INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY – PHI 2010

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Professor's Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:30-3:00 or by Appointment

Course Meetings: Lecture: T,R Period 5 (11:45-12:35) CSE A101
                                       Discussion Sections: F - times and locations vary with section

Course Website: https://elearning.ufl.edu (Canvas)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this class we will explore several fundamental philosophical questions that are at the core of our lived experience, especially those that have been put center-stage by recent global events.

- How can life be meaningful in time when there seems to be no progress and no purpose?
- Is free will real, or only an illusion?
- In a world full of filter bubbles, "fake news", and echo chambers, how can we genuinely *know* that what we see—or read—is true?
- Do we have core social values? Is free speech valuable for *its own sake* or can its value be outweighed by other considerations?
- What is "the self"? What makes a person the person that they are? What kind of change can a person go through and remain "the same person" as they were before?

A philosophy course cannot *give* you the answers to questions like these, but studying philosophy can help us understand why we shouldn't expect quick and easy answers to such questions. Philosophy helps us see that our world is more complex, nuanced, and uncertain than it may first appear. In this way, it also helps us live authentically—an "examined life". When we know what we value, when we see ourselves and our world more clearly, we give ourselves a method for making the best decisions we can in a world with no absolute guarantees.

Learning how to approach problems with a philosophical mindset will help you find and ask better questions, ones that can move a conversation—and a society—forward.

This course counts towards the Humanities (H) general education requirement and the Writing (W) requirement (4000 words).

REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS:

No purchase of books is necessary for this course. All assigned readings will be available through the class Canvas page. Students are required to bring a copy of the day's assigned reading to each class and discussion section meeting; failure to do so will result in loss of participation points. A full list of the required readings for this course can be found in the Course Schedule, below.

COURSE GOALS:

This course is designed to introduce students to the practice of philosophy through the study of central philosophical questions and arguments, as represented by a selection of historical and/or contemporary readings. Students will learn some of the basic principles of good reasoning, including how to understand arguments, represent them clearly and fairly, and evaluate them for cogency. Students will also learn to develop their own arguments and views regarding the philosophical questions studied in the course in a compelling fashion. In these ways the course aims to develop students' own reasoning and communication skills in ways that will be useful in any further study of philosophy they undertake and beyond the bounds of philosophy itself.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will demonstrate their competencies in understanding and assessing the philosophical theories studied in the course primarily via a set of assigned papers, in which they will be assessed for their abilities to: (i) understand and apply basic concepts of good reasoning, (ii) accurately and fairly describe and explain philosophical views represented in works assigned for the course, (iii) formulate arguments of their own while anticipating possible lines of objections and responding in a conscientious fashion, and (iv) speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and challenging matters of the sort raised by the philosophical material in the course.

SUMMARY OF COURSE GOALS & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify, describe and explain the major arguments and options in core areas of philosophy.
- Discern the structure of arguments, to represent them fairly and clearly and to evaluate them for cogency.
- Formulate original arguments, anticipating objections and responding in a conscientious fashion.
- Read and discuss complex philosophical texts from contemporary works.
- Speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters.

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES & 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 73% (C) is required for general education credit.

PHI 2010 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with some key philosophical topics and arguments concerning knowledge, free will, the mind, the nature of morality, and the existence of God. 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 five papers (500-1250 words each) and regular participation in class meetings. Students will be required to explain and evaluate various philosophical views. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the CRITICAL THINKING SLO through the papers and discussions, both of which will be focused on topics designed to test students' critical thinking abilities. Papers will be graded on the basis of a student's comprehension of the relevant issues, development and cogent defense of her or his position, clarity of expression, and mechanics.

SUMMARY OF HUMANITIES & GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES / LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Identify, describe, and explain how the resources available in the humanities can help with becoming a more informed and engaged citizen. **(Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities)**
2. Identify and analyze the histories of and relations among different theoretical frameworks in humanistic traditions of thought **(Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities)**
3. Identify, analyze and evaluate moral themes in public discourse **(Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Humanities)**
4. Analyze and evaluate the particular, public ethical issues that we discuss in the course (including free speech, economic inequality, sexual violence) **(Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Humanities)**
5. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between course content and their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond **(Critical Thinking SLO)**
6. Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about important public ethical issues in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course **(Communication SLO for Gen Ed Humanities).**

WRITING REQUIREMENT CREDIT:

