

PHI 2010 INTRO(DUCTION) TO PHILOSOPHY

Summer C 2023

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00am–11:30am, Thursday 10:00am–11:30am, and by appointment.

Course Overview

Course description

The patient and thorough exploration of philosophical questions is an ideal way to develop skills in clear writing and critical thinking. This course introduces the discipline of philosophy with a focus on developing those skills. Most of the semester is devoted three traditional issues: (a) What is knowledge? What can we know? (b) What is free will? Is there reason to think we don't have any free will? (c) What is morality all about? Are there facts about what is morally right and wrong? At the end of the semester, we will more briefly explore some famous questions about happiness and the meaning of life. The emphasis throughout is on writing clearly about such elusive questions and presenting good reasons to endorse one answer over another.

This is an entirely online course. Because there is no regular meeting time during which we all meet to discuss the material, it is especially important to keep up with all assignments, to participate in discussion boards, and to ask for help when needed. While the structure of assignments is designed to ensure that students challenge themselves, it is also designed so as to minimize the amount of stress placed on any particular assignment. Success requires regular and serious effort throughout the semester.

A word of caution: online courses seem to have a reputation for being easier than face-to-face courses. Whatever the source of this reputation, there is a way in which online classes are actually more challenging. In a face-to-face course, since the class has a regular meeting time, those meetings help keep you on track. But in the online environment, it is all too easy to lose focus and get far behind. We strongly recommend that you set up your own regularly scheduled “class times” at home—for reading, watching lectures, doing assignments—and stick to them.

Learning Objectives

The specific learning objectives of this course may be described in terms of the three categories of content, communication and critical thinking as follows.

- *Content.* Students will become familiar with some of the major questions, positions and arguments with respect to some representative philosophical topics, such as knowledge, free will, and morality. Assessed by all aspects of the course.
- *Communication.* Students will become practiced in presenting clearly and effectively ideas that are controversial and often liable to misunderstanding. Assessed by all aspects of the course, but especially the graded writing assignments (Short Writing Assignments and Argumentative Essays).
- *Critical Thinking.* Students will gain skills in reasoning clearly, writing out arguments, anticipating objections, and investigating difficult questions in a conscientious fashion. Assessed by the graded writing assignments (Short Writing Assignments and Argumentative Essays).

General Education Requirement and Objective

PHI 2010 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. <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx> The learning objectives of this course will also satisfy the Humanities Gen Ed SLOs:

- *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.

Writing Requirement credit

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, a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. (More information on UF's Writing Requirement can be found [here](#).)

In this class, whether you get the WR credit will depend on certain aspects of your grades for the Short Writing Assignments and the Argumentative Essays. Those assignments are assessed on several different factors; the two that are plainly relevant for the WR credit are Clarity and Mechanics. To get WR credit for this class, you need to earn at least a C average in the Clarity and Mechanics categories on the assignment rubrics. This average, call it the 'Clarity and Mechanics Average', will be determined by your scores in those categories for all three Argumentative Essays and your two overall highest scoring Short Writing Assignments. The overall rule for getting the Writing Requirement credit is, then, as follows:

In order to get the WR credit, you need both to earn at least a C for the course and to earn at least a C on your Clarity and Mechanics Average—that is, the average of all of the Clarity and Mechanics scores for your two highest scoring Short Writing Assignments and all three Argumentative Essays.

In order to help you keep an eye on whether you are in any danger of not earning the Writing Requirement credit because of a low Clarity and Mechanics Average, we have built into the assignments an 'Informational Item' category with a specific 'assignment' called 'Clarity and Mechanics.' This is not really an assignment, but it is a convenient way to make this information available to you at a glance. The score for this 'assignment' at any given point in the class will be your Clarity and Mechanics Average at that point. We will update it manually after grading each Short Writing Assignment or Argumentative Essay.

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.

Required texts

No book purchases are required, as all readings are made available as PDF files online through the Canvas system. The complete set of readings, with links to each, can be found [here](#).

