. The aim of the course is skill in critical thinking and writing.

Grade Determination

Factor	Percentage
Essay #1 20pts	
Essay #2 20pts	
Essay #3 25pts	90%
Essay #4 25pts	
Attendance Discussion Sections/Lectures/Quizzes	10%

Letter grades are equivalent to numerical values as per the following chart.

A	4	C	2
A-	3.67	C-	1.67
B+	3.33	D+	1.33
B	3	D	1

B-	2.67	D-	0.67
C+	2.33	E	0

Grading Scale

Letter	4 pt. scale	100 pt. scale
A	4.0 (3.835-4.0) 3.67	94-100
A-	(3.495-3.834) 3.33	90-93
B+	(3.165-3.494) 3.0	87-89
B	(2.835-3.164) 2.67	84-86
B-	(2.495-2.834) 2.33	80-83
C+	(2.165-2.494) 2.0	77-79
C	(1.835-2.164) 1.67	74-76
C-	(1.495-1.834) 1.33	70-73
D+		67-69

	(1.165- 1.494)	
	1.0	
D	(0.835- 1.164)	64-66
	0.67	
D-	(0.495- 0.834)	60-63
	0.0	
E	(0.0-0.494)	0-59

Note that a grade of C- for the course is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, or College Basic Distribution requirements. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

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

Academic Honesty

Please note that all UF students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. In particular, you should be aware of the regulations governing the scope of the Honor Code and possible violations; you can find that here: <http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4041.pdf>:

Plagiarism is a very serious violation of academic honesty. It includes, but is not limited to, copying another text as your own, copying the work of a fellow student, handing in a paper prepared by another as your own, and using sources for writing your paper not cited within the paper. Plagiarism is not restricted to matters of copyright infringement and therefore it does cover materials found on web pages. The penalties for plagiarism can range from an automatic failing grade in the course to suspension or expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about how to prepare your paper, please discuss them with your discussion leader or instructor before turning in the paper. All essays are submitted as a electronic copy to our page on Canvas.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will hurt your grade in the following ways.

Number of unexcused
absences

9 or more

Participation grade reduced or lost

As stated in UF's official policy regarding attendance, acceptable reasons for absence include: Illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences are excused from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena).

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

Classroom Etiquette

Do not read newspapers, sleep, eat, check email, browse the Web, or distract fellow students during the class.

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, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center for information about available resources.

www.dso.ufl.edu/drc