This course is marked 'WR', and is designated to satisfy 4,000 words of Writing Requirement credit. 4,000 words amounts to approximately 17 pages of writing (12 point font, double-spaced, one-inch

margins). Needless to say, there will be more writing in this course than you may be accustomed to from other courses. But, you can do it! The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Here is a link to the official UF statement about the WR:

https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/writing-requirement/

Students in this course can earn 4000 words towards the UF Writing Requirement (WR). 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 73% (C) or higher overall and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. Satisfactory completion of the writing component requires submission of all four papers and a grade of 77% (C+) or better on three out of four of them. A few things to note about the WR are the following:

- Written assignments that count toward the University of Florida Writing Requirement should contain extended analysis and develop original, sophisticated ideas, not merely present hastily written or cursory thoughts. UF Writing Requirement assignments should include such elements as well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, a persuasive organizational structure, well-supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements.
- Writing will be evaluated based on the content, organization and coherence, effectiveness, style, grammar, and punctuation. I will provide a detailed rubric that shows how we will evaluate assignments using these criteria (see the end of this syllabus).
- In-class writing assignments, class notes, and essay examinations may not be counted toward the 4,000 words.
- You may find it helpful to reach out to the UF Writing Studio for writing help: https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Original Discussion Board Posts: 5 total,** 150 word limit on each post (together worth 10% of final grade) You are required to complete 4 Graded Discussion Board Posts between week 2 and week 15. In week 1 the entire class will post to the discussion board, and the post will be graded as complete/incomplete. Original discussion board posts are due by 7pm Thursday. **These 5 original discussion board posts together are worth 10% of your final grade**

2. **Weekly Discussion Board Replies**: Each Thursday, by 11:59pm, students will be required to write a brief reply post to one of their classmate's discussion posts. A detailed set of instructions and rubric explaining the requirements and expectations for these discussion post replies can be found in the Discussion Board folder under the Files tab on our Canvas site. **Discussion Board Reply Posts are worth 5% of the final grade.**

3. **Verbal Participation**: You will be expected to have read and to be prepared to discuss the texts assigned for each week in your discussion section. Verbal participation will be assessed during your discussion Friday sessions. However, your participation grade can be augmented by participating in office hours. **Verbal Participation is worth 10% of the final grade.**

4. **Essay/Paper Writing Assignments**: You will be required to write 5 papers for this course. This course has a Writing Requirement of 4000 words. Detailed essay instructions and prompts can be found on our Canvas site. In order to receive the WR credit for this course, your average grade must be 72% on these three essays, combined. **Together these Writing Assignments are worth 60% of your final grade**

   o Week 1 Short Personal Writing Assignment (200-400 words) 2% of final grade
   o 1st Medium-length Writing Assignment (500-700 words) 10% of final grade
   o 1st Full-Length Essays (1400-1700 words) 15% of final grade
   o 2nd Short Writing Assignment (500-700 words) 10% of final grade
   o 2nd Full-Length Essays (1400-1700 words) 23% of final grade

5. **Quizzes**: There will be several short quizzes throughout the term. These quizzes will all be "open book", or open video for video quizzes. There will be a time limit for the quizzes (5-10 min), but you have three attempts for each quiz! **Together the quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade.**

ADDITIONAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

1. **Essay Source Materials**: Any source materials appealed to in your essay assignments that do not come from assigned course texts, *must* be cleared with the instructor at least 1 week prior to the due date of the assignment. If you do not clear additional sources with the instructor 1 week prior to turning in your paper, you will be penalized (10% for each source not-cleared, *only if* the source is cited). None of the assignments for this class will require resources beyond the required readings.

2. **Text and Note Taking**: In each lecture, we will be taking an in-depth look at the assigned readings for that session. You are expected to have a copy of the text with you, and you will benefit from being able to mark the passages that are focused on in lecture.

3. **Course Slides**: This will be a discussion-based course, so we will be talking through the readings together. Very occasionally, we may use class slides, and if we do, these will be posted on the course's Canvas site after class.

SUMMARY OF GRADED REQUIREMENTS

10% Discussion Board Posts
5% Discussion Board Replies
10% Verbal Participation
10% Essay #1
15% Essay #2
20% Essay #3
10% Essay #4
5% Essay #5
15% Poster Presentation Project

Grading Scale

Letter	4 pt. scale		100 pt. scale
A	4.0	(3.835-4.0)	94-100
A-	3.67	(3.495-3.834)	90-93
B+	3.33	(3.165-3.494)	87-89
B	3.0	(2.835-3.164)	84-86
B-	2.67	(2.495-2.834)	80-83
C+	2.33	(2.165-2.494)	77-79
C	2.0	(1.835-2.164)	74-76
C-	1.67	(1.495-1.834)	70-73
D+	1.33	(1.165-1.494)	67-69
D	1.0	(0.835-1.164)	64-66
D-	0.67	(0.495-0.834)	60-63
E	0.0	(0.0-0.494)	0-59

ESSAY SUBMISSION AND LATE SUBMISSION POLICY:

In general, requirements for section attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work are consistent with university policies specified at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.