Course structure:

This course is broken up into five units as follows:

1. Introduction to Philosophy and Argumentation (2 sections)
2. Knowledge and Skepticism (3 sections)
3. Free Will (4 sections)
4. Meta-Ethics (4 sections)
5. Happiness and Meaning (2 sections)

The first and last units are shorter, lasting no longer than two weeks each. The course is organized so that the introductory and concluding units are not as much work as the middle three, which is where you will do most of the hard work.

Each section (lasting at most one week) is designated by a number indicating the unit and the week in that unit; for example, '3.4' is the fourth section in the third unit. Some of the assignments and materials associated with a particular section are named using that same convention; for example, 'Comprehension Quiz 2.2' is the Comprehension Quiz for section 2 of unit 2.

For most sections there are some assigned readings (available as PDFs) and video lectures commenting on the readings, providing background information, or the like. Nearly every video lecture is accompanied by a downloadable PDF file ('Slides and Notes') which includes all the PowerPoint slides used in the lecture and a set of notes on those slides corresponding roughly to the recorded lecture. They are not exact transcripts but can serve as handy notes for review after listening to the recorded lecture. Look for a small 'SN' (for 'Slides & Notes') next to the lecture links; that will link you to the PDF file.

In addition to reading various materials and watching various recorded lectures, assignments include one logic exercise for section 1.2, five unit tests, required participation through group discussions for each section, and two kinds of graded writing assignments: Short Writing Assignments and longer Argumentative Essays ('SWAs' and 'AEs' for short). There are a total of *four* SWAs and *three* AEs. Each SWA is between 300 and 500 words, and each AE is between 1000 and 1500 words, for a minimum of 4200 words of formal writing.

There is also a mandatory Syllabus Review Quiz that you must take and pass before moving on in the class. Passing requires a perfect score, but you are allowed to retake the quiz as often as you need to pass. You will not be able to access any of the assignments until you pass that quiz, so you want to review the syllabus

and take that test as early as you can.

The Argumentative Essays are worth the most in determining your course grade; you are expected to put serious time and effort into these. In order to make that possible, those units that require an AE include a special 'Essay Week.' No new materials are introduced during an Essay Week; instead, your main job is to work on that essay. Each such week includes a special Essay Week discussion board which you are encouraged (but not required) to use in ways that should help you come up with ideas for your Argumentative Essay.

Finally, there is a kind of very short Comprehension Quiz for each section with new material. These quizzes are optional and they don't affect your grade at all, but they should help you in checking your understanding and preparing for the later unit test.

Schedule and regular routine:

While you should pay attention to the detailed schedule on Canvas to make sure you are on track throughout the semester, the course is designed to follow a regular pattern insofar as possible. During a regular week (one that isn't an Essay Week) the routine is roughly as follows:

- **Monday and Tuesday:** Read & watch assigned material.
- **Wednesday:** Discussion board: contribute an appropriate question before 11:59 PM. Discuss those questions with your classmates.
- **Thursday:** Vote on Questions: use the 'like' function to indicate which questions you most want to see addressed.
- **Friday:** The question most liked in each group by Friday morning is selected for review by the prof. When assigned: Unit Test opens up at 12:00 PM on Friday.
- **NEXT Monday:** When assigned: Unit Test due before 11:59 PM When assigned: SWA due before 11:59 PM

During an *Essay Week*, the routine is:

- **Monday:** Unit Test due before 11:59 PM
- **Tuesday–Friday:** Brainstorm and draft work on your Argumentative Essay. Use the Essay Week discussion board to request and suggest ideas, objections, responses, etc. with your classmates (citing them when you use any of their ideas).
- **Thursday & Friday:** **Recommended: begin reading and watching the assignment material for the first section of the next unit.**
- **Next Monday:** Argumentative Essay due before 11:59 PM!

(For an explanation of the various tasks mentioned in the charts above, see the information on assignments below.)

