

Syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy (PHI2010)

Basic information

Instructor: Dr. Stewart Duncan

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- Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00pm, and by appointment

Teaching assistant: Mr. Joe Mako

- Email: jmako@ufl.edu (<mailto:jmako@ufl.edu>)
- Office hours: Fridays, 2:00–5:00pm, in the Philosophy department library, and by appointment

Canvas and email

There is a Canvas page for the class. This hosts the syllabus and schedule. Assigned readings for the second section of the class will be posted here. It is where you will submit your papers, and where you will find information about grades. I will also use the announcements section to post additional information about the class.

Outside class and office hours, email will be the best way to contact your instructor or TA. Email addresses are listed above. Please remember to use your ufl.edu email address for all correspondence. You may also send messages using the Canvas Inbox system.

Course objectives

This course is a general introduction to philosophy. It will be divided into three sections. The first section will look at the philosophy of religion, focusing on arguments for and against the existence of God. The second section will consider topics related to the meaning of life. We will discuss how such things as pleasure, morality, love, and work relate to the value and meaning of life as a whole. The third section will look at some of the dialogues of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato.

Throughout our discussion of these topics, we will have two main aims. The first is to come to understand some views that philosophers have had on these issues. The second is to develop

your own skills in such matters as careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

This class also fulfills the general education humanities requirement and the writing requirement. For information on the former, see the final section of this syllabus. For information on the latter, see the description of the paper assignments.

Schedule

See the separate [schedule \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/445528/pages/schedule\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/445528/pages/schedule) page.

Book and reading

There are two required books for the class.

- Torin Alter and Robert J. Howell, *The God Dialogues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN 9780195395594, list price \$24.99.
- Plato, *Five Dialogues*, second edition (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), ISBN 0872206335, list price \$10.50.

Graded work

Papers (70%)

There will be three paper assignments. Each paper should be between 1370 and 1500 words long. The papers together will count for 70% of your grade for the course. The first two will count for 20% each, and the third for 30%.

Topics will be made available two weeks before papers are due. All papers must be submitted on Canvas. Any papers submitted late without a good excuse will be penalized three points (on a hundred-point scale) for every day they're late.

No papers will be accepted after the day of the last class (more precisely, after 5:00pm on Wednesday 4/20/22). If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a grade of zero for it.

This class qualifies for 4000 words of credit for the university writing requirement. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. 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. In this class "satisfactory completion of the writing component" will require an average grade of C (70.0) or higher for the three papers.

Graded papers will be returned on Canvas within two weeks of their submission. Grades will be accompanied by comments. These will refer to the standards in the [Paper Grading Guide](#)

accompanied by comments. These will refer to the standards in the [Paper Grading Guide](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/445528/pages/paper-grading-guide) (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/445528/pages/paper-grading-guide>), and will include feedback with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

You will not be required to use any one particular style (e.g., MLA or APA) for this class. However, if you need a guide, I suggest that you consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). Whichever style you prefer, please ensure that references are appropriately detailed: a reader should be able to find the text or passage you are referring to using just the information you provide, without lengthy extra searching. In particular, and no matter what your style guide says, you must provide the URL for online references.

Papers are individual assignments. You may discuss the topics with your instructor or TA, or with other students. However, you must write and submit your own paper.

Final exam (15%)

The final exam will be held on Friday 4/29/22, from 12:30 to 2:30pm, in our usual lecture room. The final exam will count for 15% of your grade for the class.

Makeup final exams will only be given in those circumstances that merit the awarding of an incomplete grade for the class.

The final exam week is a scheduled part of the semester. Alternative exam arrangements will not be made because of vacations and other non-academic travel plans. If you fail to attend the final exam, you will receive a grade of zero for it.

Quizzes (10%)

There will be quizzes in lectures throughout the semester. Your overall quiz grade will count for 10% of your grade for the course.

For these quizzes, we will use the iClicker Cloud system. The app is now free for UF students, and you do not need to purchase a physical clicker. Further details of how the quizzes will work will be provided in class during the first week of the semester, and will also be posted on Canvas.

