

Introduction to Philosophy

NOTE: it is your responsibility to read this document carefully. This is an agreement between you and your instructor. If you email me about something that is obviously stated in the syllabus, you will either receive no answer or I will reply, simply, "Read the syllabus!" However, if you read the syllabus and you still do not have an answer, then email me with your question.

I Course Information

- Course number: PHI 2010.
- Class 16391, section 1600.
- Classes:
 - Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Period 4 (10:40 AM – 11:30 AM).
 - Location: Matherly Hall 0051.
- Instructor:
 - Rodrigo Borges
 - Office: Griffin–Floyd Hall, room 314.
 - Office Hours: Mondays 4:30pm – 6:30 (or by appointment).
 - Contact Information: rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu.

2 Course Goals

The objective of this course is to introduce students to the main topics of Western Philosophy. We will do this by presenting students with classical readings touching on some of the core questions in this tradition. A further goal is to introduce students to the methods and tools used in this literature. In particular, students will learn how to present and evaluate philosophical and non-philosophical arguments.

3 Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available through Canvas.

4 Attendance and Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course.

Although attendance is not required, it is expected. Polls and surprise quizzes will be conducted during class (see below for details).

Requirements for class attendance 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>.

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. However, the recording will not be shared unless you have a valid excuse. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voice recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the 'chat' feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials by students or any other party is prohibited.

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.

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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.
4. Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.
5. This course will NOT be synchronously taught on Zoom.

5 Course Requirements

Seven different instruments will be used in order to measure student progress through the course. The name of each instrument, and the relative weight each of them carries in determining your final grade is the following; a brief description of each instrument follows.

Assignment	Total Number	% of Course Grade
Short Writing Assignments	3	30%
Writing Exercises	3	20%
Tests	6	15%
Participation in Discussion	5	10%
Presentation	1	15%
Polls	29	10%

5.1 Short Writing Assignments (SWAs)

There will be three (3) short (1100 – 1300 words) writing assignments. Each SWA will either ask you to present someone else's argument in your own words, or they will ask you to evaluate someone else's argument. The lowest grade will be dropped.

No outside readings will be required for SWAs. A *sample SWA* is available on Canvas.

Students must complete ALL SWAs in order to satisfy the Writing Requirement for the course.

5.2 Writing Exercises (WEs)

Students will write three (3) short essays (300–500 words) and sample answers will be analyzed in class anonymously (i.e., without the instructor revealing who wrote them).

Students must complete ALL WEs in order to satisfy the Writing Requirement for the course.

5.3 Outside Readings

No outside readings are required for the completion of SWAs or WEs. *However*, if you do plan to use an outside reading, you **MUST** check with your instructor or TA whether the particular reading you have in mind is an appropriate source. There are **ONLY TWO EXCEPTIONS** to this rule:

1. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy;
2. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

If you do not follow these instructions on the use of outside readings, you risk seriously harming your grade.

5.4 Basic Writing Assistance

You may find it helpful to use the influential guide by Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, available free online at www.bartleby.com/141/.

Another very useful resource is Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, also known as the 'OWL.' It is especially good for getting detailed information on how to cite sources properly. You can find it at owl.english.purdue.edu/.

UF has a dedicated writing program with a 'writing studio' that is intended to provide students with several resources for improving their writing. The site includes several resources, including links to the OWL site just mentioned and other items. You can find that site at writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/.

The writing program provides assistance with writing for UF students, including distance students who are pursuing online-only courses. You can login to tutortrac.clas.ufl.edu/ to make arrangements to meet with a tutor. We must warn you, however, that while those tutors are surely good at helping you avoid certain kinds of problems, many writing tutors are not familiar with writing philosophy papers. What counts as a good paper for, say, an English class might not count as a good paper for philosophy. In philosophy, clear structure and explicit argumentation is at a premium. If you do meet with a tutor, you would be well advised to share with the tutor the sample argumentative essay so that he or she knows what sort of paper is needed in this class.

5.5 Writing Requirement Credit

This course provides 4000 words of credit towards the Writing Requirement at UF. As such, it aims to ensure that you complete a minimum of 4000 words of writing evaluated for its effectiveness, organization, and clarity as well as grammar, punctuation, and usage of standard written English. More information on UF's Writing Requirement can be found at the following link: [link](#).

As a matter of university policy, you receive, in addition to the course grade, a *separate* grade indicating whether you get WR credit. In order to receive WR credit, you must:

1. Get *at least* a C for the course;
2. Do well enough specifically on written work that is graded for grammar, organization, and so on;
3. Complete all Short Writing Assignments.