Break Week. The week of 6/26–6/30 is a break week for this class! If you like you may use it as opportunity to get ahead of the remaining course work or simply to take some time to breathe and relax. The week following the break is an essay week, so I do recommend using this time to work on your essays and that unit's test.

Notes on the first weeks for Units 1, 3, and 4:

- For most of the course, each week other than a special Essay Week will cover a single section (e.g., 2.1) and require you to contribute a question to your group's discussion board by the Wednesday of that week. Because the Summer C semester is about three course weeks shorter than a typical schedule, the material in these weeks needs to be condensed and covered in fewer days. For these weeks, there will be one discussion board to cover two sections of the relevant units. You should use these discussion

boards to ask questions about either or both sections. This does not require you to cover both sections during that first week, but it is a chance for you to get ahead. To help make things easier, I will allow you to submit a question from the second section during the discussion board that would normally be designated for the third section. For example, the first week discussion board will allow you to submit a question on either (or both) section 3.1 or (and) 3.2; the following week's board—which would normally be dedicated to section 3.3—can be written on either (or both) section 3.2 or (and) 3.3.

- For the first week of class (the first and only week for Unit 1), the discussion board will open on Friday, and you will have the weekend to complete it. However, before you are able to submit a question, you must submit the required logic exercise (see more on this in the course requirements and information on assignments pages of the syllabus). Each student must submit a question by the end of the day Saturday (5/20) and vote on a preferred submission by the end of the day Sunday (5/21).
- The test for this unit will also not be due until Tuesday of the following week (05/22) to allow more time with the material.
- For the first week of Units 3 and 4, the discussion boards will open Wednesday like normal. However, to allow more time to digest the material, each student must submit their question by the end of the day that Thursday and vote on an answer by noon on that Friday. Because these weeks are preceded by essay weeks, it is recommended that you begin reading and watching the assigned material for the next unit. Doing so will allow you to keep close to the rough routine I represented in the first chart above and retain a regular weekly schedule as best you can.
- An additional change is that the Comprehension Quizzes for those units will be adjusted so that you have time to take them if you choose to do so; the final quizzes for those units will be closed the Friday before the test (I recommend you do, of course.)

IMPORTANT:

Your two lowest scoring Short Writing Assignments are dropped for the purpose of determining your course grade. However, we take into account your two highest scoring Short Writing Assignments after each Short Writing Assignment or Argumentative Essay. This means that a Clarity and Mechanics score for a Short Writing Assignment will figure into the Clarity and Mechanics average until you receive two higher overall scores, at which point the averages for those higher scoring Short Writing Assignments will be used.

- Case 1: Suppose you turn in Short Writing Assignment 2.1 and earn a decent but not stellar grade. Your Clarity and Mechanics Average for that assignment will be part of your overall Clarity and Mechanics average until it becomes one of your two lowest overall Short Writing Assignment scores. At that point – once you've received two SWAs with higher overall grades – the Clarity and Mechanics Average for SWA 2.1 will no longer be calculated into your overall Clarity and Mechanics Average, which will be shown in the Clarity and Mechanics category in the Canvas gradebook.
- Case 2: Suppose you don't turn in SWA 2.1. We will not calculate a Clarity and Mechanics Average for you until we have scores for those categories. In other words, your average will not be updated until after a required assignment has been graded, such as Argumentative Essay 2.3. However, if you fail to submit three or more Short Writing Assignments, a 0 for Clarity and Mechanics will be factored into the average for each missed Short Writing Assignment over and above the two that we drop.

Course Requirements and Grading

Expectations

As a student in this class, you are of course expected to read the assigned papers, watch the assigned lectures, complete assignments and participate in group discussions. In addition, however, you are also expected to:

- be familiar with all policies and requirements as set out in the Complete Course Syllabus

- be aware of all deadlines throughout the semester
- stay informed by keeping up with all announcements made on the Canvas site
- maintain academic integrity in all of your work—or risk failing the entire course
- be respectful of your classmates, even when engaged in lively critical dialogue with them
- inform the instructor promptly of any emergencies or problems that will affect your ability to do what is needed in the course ask questions and seek help when you need it

If you do these things and make a serious effort, you should be able to do well in the course, especially if you are willing to seek help when you need it. It is important to understand, though, that a grade is meant to record how well you have in fact demonstrated the skills and knowledge the class is supposed to instill; it is not in itself a reward for effort.

