

## PHI 3553: The Self, Reason, and Ethics, Spring 2022

Professor: Dr. Arina Pismenny

Griffin-Floyd Hall, room 306

Office Hours: **M:** 12-1 in person or by Zoom; **Th:** 12-1:30 by Zoom only, or by appointment

Email: [arinapismenny@ufl.edu](mailto:arinapismenny@ufl.edu)

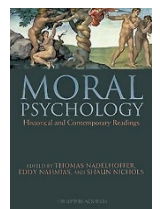
Class: MWF 10:40-11:30 AM in Matherly Hall, room 0115, or synchronously on Zoom

**Communication:** please contact me by email. It is best to send an email via Canvas. In your email, please indicate your name, course and section. Please allow 24 hours for an answer.

### Required Texts:

Thomas Nadelhoffer, Eddy Nahmias, Shaun Nichols (editors). *Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings*. (2010). Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 1405190191. [MP]

Additional reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them. The readings posted on Canvas are designated by [CN] on the syllabus.



## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

### **Course Description**

Moral Psychology is a field of study in both philosophy and psychology in which people study phenomena that are both psychological and ethical in nature—such as altruism and egoism, moral judgment, praise and blame, moral responsibility, practical deliberation, intentional action, virtue and vice, character, moral development, and so on. To explain these things, the moral psychologist must answer a number of particularly difficult questions about the nature of our actions and the way we do and should evaluate them. To do so, we will draw on research in social, cognitive and developmental psychology, as well as philosophy.

### **General education objectives and learning outcomes**

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. 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. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

PHI 3553 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with some key philosophical topics and arguments concerning knowledge, personal identity, and the nature of ethical truths as well as others. Students will become adept at thinking critically, analyzing arguments, and writing clearly and persuasively.

**The General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)** divide into three areas: **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; and **CRITICAL THINKING** – students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

**Students will satisfy the CONTENT SLO** by demonstrating a mastery of some key philosophical concepts as well as central arguments in the discipline. The **COMMUNICATION SLO** will be achieved by two Argumentative Essays (1500-2000 words each), and regular participation in class. Students will be required to explain and evaluate various philosophical views. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the **CRITICAL THINKING SLO** through the Argumentative Essays, which will be on assigned topics designed to test students' critical thinking abilities. Writing assignments will be graded on the bases of a student's comprehension of the relevant issues, development and cogent defense of her or his position, clarity of expression, and mechanics.

In short, at the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain some traditional philosophical positions as well as common objections to these.
- Analyze, evaluate, construct, and present persuasive and cogent arguments for particular philosophical positions
- Think critically about difficult and complex topics

**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/>. 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/>. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **Learning Objectives** on the syllabus (p. 1).

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

## **II. DOING YOUR PART**

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, think of your decision as a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, take responsibility for your education, and be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to it. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, and seriously prepare for the assignments.

## **III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS**

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

**A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63; E: 0-59.**

### **Components of Course Grade**

**Canvas Discussions (5): 5 pts/post; 25%**

**Group presentation: 10%**

**Short Paper #1: 15%**

**Short Paper #2: 15%**

**Final paper: 25%**

**Attendance: 5%**

**Participation: 5%**

**Total: 100%**

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Homework:** You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials.

**Canvas discussions:** almost every week, due Sundays (available until 11.59 pm the latest), you will need to post on a Canvas Discussion Board. You will need to make at least two posts. In the first post, you will answer the question posted to the whole class, and ask a question about a reading that is due next week. You will need to read the readings due next week to do that. After your first post, you will see your classmates' posts. Then you will need to make a second post, answering someone's question. There are specific instructions provided for posting, asking, and answering questions.

There are seven (7) graded discussion assignments. Two lowest post scores will be dropped. So only 5 discussion grades out of 7 will count towards your final grade. Each quiz is worth 5 points. The discussion posts are worth 25% of the final grade.

**Group presentations:** The class will be divided into four groups, with approximately three people per group. Each group will present on a specific topic. I will provide suggestions for each group. The presentation should be about 10-15 minutes. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A with the rest of the class, where the group members will need to address questions from their peers. The group is expected to put together a power point presentation, which they will upload on Canvas as part of their submission for this assignment. Group members will receive one grade, and, for this reason, are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member will submit a peer review, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own. Group presentations are worth 10% of the final grade.

