

Introduction to Philosophy (PHI2010)
Spring 2023

Instructor: Dr Stewart Duncan

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Class Meetings

In a typical week you will attend three class meetings, two lectures and one discussion section. Lectures are on Tuesdays and Thursday, period 3 (9:35–10:25am) in Turlington 2319.

Discussion sections are on Fridays. Section 15932 meets period 3 (9:35–10:25am) in Matherly 0018; section 5933 meets period 4 (10:40–11:30am) in McCarty A 3194; and section 15934 meets period 6 (12:50–1:40pm) in Weimer 1084. You must attend the discussion section for which you have registered.

Canvas and Email

There is a Canvas page for the class. This syllabus and some of the assigned readings are posted there. It is where you will submit your papers, and where you will find paper comments and information about grades. Dr Duncan will post his lecture notes or slides there after each class. Additional information about the class may be posted in the announcements section.

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

Goals, Objectives, and General Education

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 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.

PHI2010 is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program, a General Education Core Course in Humanities, and a UF Writing Requirement 4000 Course.

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.

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

Humanities General Education classes share three learning outcomes.

- Content. Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.
- Critical thinking. Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.
- Communication. Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

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

This course confers 4000 words towards the Writing Requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive an overall course grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. (Standards for satisfactory completion are described in the Assessment section below.)

Books

There are three required books for the class.

- Torin Alter and Robert J. Howell, *The God Dialogues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN 9780195395594, list price \$29.99.
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), ISBN 9780872201774, list price \$17.00.
- John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), ISBN 9780915144532, list price \$12.00.

Other assigned reading will be posted on or linked from Canvas.

Assessment: Papers (70%)

There will be three paper assignments. Each paper should be between 1370 and 1500 words long. The papers together will count for 70% of your grade for the course. Each paper will count equally towards that 70%.

For each assignment, you will have a choice of two topics. Those topics will be made available two weeks before papers are due. All papers must be submitted on Canvas.

Due dates for all three papers can be found on the schedule below.

Any papers submitted late without a good excuse will be penalized. Papers submitted on the deadline day, but after the appropriate time, and papers submitted the next day, will be penalized three points (on a 100-point scale). Papers submitted after that will be penalized a further three points for each extra day they're late.

No papers will be accepted after the last day of classes (more precisely, after 5:00pm on Wednesday 4/26/23). If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a grade of zero for it.

To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. In this class, satisfactory

completion of the writing component will require an average grade of C (70.0) or higher for the three papers.

Graded papers will be returned on Canvas within two weeks of their submission. Grades will be accompanied by comments. These comments will refer to the standards in the paper grading rubric below, and will include feedback with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

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

Students will find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page (<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio>).

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

Assessment: Final exam (20%)

The final exam will be held on Monday 5/1/23, from 3:00 to 5:00pm, in our usual lecture room, Turlington 2319. The final exam will count for 20% of your grade for the course.

Essay questions on the final exam will be drawn from longer lists of review questions, which will be posted on Canvas on Tuesday 4/18/23.

The exam is an individual assignment. During the exam, you may not use any books, notes, or other sources of outside information.

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

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

Assessment: Quizzes (10%)

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

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

There will be ungraded quizzes in the second week of the semester (the week of Monday 1/16/23) to allow you to check that your clicker setup is working properly. At all times during the semester, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have your clicker software with you, and it is working properly. Makeup quizzes will not be given for technical problems or forgotten devices, or because you have not set up your clicker software properly.

Starting on Tuesday 1/24/23, there will be two graded quizzes in every class meeting. Typically, the first quiz will be soon after the start of class, and the second will be at the end of class, but they may be at other times. For each question, you will receive two points for a correct answer, one for an incorrect answer, and zero for not answering.

Although attendance is not graded as such, these are in-class assignments, for which you will only receive credit if you are present in class. To ensure everyone taking the quiz is present in the room, we will use the geolocation feature in the clicker software, and may take attendance to check that everyone taking the quiz is actually present.