Grade determination

The course grade is determined by the following factors with the indicated percentages:

Kind of assignment	# assigned	% of course grade
Syllabus Review Quiz	1	Must pass to move on
Comprehension Quizzes (optional)	12	N/A
Logic Exercise (1.2 only)	1	5%
Unit Tests	5	15%
Participation (Questions & Group Discussion)	11	20%
Short Writing Assignments (SWAs)	4	25%
Argumentative Essays (AEs)	3	35%

As you can see from the above, the grades for the Short Writing Assignments and Argumentative Essays matter most in determining your overall course grade. Do not take these lightly; many students are surprised at how difficult it can be to write well about a philosophical issue. Because we recognize this challenge, your two overall lowest scoring SWAs are dropped from calculating the SWA portion of your grade.

Grade scale

The grade scale is different from what you are surely used to seeing. Instead of using a scale where an A starts at 92% or 94% or the like, the grading scale in this class is based on the 4-point scale for letter grade values, where an A is worth 4 points, an A- is 3.67 points, and so on. Since Canvas uses percentages for grades, the 4-point scale is translated into percentages to get the following scale.

Grade Scale	Grade Value	Grade Scale	Grade Value	Grade Scale	Grade Value
100–91.75% = A	A = 4.0	66.74–58.25% = B-	B- = 2.67	33.24–25% = D+	D+ = 1.33
91.74–83.25% = A-	A- = 3.67	58.24–50% = C+	C+ = 2.33	24.9–16.75% = D	D = 1.00
83.24–75% = B+	B+ = 3.33	49.9–41.75% = C	C = 2.00	16.74–8.25% = D-	D- = 0.67
74.9–66.75% = B	B = 3.00	41.74–33.25% = C-	C- = 1.67	8.24–0 = E	E = 0.00

(For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicregulations/grades-grading-policies/>.)

Don't let yourself be confused by this scale! If you see that you earned, say, a 68% on an assignment, don't immediately think that this means you earned a poor grade; a 68% counts as a B. The grades are not curved; they are just determined using this not very familiar scale. For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: [this page](#).

In evaluating particular assignments, we generally use the following way of assigning points:

Excellent	Good	Adequate	Minimal	Unacceptable
4	3	2	1	0

An assignment might be assessed using several factors, where each factor is evaluated using this system. One assignment that departs from this slightly is the Logic Exercise, which includes a factor that is either correct (1 point) or incorrect (0 points). (See rubric attached at the end of the syllabus for an additional breakdown.)

All of the graded work in this class is assessed using the percentage-to-letters scale given above. Each kind of assignment has its own possible maximum in terms of points. The Logic Exercise has a possible maximum of 5 points; Unit Tests have a possible maximum of 10; Short Writing Assignments have a possible maximum of 12; and Argumentative Essays have a possible maximum of 20 points. In each case, the assignment is first graded as earning a certain number of points; this determines a percentage; and that percentage then determines a letter grade using the scale above.

The course grade is then determined as follows. The percentage grades for all the assignments in a particular category are averaged together to get a percentage grade for that portion of the course; that grade is then figured into the final course grade by multiplying it by the indicated percentage. That result is then added to the results for the other categories to get an overall course percentage, and that percentage then determines the letter grade in accordance with the scale above. Note that when the individual assignments are factored into the grade for that portion of the course, it is the specific percentage, not the letter alone, that is used.

In accordance with UF policy, a grade of C- for the course is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education or College Basic Distribution requirements. Further information on UF's grading policy can be found [here](#).