More specifically, the following policies will be adhered to:

Late written work:

The penalty for late work is 1/3 of a letter grade deducted immediately at the deadline, and again at each 24-hour mark beyond the deadline until the work is submitted (including weekend days).

No assignments will be accepted which are more than one week late. Exceptions to this require instructor approval.

There will be no late discussion board contributions. Discussion boards close at 11:59pm the Thursday before each Friday section.

Other Course Policies

Working with classmates:

You are encouraged to talk to one another outside of class about philosophy and about this course as much as possible. This includes discussion of paper topics, and it includes reading drafts of one another's work. If you do work together, please be mindful of the following:

1. Your final product must be your own original work, and not a repetition of someone else's ideas or essay.

2. Each essay must be a piece of written thinking in itself. Sometimes conversation in advance of writing can make you feel like the conclusions of that conversation are now established, such that you can now talk about them by stating them (or assuming, or implying). But your essays need to "show your work"—if the argument is not explicitly on the page, you haven't made the argument. We need to see the important pieces of reasoning.
3. You must be willing to endorse what ends up in your paper. Beware of letting others persuade you to go in the wrong direction. You are ultimately responsible for both the understandings and misunderstandings in the papers you turn in.

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.

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. The use of smart phones during class is not permitted except in case of emergency. 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.

Philosophy is sometimes mistakenly understood to be a combative exercise. That style does not impress me at all. I encourage you to direct your first effort toward trying to understand and develop both the contributions of the authors we read and the contributions of others in the class. Where those are limited, of course, good philosophy also happens when you (respectfully) disagree, note tensions, make distinctions, reshape the question, and so on. Acting in a repeatedly aggressive manner, in ways which attempt to incite unnecessary conflict or to dominate the discussion and/or other people, will not be tolerated.

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://elearning.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 3930 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.**

COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS:

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations 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 and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.uf for screening/testing and vaccination opportunities.

- If you are sick, stay home. 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 to be evaluated.

- 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.

ACCOMMODATION FOR 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.

CLASS RECORDING POLICY:

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 Conduct Code.

HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Most instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided by thoroughly citing the resources you have used to help you understand the topic on which you're writing. **If you have read something that helped you understand the material, cite it!** Failure to cite sources is the most common (and easily avoidable) academic offence. Detailed citation instructions will be provided with your essay assignments.

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

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.

IMPORTANT CAMPUS & ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Health and Wellness
- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit the 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.
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

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

EMAIL POLICY & OFFICE HOURS

(1) If you need some practical information about the course you should **look at most recently updated syllabus on canvas.** E-mails requesting information which is available on the most recently updated syllabus or on the website may not be answered.

(2) If you want to discuss a substantive philosophical question you should bring it up in class or come to office hours. I will not be able to respond to in-depth, substantive questions about the readings or assignments over email. However, I am *more* than happy to discuss substantive questions of these sorts in office hours. So, please come and see me! I will be happy to address short, logistical, non-substantive questions over email.

(3) Although I am happy to answer any questions that you might have regarding our assignments in

office hours, I will not be able to read drafts of papers.

Emails received after 5pm may not be responded to until after 9am the following day.

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.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE!

1. **Be sure to read the assigned material before lecture**. This will help to ensure that our lecture time is quality time.

2. **After lecture, re-read the material for the session**: pay special attention to the questions that you had before. Hopefully the material will make much more sense to you now!

3. **Bring specific questions with you to discussion section meetings**. If there remain aspects of the readings or lecture you didn't fully grasp, your discussion section will provide you with an excellent opportunity to probe these issues further.

4. **See me in office hours:** Philosophy is tough! It's natural to have lurking (and new) questions after both lecture and section. That's what office hours are for! Come and see me. Don't be shy!

5. **Manage your time well**. Many students make the mistake of waiting until a few days before papers are due to start writing. This is not a helpful way to manage your time and efforts. Getting started early on your papers by formulating outlines and drafts will *really, really* help to improve your final product. Similar considerations apply to the final exam. The **same number of hours** devoted to the material BEFORE class can lead to a much more efficient use of your time, better understanding, and higher grades.

6. **Familiarize yourself with Philosophical Terms & Methods**: Here are links to Jim Pryor's guides to philosophical terms and methods, reading philosophy, and writing a philosophical paper. These are *very* helpful, short additional resources. I *strongly* recommend checking them out:

http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

On Reading Philosophy Texts:

You will be expected to have done the assigned reading before you come to class to be able to follow the lecture and participate in tutorial discussion. Learning philosophy is as much learning a style of thinking and reasoning as it is learning certain contents. Therefore it is important that you try to participate actively and learn to engage with the readings critically.