There will be ungraded quizzes in the second week of the semester, to allow you to check your clicker is working properly. At all times during the semester, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have your clicker software with you, and it is working properly. Makeup quizzes will not be given for technical problems or forgotten devices, or because you have not set up your clicker software properly.

Starting on Tuesday 1/18/22, there will be two graded quizzes in every lecture. Typically, the first quiz will be soon after the start of class, and the second will be at the end of class. For each question, you will receive two points for a correct answer, one for an incorrect answer, and zero for not answering.

You will receive a quiz grade for each lecture from 1/18/22. Your two lowest scores will be dropped. The remaining scores will each count equally towards your quiz grade.

Although lecture attendance is not graded as such, you are required to attend all lectures. Notice too that you will receive half the quiz points for just answering all the questions, even if you get them all wrong.

Make-up quizzes will only be given if you have an appropriate excuse. These excuses usually ought to be documented. I will excuse absences only for the acceptable reasons stated in the UF attendance policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>)).

There may be one optional extra credit assignment during the semester. If there is, it will be online, and will be treated as another quiz. If there is such an assignment, we will drop your four lowest quiz scores for the semester.

Quizzes are individual assignments. You may not consult other students while taking the quiz. You may not use someone else's clicker for them, or have someone else use your clicker. These are violations of academic honesty. If discovered, they will be reported as such.

Discussion section attendance (5%)

Attendance in discussion sections is required. You may miss two sections without penalty during the semester. Attendance on Friday 1/7/22, during the add-drop period, will not count towards attendance grades. Attendance at each of the other meetings during the semester will count equally towards your attendance grade, which will be 5% of your overall grade.

If you arrive after the instructor has taken attendance, you will be marked as absent. If you leave class early, you will be marked as absent.

Absence from discussion sections will only be excused if you have an appropriate and documented excuse.

Syllabus quiz

In addition to the graded work listed above, there will be a syllabus quiz on Canvas. Though it will

not itself count towards your final grade, you will not receive a grade for any other work until you have completed the syllabus quiz.

The syllabus quiz is due by 5:00pm on Wednesday 1/12/22, the day after the end of the add/drop period.

Grading policies

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with [university policies](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/) [\(https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/\)](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/).
- All assignments will be given a numerical grade. At the end of the semester, your overall numerical grade will be calculated, based on your grades for and the relative weights of the assignments. This numerical grade will be converted to a letter grade using the following table below.
- Current UF policies for assigning grade points may be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> [\(https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx\)](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx).

Grade conversions

Numerical grade (n)	Letter grade	GPA
$90.0 \leq n \leq 100$	A	4.0
$86.7 \leq n < 90.0$	A-	3.67
$83.3 \leq n < 86.7$	B+	3.33
$80.0 \leq n < 83.3$	B	3.0
$76.7 \leq n < 80.0$	B-	2.67
$73.3 \leq n < 76.7$	C+	2.33
$70.00 \leq n < 73.3$	C	2.0

$66.7 \leq n < 70.0$	C-	1.67
$63.3 \leq n < 66.7$	D+	1.33
$60.0 \leq n < 63.3$	D	1.0
$56.7 \leq n < 60.0$	D-	0.67
$0 \leq n < 56.7$	E	0

Course evaluations

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/> [\(https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/\)](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.bluera.com/ufl/> [\(https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/\)](https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> [\(https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/\)](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

Electronic devices

Use of laptops, phones, and other electronic devices in class is only allowed in three circumstances.

- You will need to use a phone or other electronic device to take the in-class quizzes.
- You may use an electronic device to make a permitted recording. If you plan to do this, be sure to review <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/code-change-faq/> [\(https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/code-change-faq/\)](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/code-change-faq/) so you know what you may (and may not) record and the limits on what you may do with such recordings.
- You may only use electronic devices for other purposes if you have my explicit written permission. If you believe that I ought to allow you to use a laptop in class for purposes other than recording (e.g., to take notes) please contact me.

Anyone violating this policy may be asked to leave class.

Accommodations 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](https://disability.ufl.edu/) (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). 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.

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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class.

You should expect that, if you are found to have plagiarized or otherwise cheated in this class, you will receive a grade of E for the course (not just the assignment involved).

