

PHI 2010: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2021 SYLLABUS

Instructor Information:

James Simpson, simpson.james@ufl.edu

Office Hours:

Online Office Hours: M, 8:30am-11:30am on Zoom. OBA for in-person meetings.

Course Time and Location:

Meeting Time: T: 8:30-10:25am; TH: 9:35-10:25am. MAT 0105. (NB: Although I'll be lecturing from MAT 0105 on the days we have class, you can attend class over Zoom, if you're so inclined, any day (including the first day) you so choose. You'll find the Zoom links for each class under Zoom Conferences on the Canvas course page.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Content. This course introduces students to philosophy by engaging with various readings and arguments, both classical and contemporary, in the history of philosophy. This course will have a four-part structure. The first part will cover one of the central topics in the philosophy of religion: arguments for and against the existence of God. The second part of the course will cover various topics in epistemology, with specific focus on the Regress Problem, Cartesian skepticism, and the Gettier Problem. The third part of the course will be concerned with metaphysics, with specific focus on personal identity, free will & moral responsibility, and what objects, if any, exist (e.g., do numbers exist? do chairs exist?). The fourth part of the course will mainly focus on discussion of the three standard normative ethical theories (utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, and Aristotelian virtue theory).

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.

Note well, this course fulfills the Gordon Rule 4,000 Writing Requirement and the Humanities Requirement for General Education. The Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, I'll evaluate

and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Required Materials:

Available in the UF Bookstore: Gideon 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."

Recommended:

On writing well generally: Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. (Pearson, 1999).

On writing a philosophy paper: Pryor, Jim. "A Brief Guide to Writing a Philosophy Paper" (2008).

Assessment:

Requirements for 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 be prepared to engage the assigned material. This includes: keeping current on the reading assignments and being aware of the course schedule and activities as discussed in lecture and posted on the course website. You are responsible for regularly checking your UF email and the Canvas site.

(2) 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.

(3) Writing assignments will be on assigned topics.

(4) In grading your work, I will hold you to a standard that assumes you have been doing the readings and coming to class.

(5) In grading your work, I'll be using a grading rubric. The rubric is available on our Canvas site under "Files".

(6) 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: 5 points.
2. 2: 15-Q Canvas Multiple Choice and True/False Exams (10 points each): 20 points.
3. 1: 1000-word personal reflection: 10 points.
4. 1: 1000-word exploratory essay: 15 points.
5. 2: 1,000-word take home argumentative essay exams (worth 25 points each): 50 points.
 - o Total: 100 points.

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

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 visit me during office hours.

Excused absence(s) require documentation be provided to me within a week of the absence(s).

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

Critical Dates:

Exam 1: 10/14

Exam 2: 12/8

Personal Reflection: 10/02

Exploratory Essay: 11/30

Argumentative Essay 1: 10/23

Argumentative Essay 2: 12/14

Attendance:

To get full credit for attendance, you must attend *at least* 80% of the classes.

Exploratory Essay:

This will be an opportunity for students to write on some philosophical topic that interests them, but that's not directly discussed in class. There are no formatting, style, or structural requirements for this writing assignment. The goal will be to explore some area of interest in philosophy and to write about it in an engaging way.

Exams:

There will be two exams in this class, both will be taken on Canvas. The first exam will be on the material covered in the first part of the course. The second will be on material covered in the last three parts of the course. Both exams will be multiple choice, true/false exams. Before each exam a detailed study guide will be provided by me.

Personal Reflection:

The personal reflection will be a 1000-word paper answering one of the following two questions:

Question 1: What is the most serious ethical problem/issue/dilemma that you face or have faced as a college student? How did you resolve or deal with this problem?

Question 2: What do you think is the most serious ethical problem/issue/dilemma that college students face? How do you think students should resolve or deal with this problem?

Some examples of what students wrote about previously:

Not fitting in

Not making friends

Financial stress

Cheating on exams

Lying (friends/family/partner/teachers...)

Racism

Bullying

Sexual misconduct

Homesickness

Drinking & taking drugs

To receive full points for this assignment you must turn it in by the due date, meet the word count requirement, and actually address the question that you choose to write on.