You should budget enough time for the reading to be able to read each piece at least three times. Don't expect to be able to 'breeze through' the texts and you can avoid a lot of frustration. For all the readings you should have a pen and paper ready to take notes as you read. Philosophical writing is concerned with advancing and defending arguments. Your task will be to try to reconstruct the arguments and to critically evaluate them.

The first reading of the text should be fairly quick. Your goal here should be to get a first, rough sense of the general argument the author is advancing and the rough structure of the text. What is his or her main thesis? (write this down!) Where in the text is s/he arguing for it? Where does s/he address objections? Where does he discuss qualifications? Where does s/he motivate the argument? Don't worry, if during the first reading you don't yet understand how precisely the author is arguing for a thesis.

The second reading should be devoted to giving a reconstruction of the argument that is as sympathetic as possible. Now you should spend a lot of time on trying to understand how the author supports the main thesis, and how s/he might address potential objections. Here it is usually useful to try to jot down the following: What are the premises of the argument? How are the premises themselves supported? For example the author might appeal to shared intuitions or might claim that the premises are self-evident. What are the steps which are meant to get the author from the premises to the conclusion? (Here worlds like 'because' and 'therefore' can provide a clue.) You might think of yourself as engaging in a dialogue with the text here. Ask critical questions of the text, such as "You say that all simple ideas are copies of impressions. Why should I be compelled to accept this?" Then search the text for answers. At this stage your aim should not yet be to try to discover flaws or problems in the argument. Aim to make the argument as strong as possible.

Finally it is time to be critical. During a third reading you ought to try to see if you can uncover weaknesses in the arguments. If someone would want to disagree with a conclusion, there are two general ways in which one might attack the author's arguments. One, you can disagree with one or more of the premises. That is you might accept that *if* we grant the premises, *then* the conclusion follows, but you might disagree with one or more of the premises. (But then you should ask yourself how you would respond to the attempt to motivate the premises.) Or, two, you might disagree with one or more of the steps in the argument. That is, you might be willing to accept the premises, but you might deny that this commits you to the conclusion as well. If you have an objection of the latter kind you should try to explain why it is possible to accept the author's premises and yet deny his or her conclusions. (Of course you also might have objections of both kinds.)

A careful reading of a difficult text takes time. Learn to read patiently and slowly, and before you get frustrated, remember that even professional philosophers struggle with some of the texts you

are reading. One of the most wonderful aspects of reading philosophy is that it allows you to engage in conversations with some of the deepest and most original thinkers. Enjoy the challenge!

		GRADING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS		
A	B	C	D	E
• Overall, the paper does an excellent job of responding to the topic question and reflects a more than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.	• Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.	• Overall, the paper provides a merely sufficient response to the topic question and reflects a less than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.	• Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic question and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class.	• Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials discussed in class.
• The introduction does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.
• The main ideas of the paper are clear and convincing	• The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and convincing.	• The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear and convincing.	• The main ideas of the paper are only marginally clear and convincing.	• It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be.
• All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.	• Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.	• The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material.	• The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material.	• How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelvant material.
• The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• None of the inter-pretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent.	• None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.
• The argument advances in a manner that is easy to follow.	• The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow.	• The argument is difficult to follow in places.	• The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete.	• The argument is very difficult to follow.

Grammar: The document *Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments* posted under the "Resources" tab discusses some common grammatical errors you must avoid. Grammatical errors will incur deductions as follows:

- Improper formation of plurals and possessives (- 2 points)
- Failure of agreement between subject and verb (- 2 points)
- Run-on sentence (*Basic Grammar* §2) (- 4 points)
- Unclear Pronoun Reference (*Basic Grammar* §4) (- 2 points)
- Confusion of *it's* and *its* (- 2 points)
- Sentence fragment (*Basic Grammar* §1) (- 4 points)
- Faulty Modification (*Basic Grammar* §3) (- 2 points)
- Faulty Parallelism (*Basic Grammar* §5) (- 2 points)

Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments

(adapted, with the authors' permission, from Bob Davis and Cleve Latham's *Survival Kit for Effective Writing*)

1. FRAGMENTS

Of all the mistakes that appear in student essays, the fragment emerges as the most serious because it indicates an ignorance of basic sentence structure. Every sentence includes two essential elements, the subject and the predicate. The omission of one or the other of these essential elements constitutes a fragment. By this time in your educational career, you should be able to recognize the subject and predicate in any sentence; therefore, neither time nor space will be wasted in discussing either of these elements. We will simply consider carefully the following examples:

> *Joe rushed home to drive his Chevy.* <u>*After passing the driving test*</u>.

