

Course Title

PHI2010: Introduction to Philosophy

Writing Requirement and General Education

Gordon Rule Requirement (4,000 words) and Humanities credit for General Education

Instructor Information

Christopher Becker (MA, Doctoral Student in Philosophy)

Contact Information

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Office Location

320 Griffin-Floyd Hall

Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:30 PM or by appointment

Lecture Meeting Times

MTWRF (Monday thru Friday) 11:00 AM- 12:15 PM (Period 3).

Lecture Location

Matherly Hall 0113

Course Dates

June 28th to August 6th

Observed Holidays

July 5th off

Grades Due

August 9th

Course Objectives

Studying philosophy is instrumentally and intrinsically valuable. Instrumentally, studying philosophy is valuable, insofar as philosophical thinking improves the following skills: reading comprehension, reasoning, communication, and writing. Accordingly, an important goal of this course is to help improve your skills in these areas.

Intrinsically, studying philosophy is valuable since, as a discipline, philosophy attempts to answer important questions, including but not limited to the following: Does God Exist? What does

morality require? What is knowledge? Fundamentally, what exists? What is justice? Do we have free will? Of course, our course will not be able to address every one of these questions.

However, our course, which is divided into four units, will attempt to answer some important philosophical questions. For example, in unit one, we will examine the question of if we possess free will or not. In our second unit, we will look at opposing answers to a question, which I am confident that you have considered at least once in your life, does God exist? Afterwards, for our third unit, we will look at the question of whether it is permissible to hold a belief despite insufficient evidence. Lastly, our fourth unit looks at the relationship between justice and equality. On the one hand, one might think that obviously justice requires equality of a kind. While others believe that equality is an ideal ripe for producing tyranny or merely a wish of the envious. Accordingly, we will look at the relationship between equality and justice, in addition, to looking at norms of belief, and the existence of God and free will.

In addition to the general goal of improving your skills, and in light of our aforementioned units, there are two more particular objectives for this course. First, sticking to the literal meaning of philosophy, which means “love of wisdom,” I am hoping that this course will help ignite or, if already ignited, burn brighter your passion for learning. Of course, philosophy might not be your favorite cup of tea. But still, if this course helps improve your motivation to learn in your desired field of choice, then another objective will be satisfied. Secondly, another objective of this course is to improve your philosophical understanding. That is, an important goal of this course it to improve your ability to explain different philosophical positions and arguments. In addition, I take genuine philosophical understanding to consist of an awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of various positions and arguments. In short, if this course improves your skills, desire to learn, and philosophical understanding, then our course objectives will have been satisfied.

Required Materials

Textbook: *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* Second Edition Eds. Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Seana Shiffrin. W.W. Norton (Reitz Union Bookstore) ISBN: 9780393624427

Course Procedure

Our course will meet, in person, Monday through Friday, between 11:00 am and 12:15pm, at Matherly Hall 0113. Following the guidelines of the CDC and the University of Florida, you are *not* required to wear a mask in class if you are fully vaccinated. If you are not fully vaccinated, then please wear a mask. With that being said, even if you are fully vaccinated, feel free to wear a mask in class. If you are feeling sick, please just let me know (you do not need a Doctor’s note), and I will gladly excuse your absence and I will attempt to update you on what you missed in class. In general, we will try to have class back to normal while remaining safe.

Grade Requirements:

Four Essays

Since this course features a Gordon rule requirement of 4,000 words, successful completion of this course requires you to write 4,000 words. Towards this end, our main assignments will be four essays of a thousand words each. Each essay will be worth 100 points. Prior to the essays, I will explain the grading for the essays and provide instruction on how I would like the essays structured. Also, unless otherwise specified, all of our essays will be submitted directly and only on Canvas.

Logic Quiz

On Friday July 2nd, by Midnight, we will have a logic quiz due on Canvas. This is a minor assignment intended to get you thinking about philosophical reasoning. In class, I will discuss this assignment and what sorts of questions you can expect to see on it.

Attendance

Starting the second day of class, Tuesday June 29th, I will start taking attendance. Each day you come to class; you will receive one point for attendance up to 25 points. While we are not going to have a separate grade for participation, I highly encourage you to participate in class for a few reasons. For starters, asking questions is necessary in philosophy, as you may not understand an author's position. Secondly, discussing philosophy is often the best way of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your own position. Thirdly, believe it or not, discussing philosophy can sometimes just be fun in of itself!

Grading Breakdown1st Essay 100 points2nd Essay 100 points3rd Essay 100 points4th Essay 100 points

Logic Quiz 25

Attendance 25 points

Total Points 450 points

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-76=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

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>

Additional Information

If, at any point of the semester, you have questions about your grade(s) or the final grade, then simply let me know during office hours or via email.

In the syllabus below the pages are to our textbook listed above. The page numbers are in parentheses after the author and title. In order to get the most out of this course and help improve your reading comprehension, I strongly suggest that you complete the specified reading before we discuss that reading in class.

Also, announcements will occur during the course through Canvas. These are important and may alter the syllabus or due dates for assignments. I will also post our slides and any other relevant information for our course on Canvas.