Policies and resources

Academic honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code in full can be found at sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/. It specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or teaching assistants in this class.

In any academic writing you are obliged to inform the reader of the sources of ideas expressed in your work. Failure to do so is plagiarism. **WE HAVE A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY. CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY MEANS AN AUTOMATIC FAILING GRADE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.** This includes not just plagiarism but any conduct constituting academic dishonesty as defined in the honor code, including prohibited collaboration, prohibited use of resources, and so on. Any act of academic dishonesty is reported to the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s Office prevents students from dropping courses in cases of academic dishonesty. **If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or other academic dishonesty it is your responsibility to get answers. Do not be afraid to ask if you are unsure.**

We are serious about this. If you cheat in any way and are caught, you will fail the course. Cheating is an insult to the professor, the teaching assistants, and your fellow students. It will not be tolerated.

Outside sources

There are many resources out there about philosophy, including on the internet. We cannot stop you from looking at those sources, but we want to strongly discourage you from looking at them. Doing so will probably hurt you more than it can help you. Here’s why.

- The variety of material out there is of very inconsistent quality. While there are many sites with good, informed discussion by people who know what they’re talking about, there are many other sites about which that cannot be said.
- Even if the site you are reading has high quality material on it, there is a good chance it will be more bewildering than enlightening. Without any help in approaching the material, you could end up much more confused than before.
- If you find yourself browsing through the results of a Google search on the philosophical topics under discussion in this class, you may find yourself tempted to make use of ideas you get from what you found without citing them properly. If you do that, however, that will constitute plagiarism, and you then run the risk of getting an automatic failing grade for the course as stressed above. If you refrain from such browsing, you avoid that temptation and risk.
- Even if you are entirely conscientious and cite everything you use that you find from these outside sources, you might be tempted to do something else that, while honest, is definitely not to your advantage. This is the temptation to lean on the ideas of the outside sources without trying to think

through the issues on your own. More precisely, you may be tempted to fill up the paper by explaining someone else's argument, then someone else's objection to it, and then someone else's reply to it, and end with nothing by way of your own contribution. If you write such an essay clearly and show that you understand the issues, it may get a passing grade, but it won't get a good grade. We hope for you to come out of this class with some real skills in both thinking for yourself and being critically rigorous. If you merely assemble other people's ideas, you are not developing those skills.

In light of these reasons, we strongly recommend that you refrain from surfing the net looking for outside help on philosophical issues. If you do look at any outside sources, you must provide appropriate citation, of course. We are not picky about the method of citation, but if you refer to anything that isn't a reading made available here on this Canvas site, you must (1) refer to that source wherever in your own essay you make use of it and (2) include in a 'works cited' list information on the author(s), title, publisher, and date of publication. If it is an online source you must provide the URL. For more information on how cite properly, see the resources for basic writing assistance.

Drafts of written work

While you are working on your SWAs and AEs, you may wonder if we are willing to review your rough drafts. The answer is that we will not look at such drafts, but we are willing to discuss the drafts with you. You can come to office hours with your own draft and/or notes in hand and talk through with us what you hope to say, how you hope to defend it, and so on. From experience, this seems the most fruitful way for us to help you in the process of writing your papers, in contrast to reviewing rough drafts.

Basic writing assistance

Students will also find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page ([which you can find here](#)), including a link to an electronic version of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>), the recommended style manual for this course.

Another very useful resource is Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, also known as the 'OWL.' It is especially good for getting detailed information on how to cite sources properly. You can find it [here](#).

Make-up policy

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>.

Disability accommodations

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.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

Support services

You should be aware that UF provides counseling and other kinds of help for students in distress. You can call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center at **352-392-1575** and see their website at <https://counseling.ufl.edu>.

The “U Matter, We Care” program provides resources for everyone in the UF community. See the website at umatter.ufl.edu/. Students can contact umatter@ufl.edu seven days a week for assistance for students in distress. There is also a phone number for this program: **(352) 294-CARE**.