You will receive a quiz grade for each class from Tuesday 1/24/23. Your three lowest quiz scores will be dropped. The remaining scores will each count equally towards your quiz grade.

Make-up quizzes will only be given if you have an appropriate excuse. These excuses usually ought to be documented. Absences will only be excused only for the acceptable reasons stated in the UF attendance policy.

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

Grading Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies, which can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

All assignments will be given a numerical grade. At the end of the semester, your overall numerical grade will be calculated, based on your grades for and the relative weights of the assignments. This numerical grade will be converted to a letter grade using the table below.

Table 1. Numerical grades, letter grades, and GPA points

Numerical grade (n)	Letter grade	GPA
$90.0 \leq n \leq 100$	A	4.0
$86.7 \leq n < 90.0$	A-	3.67
$83.3 \leq n < 86.7$	B+	3.33
$80.0 \leq n < 83.3$	B	3.0
$76.7 \leq n < 80.0$	B-	2.67
$73.3 \leq n < 76.7$	C+	2.33
$70.0 \leq n < 73.3$	C	2.0
$66.7 \leq n < 70.0$	C-	1.67
$63.3 \leq n < 66.7$	D+	1.33
$60.0 \leq n < 63.3$	D	1.0
$56.7 \leq n < 60.0$	D-	0.67
$0 \leq n < 56.7$	E	0

Current UF policies for assigning grade points may be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

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.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Electronic Devices

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

- You will use a phone or other electronic device to take the clicker quizzes.
- You may use an electronic device to make a permitted recording. If you plan to do this, be sure to review the information about UF policy (and related law) at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/code-change-faq/>.
- You may only use electronic devices for other purposes if you have Dr Duncan's explicit written permission. If you believe that you ought to be allowed to use a laptop or tablet in class for purposes other than recording (e.g., to take notes) please email Dr Duncan about this.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

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

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

Paper Grading Rubric

Several related criteria are used to evaluate your papers.

Topic. Most basically, you must answer the question, including all parts of the question. Beyond this, you need to show good judgment in choosing what material to include and what to exclude.

Structure. Your paper overall should have a structure that is clear and easy to follow. Moreover, there should be clear and appropriate connections between the parts, including the parts of arguments.

Accuracy. When explaining the views of others, you should do so accurately. When one might reasonably disagree over what interpretation to offer, you will present an interpretation that is plausible and supported by relevant evidence.

Creativity. Ideally you will present and discuss the material in a way that shows a contribution of your own, beyond the material in the classes and readings. (This, like all other criteria, should be understood in a way appropriate to the level of the class.)

Evidence and argument. You should offer good reasons for the claims you make. This includes citing relevant texts as evidence and arguing in a way that is logically well-structured.

Fairness. Your paper should represent other views fairly, and try to understand what the best reasons for those views are, even if you disagree strongly with them.

Language. Your paper should contain no errors of grammar or spelling. The sentences themselves should be clear to read, and relate to each other in sensible ways. The paper should be divided appropriately into paragraphs (and may also be divided into sections with headings).

An A paper will score highly on all of these criteria.

A B paper will typically score well on most of these criteria, but not all of them. So it will answer all of the question, offer reasons for its claims, and be clearly written. Often, however, it will be less creative or original in its claims, and offer weaker reasons for them (such as less relevant textual evidence, or less well constructed arguments).

A C paper may fail more dramatically at one of the criteria (say by not answering all of the question) or be weaker all round. D and E papers will have the same problems to a higher degree.

Schedule

Section 1. Philosophy of Religion. Weeks 1–5.