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 let me know.

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

First Week - Introduction to Course, Philosophical Reasoning, and Unit 1 Free Will (6/28-7/2)

Monday 6/28

- Syllabus

Tuesday 6/29

- Philosophical Reasoning

Wednesday 6/30

- Philosophical Reasoning
- Introduction to Free Will and Galen Strawson, “Free Will” (600-609).

Thursday 7/1

- Galen Strawson, “Free Will” (600-609).

Friday 7/2

- Galen Strawson, “Free Will” (600-609).
- Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (610-617).
- **Logic Quiz due on Canvas**

Second Week Unit 1: Free Will (7/5-7/9)

Monday 7/5 No Class

- No Class-Independence Day

Tuesday 7/6

- Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (610-617).

Wednesday 7/7

- Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (610-617).
- A.J. Ayer’s, “Freedom and Necessity” (618-624).

Thursday 7/8

- A.J. Ayer's, "Freedom and Necessity" (618-624).

Friday 7/9

- A.J. Ayer's, "Freedom and Necessity" (618-624).
- Review for first essay exam on Free Will

Third Week Unit 2: Philosophy of Religion and Unit 3: Epistemology: Norms of Belief (7/12-7/16)

Monday 7/12

- Introduction to Philosophy of Religion and Arguments for Theism
- **First Essay Due by Midnight**

Tuesday 7/13

- Arguments for Theism

Wednesday 7/14

- Arguments for Theism
- Louise Anthony's, "No Good Reason-Exploring the Problem of Evil." (36-45).

Thursday 7/15

- Louise Anthony, "No Good Reason-Exploring the Problem of Evil." (36-45).

Friday 7/16

- Louise Anthony, "No Good Reason-Exploring the Problem of Evil." (36-45).
- Eleonore Stump's, "The Problem of Evil." (47-57).

Fourth Week Unit 2: Philosophy of Religion and Unit 3: Norms of Belief (7/19-7/23)

Monday 7/19

- Eleonore Stump's, "The Problem of Evil." (47-57).

Tuesday 7/20

- Eleonore Stump's, "The Problem of Evil." (47-57).
- Review for Second Essay Exam on Philosophy of Religion

Wednesday 7/21

- Introduction to Epistemology: Norms of Belief
- **Second Essay on Philosophy of Religion Due by Midnight**

Thursday 7/22

- W.K.Clifford's, "The Ethics of Belief" (85-95).

Friday 7/23

- W.K.Clifford's, "The Ethics of Belief" (85-95).

Fifth Week Unit 3: Epistemology: Norms of Belief and Unit 4: Political Philosophy (7/26-7/30)

Monday 7/26

- William James, "The Will to Believe" (97-105).

Tuesday 7/27

- William James, "The Will to Believe" (97-105).

Wednesday 7/28

- Review for third essay exam on norms of belief

Thursday 7/29

- Introduction to Political Philosophy
- **Third Essay on Norms of Belief due by Midnight**

Friday 7/30

- John Rawls, “Two Principles of Justice” (1125-1133).

Sixth Week Unit 4: Political Philosophy (8/2-8/6)

Monday 8/2

- John Rawls, “Two Principles of Justice” (1125-1133).

Tuesday 8/3

- John Rawls, “Two Principles of Justice” (1125-1133).
- Robert Nozick’s, “Distributive Justice.” (1155-1162).

Wednesday 8/4

- Robert Nozick, “Distributive Justice.” (1155-1162).

Thursday 8/5

- Robert Nozick’s, “Distributive Justice.” (1155-1162).

Friday 8/6 Last Day of Classes

- Review for Final Essay Exam on Political Philosophy
- Course Wrap Up
- **Final Essay Exam on Political Philosophy due by Midnight**

Important Due Dates for Assignments	
<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Logic Quiz	Friday July 2 nd
Essay Exam #1	Monday July 12 th
Essay Exam #2	Wednesday July 21 st
Essay Exam #3	Thursday July 29 th
Essay Exam #4	Friday August 6 th

List of Readings

Unit 1- Free Will

Galen Strawson, “Free Will” (600-609).

Roderick Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self” (610-617).

A. J. Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity” (618-624).

Unit 2- Philosophy of Religion

Suggested Readings for Theism

Anselm, “The Ontological Argument” (8-9)

Blaise Pascal, “The Wager” (68-73).

Thomas Aquinas, “The Five Ways” from *Summa Theologica* (13-15).

Mandatory Readings

Louise Anthony, “No Good Reason-Exploring the Problem of Evil.” (36-45).

Eleonore Stump, “The Problem of Evil.” (47-57).

Unit 3- Epistemology (Norms of Belief)

W.K.Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief” (85-95).

William James, “The Will to Believe” (97-105).

Unit 4- Political Philosophy

John Rawls, “Two Principles of Justice” (1125-1133).

Robert Nozick, “Distributive Justice.” (1155-1162).

From *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* Second Edition Eds. Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, Seana Shiffrin. W.W. Norton (Reitz Union Bookstore) ISBN: 9780393624427