General education objectives and learning outcomes

PHI2010 meets the Humanities General Education requirement. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

This course will achieve those objectives by introducing and discussing a series of important issues in philosophy. These include topics of contemporary discussion and views from the history of the field. We will examine a variety of views and arguments about these topics, aiming both to understand and to critically discuss them.

Courses meeting the Humanities General Education requirement have the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- Know the history, underlying theory and methodologies used within the discipline studied.
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within

that discipline. Approach issues and problems within that discipline from multiple perspectives.

- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to that discipline, individually and/or in groups.

All three SLOs will be assessed through paper assignments and a final exam. These will be supplemented by in-class quizzes, which will emphasize the first SLO.

Schedule

Week 1

Thursday 1/6

- Introductory lecture

Friday 1/7

- Discussion section 1

Week 2

Tuesday 1/11

- Philosophy of religion lecture 1: religion and morality. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 1.

Wednesday 1/12

- **Syllabus quiz** due by 5:00pm

Thursday 1/13

- Philosophy of religion lecture 2: design arguments. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 2.
- Paper 1 topics available

Friday 1/14

- Discussion section 2

Week 3

Tuesday 1/18

- Philosophy of religion lecture 3: cosmological arguments. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 4.
- **First graded clicker quiz**

Thursday 1/20

- Philosophy of religion lecture 4: the ontological argument. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 5.

Friday 1/21

- Discussion section 3

Week 4

Tuesday 1/25

- Philosophy of religion lecture 5: sacred texts and reports of miracles. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 6.

Thursday 1/27

- Philosophy of religion lecture 6: the problem of evil (1). Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 7.
- **Paper 1 due**

Friday 1/28

- Discussion section 4

Week 5

Tuesday 2/1

- Philosophy of religion lecture 7: the problem of evil (2). Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 7.

Thursday 2/3

- Philosophy of religion lecture 8: Pascal's wager argument. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 8.
- Paper 2 topics available

Friday 2/4

- Discussion section 5

Week 6

Tuesday 2/8

- Philosophy of religion lecture 9: faith. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 9.

Thursday 2/10

- Meaning and value lecture 1: questions about value
- Detailed reading assignments for the meaning and value section of the class will be available by 2/1. The readings themselves will be posted on or linked from Canvas.

Friday 2/11

- Discussion section 6

Week 7

Tuesday 2/15

- Meaning and value lecture 2: pleasure and the best life (1)

Thursday 2/17

- Meaning and value lecture 3: pleasure and the best life (2)
- **Paper 2 due**

Friday 2/18

- Discussion section 7

Week 8

Tuesday 2/22

- Meaning and value lecture 4: morality and the best life (1)

Thursday 2/24

- Meaning and value lecture 5: morality and the best life (2)

Friday 2/25

- Discussion section 8

Week 9

Tuesday 3/1

- Meaning and value lecture 6: meaning and absurdity (1)

Thursday 3/3

- Meaning and value lecture 7: meaning and absurdity (1)

Friday 3/4

- Discussion section 9

Spring break is the week of Monday 3/7

Week 10

Tuesday 3/15

- Plato lecture 1: Euthyphro

Thursday 3/17

- Plato lecture 2: Euthyphro
- Paper 3 topics available

Friday 3/18

- Discussion section 10

Week 11

Tuesday 3/22

- Plato lecture 3: Apology

Thursday 3/24

- Plato lecture 4: Apology

Friday 3/25

- Discussion section 11

Week 12

Tuesday 3/29

- Plato lecture 5: Meno

Thursday 3/31

- Plato lecture 6: Meno
- **Paper 3 due**

Friday 4/1

- Discussion section 12

Week 13

Tuesday 4/5

- Plato lecture 7: Crito

Thursday 4/7

- Plato lecture 8: Crito

Friday 4/8

- Discussion section 13

Week 14**Tuesday 4/12**

- Plato lecture 9: Phaedo

Thursday 4/14

- Plato lecture 10: Phaedo

Friday 4/15

- Discussion section 14

Week 15**Tuesday 4/19**

- Final lecture: review class for final exam

Exam week**Friday 4/29**

- **Final exam**, 12:30–2:30pm