Argumentative Essays:

There will be two 1000-word argumentative essays. These will be on assigned topics. They will test your understanding of the material and your skill at writing philosophical essays in the

analytical style. See the following for an example of a nice undergraduate analytic philosophy paper: <http://fresnostate.edu/artshum/philosophy/documents/ClarkCUPR1-2.pdf> (Links to an external site.). Note well that your paper needn't be of the same quality as this paper to receive high marks, but it should imitate the structure and style of it.

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+	= C+ = 2.33
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75-72 C	= C = 2.00
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71-69 C-	= C- = 1.67
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68-66 D+	= D+ = 1.33
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65-62 D	= D = 1.00
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$$\frac{61-60}{D-} = D- = 0.67$$

$$59-0 = E \quad E = 0.00$$

Classroom Conduct:

Do not be disruptive or disrespectful. All conversations should be civil.

COVID Practices:

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.ufhealth.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:

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, at 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 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.ua.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.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

CANVAS E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." 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 2010 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. Do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

Writing Studio:

www.writing.ufl.edu

Rubric:

A rubric will be posted on the Canvas course page under “Files”.

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct.

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

Part 1: Philosophy of Religion

8/24: Review Syllabus. Introduce Anselm’s Ontological Argument.

8/26: Reading: Anselm’s Ontological Argument (OA), pages (pp) 8-9 of the Norton. Andrew Chapman “The Ontological Argument for God’s Existence” and Bailie Peterson “Attributes of God”.

8/31: Reading: Excerpts from Alvin Plantinga 1974 on the so-called modal ontological argument.

9/2: Reading: Aquinas’ Contingency Argument (CA), pp. 13-15 of the Norton. Excerpt from Samuel Clarke on the CA.

9/7: Reading: Roger White on the Fine-Tuning Argument, pp. 29-36.

9/9: Reading: First Cause Argument. Reading: Aquinas, pp. 13-14.

9/14: Problem of Evil. Reading: Thomas Metcalf “The Problem of Evil”

9/16: Reading: Louise Antony and Elenore Stump, pp. 41-57 of the Norton.

9/21: No Reading. Discussion of other arguments for and against God’s existence.

Part 2: Epistemology

9/23: Epistemic Justification. Then Edmund Gettier, pp. 143-45 of the Norton. Andrew Chapman “The Gettier Problem and the Definition of Knowledge”. (Gettier Problem)

9/28: Reading: Michael Clark 1963.

9/30: Reading: Timothy Williamson, pp. 149-155 of the Norton. (Knowledge First).

10/5: Reading: Andrew Chapman “External World Skepticism”. G.E. Moore, pp. 278-283 of the Norton. (Problem of Skepticism)

10/7: Reading: Jonathan Vogel, pp. 284-291 of the Norton.

10/12: Reading: Nick Bostrom, pp. 442-451 of the Norton.

10/14: Pyrrhonian Skepticism—no reading. (Regress Problem)

10/19: Pyrrhonian Skepticism cont. Reading: TBA.

10/21: Reading: Kenneth Blake Vernon “The Problem of Induction”. (Problem of Induction)

Part 3: Personal Identity, Free Will & Moral Responsibility, and What Is There

10/26: Reading: Chad Vance, “Personal Identity”.

10/28: Personal Identity. No Reading.

11/2: Reading: Jonah Nagashima “Free Will and Free Choice”. Reading: Galen Strawson, pp. 600-09 of the Norton.

11/4: Compatibilism and Libertarianism. Reading: TBA.

11/9: Reading: Chelsea Haramia “Free Will and Moral Responsibility”; Rebecca Renninger “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”.

11/16: Reading: Yablo, pp. 461-466 and Unger, pp. 467-73.

Part 4: Meta-Ethics and Normative Ethics:

11/18: Reading: Thomas Metcalf “Ethical Realism”; Mackie, pp. 850-57 of the Norton.

11/23: Utilitarianism. Reading: J.S. Mill, pp. 790-798 of the Norton. Shane Gronholz “Consequentialism”.

11/30: Reading: Kant, pp. 800-10 of the Norton; Andrew Chapman “Deontology: Kantian Ethics”.

12/2: Deontology cont. No Reading.

12/7: Reading: Aristotle, pp. 813-822 of the Norton; Rosalind Hursthouse, pp. 824-30 of the Norton.

