

Introduction to Philosophy (PHI 2010)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Does God exist? Do we have free will? Is eating meat morally wrong? How do you know that you're not dreaming right now? Could you survive the death of your body?

This course will introduce you to the kinds of questions philosophers think about and the tools they use to answer them. It will also help you develop a variety of useful skills, such as writing clearly and persuasively, constructing and evaluating arguments, and breaking down complex ideas to make them easier to understand. Readings will include both historical and contemporary texts.

The course counts towards the Humanities (H) general education requirement and the Writing (W) requirement (6000 words).

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 1:55-2:45 PM
FLI0109

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Gideon Rosen et al., *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* (2nd Edition)

- We are participating in the UF All Access program, which provides discounted access to electronic textbooks. You will be able to access an electronic copy of the textbook through Canvas at the start of the term. To maintain access, you will need to "opt in" by purchasing the eBook from the UF bookstore for \$21. If you like, you can pay an additional \$35 to get a hardcopy as well (for a total of \$56).
- The book currently retails new on Amazon for about \$83. If you buy the book from a different vendor, make sure to buy the second edition!

INSTRUCTOR

Lyndal Grant
Email: l.grant@uf.edu
Office hours: Mondays 11.30-12pm, Fridays 3-4pm and by appointment
Office location: TBA

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Engage critically with historical and contemporary philosophical texts.
2. Develop familiarity with several classic problems from the philosophical tradition.
3. Propose and evaluate candidate solutions to those problems.
4. Reconstruct and evaluate arguments.

5. Express yourself in speech and writing with clarity, depth, and precision.

COURSE WEBSITE

This course is supplemented by online content in the Canvas e-Learning environment. PDF readings, an electronic copy of the syllabus, and assignment submission portals can be found on the course website.

- To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the e-Learning in Canvas button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 3681 from the Courses pull-down menu at the top of the page.
- If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537 or <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.
- Please do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues (I am unlikely to be able to help you!).

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes (20%)

To help you stay on top of the reading, there will be regular reading quizzes on Canvas. These will be due the day *before* the associated lecture. Late quizzes will not be accepted, but you can retake quizzes that are submitted on time as many times as you like.

Papers (70%)

You will write four papers of 1500-1750 words, worth the following:

- You will need to submit all four papers in order to receive credit towards the writing requirement (6000 words).
- All paper submission will be done on Canvas.
- Papers submitted late without a good excuse will be penalized by 3% for each day late. No papers will be accepted after the end of classes.

Class attendance and participation (10%)

Philosophy is a team sport, and you will perform best in this course if you participate actively in our in-class discussions. Regular class attendance and participation makes up the remaining 10% of your grade.

- Attendance in lecture is mandatory. Students may be removed from the class roster for frequent unexcused absences.
- You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. If you need to miss class for any reason, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss whether the

absence will be excused and what sort of documentation will be necessary (if applicable).

- Each unexcused absence beyond the first two will result in a 10% deduction from your participation grade (and therefore 1% of your final grade in the course).
- Poor conduct in class will also result in a 10% deduction. Examples of poor conduct include disruptive behavior, falling asleep, sending text messages, checking email, etc.

<p>IF YOU SUSPECT YOU ARE SICK, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS (SEE UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES BELOW)</p>
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- If you are feeling ill, please do not come to class – even if you are vaccinated against COVID-19. The delta variant of COVID-19 can be spread by vaccinated individuals, and spreads readily to the unvaccinated. Please keep in mind that many of us have unvaccinated family members (such as small children) that are vulnerable and need to be protected.
- **Students will not be penalized for staying home due to illness.** If you do feel ill, please let me know and **I will work with you directly to help you get up to speed** when you are feeling well enough to return.

Writing requirement

This class qualifies for 6000 words of credit for the university writing requirement. Note that there is a separate grade for the writing component. To receive a satisfactory grade for the writing component of this class, you must earn an average grade of C or higher for your papers. For more information on the writing requirement, please see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-requirement.aspx>.

GRADING SCALE

The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

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

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

Grades that fall exactly on the upper threshold are awarded the higher grade. See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> for more information about UF grading policies.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
 - Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
 - Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for

no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.

- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
- If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.
- Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

Academic Honesty

Please review the following guidelines on academic honesty:

1. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>
2. <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty>

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university.

All sources and assistance used in preparing your papers and presentations must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. The web creates special risks here. Cutting and pasting even a few words from a web page or paraphrasing material without a reference constitutes plagiarism. If you are not sure how to refer to something you find on the internet, you can always give the URL.

Students with Disabilities

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.

Classroom Conduct

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an

alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Laptop and cellphone policy

Laptop and cellphone use is prohibited in this class. Please turn off your phone as soon as you enter the classroom. First-time violations will receive a verbal warning. Subsequent violations will yield a loss of participation points.

Attendance, Illness, Religious Holidays, and Twelve Day Rule

Requirements for class attendance, religious holidays, and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Excerpt from the statement on absences:

“Absences count from the first class meeting. In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class 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 from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.”

Course evaluation process

“Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.”

Counseling and wellness/Emergencies

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

The University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshop

Topics and readings

What's the right thing to do?

Week 1: Famine

- Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
- Rosen et al., “A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation”

Week 2: Abortion

- Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion”
- Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral”

Week 3:

- Harman, “The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Animal Death”
- Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People”

Does God exist?

Week 4: The ontological argument; the argument from design

- Anselm of Canterbury, “The Ontological Argument”
- Paley, “The Argument from Design”

Week 5: The problem of evil

- Antony, “No Good Reason—Exploring the Problem of Evil”

Week 6: Is it reasonable to believe without evidence?

- Pascal, “The Wager”
- Hajek, “Pascal’s Ultimate Gamble”
- Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”

How can we know about the external world?

Week 7:

- Descartes, “Meditation I: What Can Be Called into Doubt”
- Hume, “Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses”

Week 8:

- Moore, “Proof of an External World”
- Vogel, “Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation”

Week 9:

- Hume, “Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding” and “Sceptical Solution of These Doubts”
- Goodman, “The New Riddle of Induction”

What is personal identity?

Week 10:

- Locke, “Of Identity and Diversity”
- Swinburne, “The Dualist Theory”

Week 11:

- Parfit, “Personal Identity”
- Williams, “The Self and the Future”

Week 12:

- Wolf, “Self-Interest and Interest in Selves”
- Lewis, “Survival and Identity”

Do we possess free will?

Week 13:

- Strawson, “Free Will”
- Chisholm, “Human Freedom and the Self”

Week 14:

- Ayer, “Freedom and Necessity”
- Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment”

Week 15:

- Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person”
- Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”