**Extra credit:** attend one or more of the suggested events, write a report on time to get extra points.

**Papers:** You are asked to write two short papers (750-1000 words each), and one long final paper (2000-4000) for this course. All papers are thesis papers. In the short papers you will need to answer a specific question based on the readings. For each short paper you will have two options to pick from. Note that each option has a different due date. For the final paper, you will need to choose a topic, develop a thesis, and defend it by providing evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course. The short papers are worth 15% each, and the final paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

**\*Late Work** will not be accepted. There will be no make-ups for missed assignments. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to makeup an assignment, the following conditions must be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the missed assignment must be made-up within one calendar week.

**Attendance:** Your presence is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. You are allowed four excused absences in the course. Beyond this number, proper documentation will be required to excuse absences (e.g., a doctor's note). You must provide this documentation to me within one week of the missed class.

If you are absent for an excused reason, you will not lose any points and the absence will not exhaust one of your free absences. In most cases you need documentation of the excuse (see below). Excused absences are limited to the following cases:

- *Health.* If your physical or mental health causes you to miss class, a note from your doctor or from the Dean of Students within one week of the absence will count as documentation for this.
- *Personal Reasons.* The Dean of Students will send me a note of excuse if you have personal reasons for needing one, such as a death in the family or an ongoing medical issue. I need your note from the DOS within one week of the absence. Note: I do not get involved in adjudicating good personal reasons from bad ones. I let the DOS handle that.
- *Some UF Activities are excused absences.* You must provide a note for activities absences prior to the day of absence. Notes may come from the activity supervisor, such as a coach. Regular activities absences will lead to make-up assignments.
- *Religious observances.* Talk to me at the beginning of the semester about this.

If you think you have an exceptional case, talk to me.

All other absences are typically unexcused, including some very good reasons to miss a class, like career or family events. I support your interest in these things, and understand why you might prioritize them over class, but that does not make them excused absences. Please note that you are responsible for the information presented in your discussion section even if you miss class, whether for excused or unexcused reasons.

Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 5% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worth 5% of your final grade. Please be on time.

Since we are living a pandemic, it is likely that everyone is facing unique challenges at home, at school, at work. Our goal as your educators is to help you succeed. For this

reason, if you are requiring help or assistance, please contact us. We are all in this together.

For most people this is a new format of attending class and learning. You might be difficult to concentrate. I encourage you to make an effort to make your learning environment as distraction free as possible. Put a timeout on websites and apps like Facebook, so that you have an easier time concentrating during class. Paying attention during lectures and discussions is absolutely necessary in order to do well in the course.

### **Covid-19 Regulations for in-class attendance:**

We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

#### **If you are registered to attend class in-person,**

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- 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.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
  - 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. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

**You are always welcome to attend class via Zoom.**

**Participation:** Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This portion of your grade will

depend on your engagement and contribution (quality, not quantity). Your class participation will be tracked. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

**Zoom:** my office hours and lectures will all be held on Zoom and in-person this semester. To access lectures via Zoom, go to [www.ufl.zoom.us](http://www.ufl.zoom.us) and sign in with your UF credentials. It is recommended that you download the Zoom app on your computer. You can also access it on your smart phone.

When you click on Meetings, you should see all of our lectures scheduled.

You can also access Zoom lectures via Canvas by (1) clicking on Zoom Conferences (left side panel) or by (2) clicking online Canvas Calendar, and clicking on the Zoom class scheduled.

You can find more information about using Zoom at <https://ufl.zoom.us/>.

If you need assistance, please contact UFIT <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. They are available 24/7 by phone and email: (352) 392-HELP (4357) [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu)

### **Recording lectures and discussions:**

- Please be advised that a recording of a class lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.
  - **Publish** is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing 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.
  - A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet.
- 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 Conduct Code.

**Note taking:** [Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned](#)

< <https://tinyurl.com/h98vbgr> >. When taking notes, you should write down ideas. You should **not** be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them. Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn.

Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

**Electronic devices class policy:** Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*.

If you wish to record a lecture, be sure to obtain permission from me first.

**Accommodations and other services:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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>; 352-392-1575.

The instructors of this course are committed to supporting all of our students. Please let us know about accommodations that will ensure a welcoming space for you.

**Health and Wellness Resources:**

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

*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](#).

*University Police Department:* [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

*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](#).

**Cheating and Plagiarism policy:** If you are cheating on an assignment, you will receive an F on that assignment (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.



Here is **University of Florida's Policy on Academic Honesty**

[https://flexible.dce.ufl.edu/media/flexible.dce.ufl.edu/documents/uf\\_policy\\_student\\_conduct.pdf](https://flexible.dce.ufl.edu/media/flexible.dce.ufl.edu/documents/uf_policy_student_conduct.pdf)

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**The Honor Pledge:** We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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."

**A. Cheating.** A Student cannot use unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another Student without the other Student's express Consent or without proper attribution to the other Student.
2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to the Student.
3. Using additional time, or failing to stop working when instructed, on any time-bound academic activity.
4. Failing to follow the directions of a proctor of any academic activity, when such conduct could lead to an academic advantage or benefit.
5. Collaborating with another person, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.

**B. Complicity in Violating the Student Honor Code.** Attempting, aiding, encouraging, facilitating, abetting, conspiring to commit, hiring someone else to commit, giving or receiving bribes to secure, or being a participant (by act or omission) in any act prohibited by the Student Honor Code.

**C. False or Misleading Information.**

1. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement during the Investigation or resolution of an alleged Student Honor Code violation.
2. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement for the purpose of procuring an improper academic advantage for any Student.
3. A Student must not use or present fabricated information, falsified research, or other findings if the Student knows or reasonably should be aware that the information, research, or other finding is fabricated or falsified.

**D. Interference with an Academic Activity.**

1. A Student must not take any action or take any material for the purpose of interfering with an academic activity, through any means over any medium.
2. A Student must not be disruptive to the testing environment or other academic activity.

**E. Plagiarism.** A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

**F. Submission of Academic Work Purchased or Obtained from an Outside Source.** A Student must not submit as their own work any academic work in any form that the Student purchased or otherwise obtained from an outside source, including but not limited to: academic materials in any form prepared by a commercial or individual vendor of academic materials; a collection of research papers, tests, or academic materials maintained by a Student Organization or other entity or person, or any other sources of academic work.

**G. Unauthorized Recordings.** A Student must not, without express authorization from Faculty, make or receive any Recording, through any means over any medium, of any academic activity, including but not limited to a Recording of any class or of any meeting with Faculty. Students registered with the Disability Resource Center who are provided reasonable accommodations that include allowing such Recordings must inform Faculty before making such Recordings.

**H. Unauthorized Taking or Receipt of Materials or Resources to Gain an Improper Academic Advantage.** A Student, independently or with another person or other people, must not without express authorization take, give, transmit, or receive materials, information, or resources in any manner, through any medium, for the purpose of gaining or providing an improper academic advantage to any Student.

#### IV. USEFUL LINKS

**Canvas**

<https://ufl.instructure.com/>

**Canvas help:** <<http://guides.instructure.com>> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact UF's Computing Help Desk: <<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>>

**Zoom** [www.ufl.zoom.us](http://www.ufl.zoom.us)

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>

**Counseling and Wellness Center**

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, (352)392-1575

**University Police Department**

<https://police.ufl.edu/> (352)392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

**Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources**

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/full-sexual-harassment-and-misconduct-policy/>

**Writing Studio**

<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

**Libraries**

<https://www.ufl.edu/academics/libraries/>

**LGBTQ Affairs**

<https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/>

*Philosophy at UF:*

**Philosophy Department**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/index.html>

**Philosophy Discussions – Food and Talk**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-food&talk.html>

**Undergraduate Philosophy Society**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8317358197/about/>

**Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-major.html>

**Hare Essay Competition**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad.html?page=hare>

*Philosophy Research Sources*

**How to write a good philosophy paper:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

**The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

**Philosophy Bites Podcast**

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

**Philosophy of TED Talks**

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>