4. Complete all Writing Exercises

Writing Assignments are assessed on several different factors (the rubrics themselves can be found at the end of this document):

1. *Comprehension*: whether you understand accurately the material you are writing about.
2. *Clarity*: whether you write in a way that can be understood by others, avoids ambiguity, and is focused and organized.
3. *Mechanics*: whether you avoid grammatical or formal errors.
4. *Thesis Support*: whether you provide good reasons to believe the thesis you advance in your essay.
5. *Defense against Objections*: whether you anticipate how someone might object to what you say and defend it against those objections.

When grades are released for your SWAs and WEs, you will probably look first to see what grade you received. That is understandable. But you will be doing yourself no favors if you don't also look at the other feedback on your work, since that is what you will learn from.

When you review your graded work, you will always find:

1. The grade and the specific marks on the rubric.
2. A general comment on your performance.

More often than not, you will also find:

3. In-text or inline comments on the text itself.

Make sure you read that feedback; we provide it so as to enable you to improve your writing skills.

5.6 Tests

There are six (6) tests. They are designed to check your understanding of the materials. Each test consists of ten multiple choice questions. Tests are 'open note' and you are encouraged to consult the readings and/or your notes when you take them.

Different students will get different questions as determined in part by a random draw from the bank of questions. The questions cover only the material we discussed in class. The lowest grade will be dropped.

If you receive a grade lower than 85% for any test, YOU MUST discuss your test with Rodrigo ASAP. Failure to do so will result in inability to take future tests.

5.7 Presentation

The class will be divided into small groups of 2 - 3 students. Each debate will feature two groups discussing a particular proposition (e.g., 'Persons are souls'). One group will argue that this proposition is *true* and the other group will argue that this proposition is *false*. The goal of the presentation is for students to articulate and defend a particular thesis.

The readings in this course will help inform your presentation. You might include your own research as well.

The propositions to be addressed in the debates will be posted on Canvas. Students will be graded individually according to the rubric for this assignment.

5.8 Participation in Discussion

The group formed for your presentation is also required to come up with an appropriate question about the material (readings and/or lectures) on Fridays. This question will be addressed to the instructor. The same group will also provide an appropriate answer to a question posed to it by the instructor.

Here's what makes a question/answer an appropriate one.

There are two requirements.

1. *Specificity*: your question/answer must be reasonably specific. That is, it must refer to some particular point in the course material. You will not get away with open-ended questions/answers like 'What is A's view about X?'/ 'A has a view about that.'
2. *Precision*: your question must fit into one of the categories below. When you ask your question, you must indicate which category it belongs to. In your answer to the instructor's question the group must also explain to which category his question belongs.
 - *Clarification*: questions of clarification ask for help in understanding a specific point or passage in the lectures or readings. For example, you might ask, 'Why does Descartes bring up the discussion of an "evil demon" set on deceiving him if he doesn't actually think such a demon exists? How could that demon be relevant to his argument if he doesn't think it's real?'
 - *Significance*: questions of significance ask how a particular view or argument in a reading or lecture might have broader significance – that is, how it might have relevance for other things that aren't explicitly addressed in the readings or lectures. For example, you might ask, 'If Descartes is right that we don't know anything about the external world, does that mean that we should never trust what science tells us? Does it mean that we should

live as if every day is our last day? What difference would it make if he's right?'

- *Criticism*: questions in this category proposes a criticism of some argument or claim made in a reading or lecture. For example, you might ask, 'Descartes thinks we can't know at the moment that we're not just dreaming everything, but this seems to me false. If I flap my arms right now and don't find myself flying around like in a dream, doesn't that show that I'm not just dreaming?'

5.9 Poll and iClicker

There will be polls in class throughout the semester.

Polls will use the iClicker system. For information on this system, please see

- <https://classrooms.at.ufl.edu/classroom-technology/iclicker-response-system/>

For this class, you will use the iClicker Reef application, either on a smartphone or a computer.

You must register your clicker Reef as soon as possible, but certainly before the first graded poll on Wednesday 1/19/22. See the iClicker registration page for more details.

There will be no poll in the first week of the semester, to give everyone time to acquire the application.

There will be ungraded polls 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 with you, and that it is working properly. Makeup polls will not be given for clicker problems.

Starting on Wednesday 1/19/22, there will be at least two graded poll questions in every lecture. Typically, the first question will be soon after class begins, 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 poll grade for each lecture from 1/19/22. Your three (3) lowest scores will be dropped. The remaining scores will each count equally towards your poll grade. Dropping those three lowest scores will allow for occasional absences. Make-up polls will only be given if you have an appropriate excuse.