The fragment contains no subject—the prepositional phrase cannot stand alone. The correction is simple—connect the two.

> *After passing the driving test, Joe rushed home to drive his Chevy.*

Another example:

I am taking three friends with me to the beach. Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Sam.

We have no predicate in this fragment. There are several possible corrections. As an appositive:

I am taking three friends with me to the beach, Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Sam.

Change in order:

Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Sam are the three friends whom I am taking to the beach.

Most students would not make such obvious mistakes as those above; the majority of fragment errors occur when a dependent clause is employed as a solitary sentence. In this case, the clause may have operable subjects and predicates, but the clause or phrase simply does not express a complete thought, as in the following example:

We went to the play. Which lasted two hours, but we had to leave early.

Because of the subordinate word, "which," the clause is dependent and is an incomplete thought. Correct by joining the two.

We went to the play which lasted for two hours, but we had to leave early.

Other words that introduce dependent clauses:

who	whom	that
because	although	unless
before	after	when
where	as	how
until	why	if

Most often, fragments occur when a student proves too lazy to proofread a paper thoroughly. Every sentence must be able to stand alone and make some intelligible statement.

2. RUN-ONS

Run-ons surface when a sentence is written with two independent clauses and faulty or inadequate punctuation. The correction for this all-too-frequent occurrence lies within the student's understanding and recognition of compound sentences. Compound sentences are those with morethan one independent clause. Three ways to punctuate these types of sentences are recommended:

1) a comma and a conjunction
2) a semicolon
3) a semicolon, conjunctive adverb, and comma

Consider the following examples.

> *Joey has traveled extensively he is the only member of the class who has journeyed to Europe.*

This run-on has two independent clauses and no punctuation. Here are three possible ways to correct it.

1) comma and conjunction:
> *Joey has traveled extensively, and he is the only member of the class who has journeyed to Europe.*

2) semicolon:
> *Joey has traveled extensively; he is the only member of the c/ass who has journeyed to Europe.*

3) semicolon, conjunctive adverb, comma:
> *Joey has traveled extensively; moreover, he is the only member of the class who has journeyed to Europe.*

Most run-on errors are similar to the following example:

> *Carlotta and Gabriel have dated for two years, therefore I'm sure they will be married by June.*

In this example, the student recognizes the need for some kind of punctuation between the two independent clauses, but he inserts a comma rather than a semicolon. There are three methods of correction.

> *Carlotta and Gabriel have dated for two years; I'm sure they will be married by June.*
> *Carlotta and Gabriel have dated for two years, and I'm sure they will be married by June.*
> *Carlotta and Gabriel have dated for two years; therefore, I'm sure they will be married by June.*

Sometimes a writer shows an awareness of the need to separate two main clauses by including a conjunction but not the comma preceding the conjunction.

> *Again I'm coming down with a cold but I refuse to miss anymore school.*

Such a sentence we can call a "technical run-on" because it does not employ one of the three accepted methods of including two main clauses in one sentence. The comma proves necessary because it serves as a clue to the reader for the interpretation of the sentence.

> *Again I'm coming down with a cold, but I refuse to miss anymore school.*

The most common conjunctions are:

and	but	for	or	nor

The most common conjunctive adverbs are:

besides	indeed	in fact
also	moreover	furthermore
nevertheless	still	however

therefore   thus   hence
consequently accordingly

3. FAULTY MODIFICATION

Faulty modification occurs in a paper when a student carelessly misplaces a modifier. For clarity, all modifiers should be placed close to the word or words that they modify. Confusion results from ignoring this important detail. Faulty modification contains two categories: dangling modifiers and misplaced modifiers.

3a. Dangling Modifiers

A phrase is termed "dangling" when the word it modifies is omitted from the sentence.

> *Walking along the beach, ships could be seen in the distance.*

Can ships walk along the beach? The actual walker has been omitted. Correction:

> *Walking along the beach, I could see ships in the distance.*

To correct any sentence containing a dangling phrase, simply insert the word that the phrase actually modifies.

Dangling infinitives are similar to dangling phrases. Consider the following:

> *To enjoy football, the stadium must be well planned.*

Can a stadium enjoy football? Correction:

> *To enjoy watching football, one must have access to a well-planned stadium.*

3b. Misplaced Modifiers

A modifier is termed "misplaced" when it modifies the wrong word in a sentence.

> *He nearly wrote all of his term paper yesterday.*

"Nearly" is misplaced in this sentence. Correction:

> *He wrote nearly all of his term paper yesterday.*

Misplacement of phrases and clauses, also, may prove confusing.