- Tuesday 1/10/23. Introductory lecture.
- Thursday 1/12/23. Religion and morality. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 1.
- Friday 1/13/23. Discussion section 1
- Tuesday 1/17/23. Design arguments. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 2.
- Thursday 1/19/23. Cosmological arguments. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 4. Topics for paper 1 available.
- Friday 1/20/23. Discussion section 2
- Tuesday 1/24/23. Ontological arguments. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 5.
- Thursday 1/26/23. Sacred texts and reports of miracles. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 6.
- Friday 1/27/23. Discussion section 3
- Tuesday 1/31/23. The problem of evil (1). Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 7.

- Thursday 2/2/23. The problem of evil (2). Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 7. **Paper 1 is due by the start of class.**
- Friday 2/3/23. Discussion section 4.
- Tuesday 2/7/23. Pascal's wager. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 8.
- Thursday 2/9/23. Faith. Reading: *God Dialogues*, chapter 9.
- Friday 2/10/23. Discussion section 5.

Section 2. Meaning, Value, and the Self. Weeks 6–9.

- Tuesday 2/14/23. Meaningfulness. Reading: Susan Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives" (available on Canvas).
- Thursday 2/16/23. Happiness. Reading: Émilie Du Châtelet, "Discourse on Happiness" (available on Canvas). Topics for paper 2 available.
- Friday 2/17/23. Discussion section 6.
- Tuesday 2/21/23. Pleasure. Reading: Joel Kupperman, "Myth One" (available on Canvas).
- Thursday 2/23/23. Utilitarianism: Reading: Julia Driver, "Classical Utilitarianism" (available on Canvas).
- Friday 2/24/23. Discussion section 7.
- Tuesday 2/28/23. Absurdity. Reading: Thomas Nagel, "The Absurd" (available on Canvas).
- Thursday 3/2/23. Personal identity (1). Reading: *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, The First Night. **Paper 2 is due by the start of class.**
- Friday 3/3/23. Discussion section 8.
- Tuesday 3/7/23. Personal identity (2). Reading: *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, The Second Night.
- Thursday 3/9/23. Personal identity (3). Reading: *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, The Third Night.
- Friday 3/10/23. Discussion section 9.

Spring break is the week of Monday 3/13/23.

Section 3. History of Political Philosophy: Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Weeks 10–13.

- Tuesday 3/21/23. Materialism and motivation. Reading: the early chapters of *Leviathan*, especially chapters 1, 2, and 6.
- Thursday 3/23/23. Religion and superstition. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapter 12.
- Friday 3/24/23. Discussion section 10.
- Tuesday 3/28/23. The state and laws of nature. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapters 13–15. Topics for paper 3 available.
- Thursday 3/30/23. Sovereignty and authority. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapters 16–20, especially 17–18.
- Friday 3/31/23. Discussion section 11.

- Tuesday 4/4/23. Liberty. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapter 21.
- Thursday 4/6/23. The role of women in Hobbes's political view. Reading: Susanne Sreedhar, "Hobbes on 'The Woman Question'" (available on Canvas).
- Friday 4/7/23. Discussion section 12.
- Tuesday 4/11/23. Politics and religion: miracles. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapter 37. **Paper 3 is due by the start of class.**
- Thursday 4/13/23. Politics and religion: established churches. Reading: *Leviathan*, chapter 39 and "A Review and Conclusion".
- Friday 4/15/23. Discussion section 13.

Section 4. Zeno's paradoxes. Week 14.

- Tuesday 4/18/23. Zeno's paradoxes (1). Reading: Nick Huggett, "Zeno's Paradoxes (available on Canvas). Review questions for the final exam will be available on Canvas.
- Thursday 4/20/23. Zeno's paradoxes (2). Reading: Nick Huggett, "Zeno's Paradoxes (available on Canvas).
- Friday 4/21/23. Discussion section 14.

Final exam. Week 15 and exam week.

- Tuesday 4/25/23. The last lecture of the semester will be a review class for the final exam.
- Monday 5/1/23. **Final exam.** The exam is from 3:00 to 5:00pm in our usual lecture room, Turlington 2319.