Unless otherwise determined by your instructor, polls are individual assignments. You may not consult other students while taking an individual poll. You may not use someone else's clicker for them, or have someone else use your clicker. These are violations of academic honesty (see section 5 below).

6 Grade Scale

See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

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

	Grade Scale	Grade Value
A	100 - 93	4.00
A-	92 - 90	3.67
B+	89 - 86	3.33
B	85 - 82	3.00
B-	81 - 79	2.67
C+	78 - 75	2.33
C	75 - 72	2.00
C-	71 - 69	1.67
D+	68 - 66	1.33
D	65 - 62	1.00
D-	61 - 60	0.67
E	59 - 0	0.00

7 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. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of ‘E’ for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida’s Student Honor Code as follows: ‘A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.’ Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

8 Students with disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

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

10 Office Hours

I strongly encourage you to set up a meeting to discuss anything related to the course. Rodrigo will hold office hours on Mondays 4:30pm – 6:30pm (or by appointment via rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu).

11 Technical Issues

Please, direct any questions about technical issues you might have to UF Helpdesk. The website is <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. You may also call them at 352 392 4357.

12 Campus Resources

- Health and Wellness:
 1. U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website (www.umatter.ufl.edu) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
 2. Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website (www.counseling.ufl.edu) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

3. Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website (www.shcc.ufl.edu).
4. University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website (www.police.ufl.edu) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
5. UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website (www.ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

13 Academic Resources

1. E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
2. Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
3. Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
4. Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
5. Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
6. Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage ([here](#)) for more information.
7. On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process (www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process).

14 Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

[SEE UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS]

1. Arguments
 - 1/5 - QA about Introductory Video,
 - The Validity and Soundness of Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p. 9-10)
 - 1/7 - Proving the Validity of Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p.10-16)
 - 1/10 - Non-Deductive (i.e., Inductive) Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p.16-24)
 - 1/12 - Fallacies (reading: Perry et al. p. 19-24)
 - 1/14 - Discussion
 - 1/17 - Holiday (no class)
2. Tools for Doing Philosophy
 - 1/24 - Doing (Thought) Experiments (reading: Williamson p.50-60)
 - 1/26 - Concerns about Doing Thought Experiments (reading: Williamson p.60-65)
 - 1/28 - Discussion
 - 1/31 - Reading and Writing Philosophy (reading: Perry et al. p. 1-8)
 - 2/2 - Grading your written work (reading: how to read/write slides and Pryor web-pages)
 - 2/4 - Discussion
3. The Inception of Modern Philosophy: Some Questions
 - 2/7 - What can we know? (reading: Descartes, meditations 1 and 2)
 - 2/9 - Who is responsible for our mistakes? (reading: Descartes, meditations 3 and 4)
 - 2/11 - Discussion
 - 2/14 - Does God exist? (reading: Descartes, meditation 5)
 - 2/16 - Are we minds or bodies (or both)? (reading: Descartes, meditation 6)
 - 2/18 - Discussion
2. The Knowledge Question Today
 - 2/21 - A common sense response to Cartesian skepticism (reading: Moore)
 - 2/23 - The limits of the common sense response (reading: Moore)
 - 2/25 - Discussion
 - 2/28 - The traditional analysis of knowledge (TAK) and its limits (reading: Feldman p.25-28)
 - 3/2 - Modifying the TAK (reading: Feldman p.28-37)
 - 3/4 - Discussion
 - 3/7 - SPRING BREAK
 - 3/9 - SPRING BREAK
 - 3/10 - SPRING BREAK
3. The Responsibility Question Today

3/14 - God and the responsibility for existence of suffering (reading: Perry's dialogue p.100-112)
 3/16 - God and the responsibility for our actions (reading: Perry's dialogue p.112-122)
 3/18 - Discussion
 3/21 - Moral responsibility and being able to do otherwise (reading: Frankfurt p.829-832)
 3/23 - Moral responsibility and being able to do otherwise (reading: Frankfurt p.832-839)
 3/25 - Discussion
 4. The Mind-Body Question Today
 3/28 - The mind is the brain: the scientific argument (reading: Churchland p.)
 3/30 - The mind is the brain: the rejection of dualism (reading: Churchland p)
 4/1 - Discussion
 4/4 - The mind is not the brain: the scientific argument (reading: Nagel p.)
 4/6 - The mind is not the brain: the argument from illusion (reading: Frankish)
 4/8 - Discussion
 4/11 - Presentations
 4/13 - Presentations
 4/15 - Presentations
 4/18 - TBD
 4/20 - Conclusion and evaluation