> *She stood adjusting her hat on the sidewalk that she had just bought.*

What? Correction:

> *She stood on the sidewalk adjusting the hat she had just bought.*

In both speech and writing, we too often misplace the word "only" by throwing it into the sentence before we need it.

> *I only earned three A's last semester.*

Did the writer not deserve the A's? Did the writer earn them, but not receive them? On the contrary, she intends to say that she is accustomed to earning more than three A's. Correction:

> *I earned only three A's last semester.*

Like most writing errors, faulty modification appears when the student refuses to proofread each sentence. The errors are usually obvious and easily corrected; therefore, faulty modification need never appear in any paper.

4. UNCLEAR PRONOUN REFERENCE

Nothing confuses a reader more than a paper full of ambiguous pronoun reference. When pronouns refer to multiple antecedents or perhaps refer to no antecedent at all, the writing loses continuity and accuracy. If pronouns are to be employed, they must have proper and definite reference. We shall consider three categories of problems: ambiguous antecedents, indefinite reference of "you," and the dangers of "it."

4a. Ambiguous Antecedents

A pronoun's antecedent is termed "ambiguous" if a question arises about what the pronoun refers to.

> *The teacher told the student that his duties did not include babysitting.*

Whose duties did not include babysitting? The teacher's? The student's? The assignment of duties remains difficult because of the unclear reference between the pronoun "his" and the antecedent. Correct this type of mistake by writing what you actually mean.

> *The teacher told the student that babysitting was not one of the teacher's duties.*

Consider the following example:

> *He wore a ring on his finger that was big enough to choke a horse.*

Does "that" refer to "ring" or "finger"? Who but the writer knows? On his finger he wore a ring big enough to choke a horse.

Also, be wary of beginning a sentence with the single word "This" as subject. We usually find that a writer's intended antecedent for the subject "This" embodies a number of preceding sentences, such as in the following sentence to conclude a three-hundred-word essay: "*This* is why I choose not to go to college." A discriminating reader, however, will demand that pronouns claim precise antecedents.

4b. Indefinite reference of "you"

A second problem that students encounter at times is a reliance upon the word you.

> *Rules have such a negative effect on a person. Sometimes you think you can hardly do anything without someone yelling at you.*

The use of the word "you" in a paper indicates laziness because the writer employs "you" to bypass a more difficult stylistic situation. Also, the use of "you" makes a thought personal when it should not be personal at all. For instance, does everyone have problems with rules?

> *Rules have such a negative effect on a person. At times even simple movement becomes difficult because of some particular correction for it.*

The use of "you" is entirely inappropriate and short-circuits good writing.

4c. Dangers of "it"

The last category for consideration involves the word "it." Generally, "it" is a dangerous word to use because at times "it," too, may cause confusion with reference.

> *Jack veered to the left to avoid a collision, but it was too late.*

What was too late? We can't tell. Correction:

> *Jack's effort to avoid the collision was useless.*

Another example:

> *When I put my gear on and go down under the surface of the ocean, it seems as if I am in another world.*

"It" simply does not clearly refer to anything. We are not confused by the situation generally, but the wording can hardly be said to be exact.

Correction:

I am in another world when I put my gear on and go beneath the surface of the ocean.

5. FAULTY PARALLELISM

When talking about both parallelism and subordination, we will refer to the various ideas that go together to make up a sentence as elements or aspects.

By using the principle of parallelism, a writer stresses or merely allows the equality of two or more elements of his sentence. And when two elements are equal in importance or usage, they must appear in identical grammatical form.

Wrong: *Conrad especially loves swimming and <u>to take long walks</u>.*
                             ~~direct object~~   infinitive phrase

Faulty parallelism may occur in two ways. Above is an example of one: logically equal elements not expressed in equal grammatical form. We are not given, in this sentence, any clue concerning Conrad's preference between the activities of swimming and walking; therefore, we must assume that the activities are of equal importance. And yet, one is expressed as a direct object; the other, an infinitive phrase.

Right: *Conrad especially loves swimming and walking.*
Right: *Conrad especially loved to swim and to walk.*

Wrong: *I procrastinate incessantly, whether being an athlete, student, or working on a job.*
Right: *I procrastinate incessantly, whether as an athlete, student, or employee.*

Wrong: *A person should not be only attractive, but also kind, loyal, have a good attitude, and be trustworthy.*
Right: *A person should not be only attractive, but also kind, loyal, cheerful, and trustworthy.*

The second error in the use of parallelism is equalizing, through use of parallel structure, two or more sentence elements which should not be equalized.

Wrong: *She was tall, tan, and a beauty queen.*

Being a beauty queen is not an element of physical description, as are tall and tan, and should not appear grammatically equal. Being a beauty queen is probably more important than being tall and tan; or being a beauty queen is a result of being tall and tan.

Right: *She was a tall, tan beauty queen.*

6. SUBORDINATION HAZARDS

While parallelism should be used to express an equality among sentence aspects, subordination makes clear which part of a sentence proves the most significant. A writer must learn to evaluate the aspects of a sentence, deciding which to emphasize and which to subordinate. Consider the following actions of Lois:

> ...came home late at night

> ...tripped over a dead body

> ...walked through the back door

In deciding which aspect is the most important, the writer should ask the question, "Which aspect happens least?" Certainly Lois comes home late and walks through her back door much more frequently than she trips over a dead body. Therefore, we have decided to emphasize the tripping over the dead body by placing it in the independent clause. Other aspects must be subordinated by using a dependent clause, phrase, or by paring the aspect down to a single word. The example below illustrates the most effective treatment of the ideas.

> *Walking through the back door late at night, <u>Lois tripped over a dead body</u>.*

The independent clause is underlined and proves to be a grammatically correct sentence if standing alone. The first part of the sentence results from subordination, both secondary sentence aspects combined into a single introductory phrase.

Incorrect subordination would have occurred had we emphasized the wrong aspect of the sentence, as in the following possibilities:

> *As she tripped over the dead body, Lois walked through the back door late at night. When she came home late at night, Lois walked through the back door, tripping over a dead body.*

These examples afford the reader the wrong impression of the scene; they minimize Lois's finding a corpse at her doorstep, implying that we should be more impressed by her walking through her backdoor than by her discovering a dead body.

In employing subordination, then, the writer signifies the relationship among the several ideas in her sentence. Such subordinate elements often include a word that signifies a specific relationship. The writer will most often express the relationships of time, contrast, and cause and effect. Employ the following words and phrases to express the correct relationships:

> **time**: when, while, as, after, before

> **contrast**: although, in spite of, whereas

> **cause and effect**: because, since, as a result of, if, unless

Dependent clauses sometimes provide additional information about a noun or pronoun in a sentence. These clauses (termed "adjective clauses") will most often be introduced by the words "who," "whom," "whose," "which," "that," "where," "when," and "why." The following three sentences should be combined using one of these words:

> *Darlinda is crazy. She is also sadistic. She enjoys attending funerals.*

Obviously, the third idea proves most significant and should be emphasized in the independent clause of the revised sentence. The first two sentences further describe Darlinda, so we combine the first two sentences into a single subordinate clause beginning with "who."

> *Darlinda, who is crazy and sadistic, enjoys attending funerals.*

Commas. If the additional information offered in these adjective clauses proves essential to the identification of that noun or pronoun, do not set off the clause with commas. However, if the additional information is not essential in identifying the person, place, or thing, then commas should be used to set it off from the rest of the sentence. Commas, then, indicate that the meaning of the

sentence would not be distorted if the adjective clause were omitted. Consider the differences in the following examples:

> *College freshmen who have already experienced a boarding school environment will probably require fewer adjustments to college life.*

Darlinda plans to enroll in Mississippi University for Women, which was founded as the nation's first state-supported women's college.
I slowly opened the door to the room where I would be living for the next nine months.
Two teenagers were murdered in my neighbor's house, which has been placed on the market four times in the last two years.

Aside from incorrect subordination, many writers fail to subordinate at all, plaguing the reader with a series of short, choppy sentences. Moreover, without subordination as a connecting device, the writer weakens his prose by repeating ideas in order to make his connections clear.

Summary of the rules for subordinating effectively:
1. Decide which ideas in a related series should be emphasized by placing them in theindependent clause.
    2.   Decide whether a dependent clause expresses a relationship (time, contrast, cause andeffect) or identifies a noun or pronoun.
3. If a dependent clause identifies a noun or pronoun, decide whether the information isessential or nonessential. If nonessential, set the clause off with commas.

LECTURE & READING SCHEDULE (Including Assignment Due Dates)

This Schedule is Subject to Revision – please read all class announcements

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Thursday, 8/25 – Course & Syllabus Overview

Friday, 8/26 – Discussion Sections will cover 2 Readings:
        i) Anthony Appiah, *The Ethicist*
        ii) Jody Azzouni, The Vampire's Guide to an Ethical Life

First Paper: Short Personal Writing due Sunday 8/28 11:59pm *(If adding this course late you will coordinate with your TA to arrange a due date for this assignment)*

WEEK 2: EXISTENTIALISM AND THE ABSURD- SEARCHING FOR MEANING IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Tuesday, 8/30 – Read **Albert Camus,** *An Absurd Reasoning* (excerpts)

Thursday, 9/1 – continue **Albert Camus,** *An Absurd Reasoning* (excerpts)

        Quiz 1 due by 11:59pm Thursday 9/1

Friday, 9/2 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 3: RESPONDING TO THE ABSURD

Tuesday, 9/6 – Read **Albert Camus,** *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Thursday, 9/8 – Read **Jami Attenberg**, "Is Resilience Overrated?" *NYTimes* Aug 19, 2020

Quiz 2 due by 11:59pm Thursday 9/8

Friday, 9/9 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

Second Paper Assignment Posted; due 11:59pm on Sunday, September 18 (500-700 words)

WEEK 4: EPISTEMOLOGY- THE BASICS

Tuesday, 9/13 – Read **Jennifer Nagel**, *Knowledge; A Very Short Introduction,* Chapter 4, An Analysis of Knowledge

Thursday, 9/15 – No Lecture- Professor away

Friday, 9/16 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

Second Paper Due via Canvas Submission by 11:59pm on Sunday, September 18 (500-700 words)

WEEK 5: SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Tuesday, 9/20 – Read **John Hardwig** (1985) "Epistemic Dependence", *The Journal of Philosophy* 82, 7, pp 335-349

Thursday, 9/22 – Read **C. Thi Nguyen (2020)** – "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles"

Third Paper Assignment Posted; due Sunday Oct 9, 11:59pm

Friday, 9/23 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 6: FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

Tuesday, 9/27 – Read **Emily Bazelon** (Oct 13, 2020) "Free Speech Will Save Our Democracy- The First Amendment in the Disinformation Age" *New York Time*

Thursday, 9/29 – Continue Nguyen and Bazelon

Friday, 9/30 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 7: WRITING WEEK

Tuesday, 10/4 – No Reading- Writing day

Thursday, 10/6 – No Reading- Writing day

Friday, 10/7 – TBD

Third Paper Assignment Due via Canvas Submission by 11:59pm Sunday, Oct 9 11:59pm

WEEK 8: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Tuesday, 10/11 – Euthyphro, Divine Command Theory

Thursday, 10/13 – Mill, Kant

Friday, 10/14 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 9: FREE WILL AND DETERMINISM

Tuesday, 10/18 – Read **D'Holbach,** Of the System of Man's Free Agency

Thursday, 10/20 – Reading TBD

Fourth Paper Assignment Posted, Due Sunday Nov 6, 11:59pm

Friday, 10/21 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 10: FREE WILL- BEYOND DETERMINISM

Tuesday, 10/25 – Read **Richard Taylor,** "Libertarianism: Defense of Free Will" (from Pojman, Louis P. ed. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings* 3rd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 2004)

Thursday, 10/27 – Read **Daniel Dennett**, "I Could Not Have Done Otherwise- So What?"**,** *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 81, No. 10, (Oct., 1984), pp. 553-565.

Friday, 10/28 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 11: WRITING WEEK

Tuesday, 11/1 – No Reading- Writing day
Thursday, 11/3 – No Reading- Writing day
Friday, 11/4 – *TBD*

Fourth Paper Assignment Due via Canvas Submission by 11:59pm Sunday, Nov 6 11:59pm

WEEK 12: THE SELF AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Tuesday, 11/8 – **Reading TBD**

Thursday, 11/10 – **Reading TBD**

Friday, 11/11 – *Holiday; no discussion sections*

WEEK 13: THE SELF AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Tuesday, 11/15 – Reading TBD

Thursday, 11/17 – **Reading TBD**

Friday, 11/18 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 14: THANKSGIVING- CATCH-UP DAYS

Tuesday, 11/21 – **Catch-up Day (no lecture)**

Thursday, 11/24 – *No Class (Thanksgiving)*

Friday, 11/25 – *No Class (Thanksgiving)*

WEEK 15: VIRTUE AND THE MEANINGS OF LIVES

Tuesday, 11/29 – 2 Readings: i) **Goswami**, *Intro to Virtue Ethics*, Aristotle (2019)
ii) **Aristotle**, *The Nicomachean Ethics, Book II* (pp 23-37) [pages 68-82 of pdf]

Thursday, 12/1 – Read **Susan Wolf**, The Meanings of Lives (2007)

Friday, 12/2 – *Discussion of the Week's Readings*

WEEK 16: COURSE WRAP

Tuesday, 12/6 – Read **Aristotle**, The Nicomachean Ethics, Book I (excerpts only)

Fifth Paper Assignment (Short Paper) Due Wednesday Dec 7, 11:59pm