Online courtesy

While our interactions are online, remember that there are real people at the other end of the internet connection. You are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

In this class it is especially important that you treat others with respect. Your task is to be a good listener and help evaluate ideas and arguments, not to attack or evaluate people. Philosophy is not a matter of combat between people; we are all engaged in a cooperative effort to achieve understanding, and while that may mean letting the ideas fight among themselves, so to speak, it does not require that we fight with each other.

You should be vigorous and engaged in your online discussions with your fellow students, and that includes being critical of the things they say. But you should keep those critical remarks relevant and polite. And remember that you can help as well as criticize: you may note that an argument has a problematic premise, point this out, and then suggest a better one to replace it!

Discussion boards are lightly monitored to watch out for any cases in which the critical back-and-forth degrades into name-calling or other inappropriate behavior. If personal conflicts arise between students in the same group we may move students from one group to another to get around the problem. If you have problems with people in your group, you should feel free to contact the instructor about your concerns.

Technical support for PHI2010 online

General technology support

The course website is hosted on Canvas, the dedicated e-learning environment for the University of Florida. You need to log in to Canvas here: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

If you have questions regarding Canvas, your internet connection, or any other technology used to support or deliver this online course, please do not contact your instructors or TA. Instead, please contact the UF Help Desk through one of the following:

- Email: Learning-support@ufl.edu
- Web: helpdesk.ufl.edu
- Phone: **(352) 392-HELP (4357)**

For the make-up policy regarding issues due to technological problems, see the general make-up policy.

There are several resources online that provide guidance in using Canvas. In particular,

- [Canvas Student Orientation](#).
- [Canvas Student Guide](#).
- [Canvas Guides](#).

Be sure that your notifications preferences are appropriately set. See the [Notification Help](#) page for students. It is recommended that you have the notifications for announcements and invitations be set for “Notify me right away.”

Other resources aimed at students taking UF courses from a distance are available at <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/>.

In addition, there is a General UF Resources page that includes many resources relevant to online learning.

Virtual office hours

To use virtual office hours, take a look at the links on the left margin of the course website. You’ll see one called “Zoom Conferences”. When we hold office hours, we create a “conference” through this feature and invite everyone in the class. This invitation means that you can “join” the conference electronically and interact with us online. Several people can meet at once.

When office hours are being held and a conference is set up in this way, there are three ways for you to join electronically. (1) An email will be sent to your UF email address via Canvas announcing the Zoom Meeting. Once you open this email, you can click on the link following “Join URL.” (2) The meeting will also appear as an event on your e-learning calendar with a link to the conference that you can click on. (3) You can also go directly to Canvas and click on the link to the left that says “Zoom Conferences.” Make sure that “Upcoming Meetings” is blue, then find an ongoing meeting under “Topic” during scheduled office hours. Click “Join.”

When joining a conference, a window browser will open with the Zoom meeting, and you’ll then have to choose whether to use your computer or your phone for audio.

Announcements and archive

When you log in to Canvas, you should see any and all announcements from your online class sites. If there is a new announcement you have not read, make sure you read it! That may seem obvious, but we want to emphasize doing this so that you keep on top of the course. Announcements might include information that you really don’t want to miss out on. For instance, if we hear that a particular assignment is causing confusion among students, we may post an announcement clarifying that assignment. They may also include links to additional materials designed to help you do better in this class. So be sure to pay attention to those announcements.

Instead of having announcements linger on the “announcements” page for the entire term, after a few days or so announcements will be removed. Some announcements will include things that you will want to be able to go back to later, however, such as links to samples of good student work that we provide to you during the term or documents that provide additional comments on the material to improve everyone’s understanding. A separate discussion board called “Links Archive” is maintained where that material is stored for the entire term so you can return to it at any point later in the course.

Accessing in-text comments on written work

Here’s what you should do to see the “in-text” (or “inline”) feedback on those assignments:

1. Click on the Assignments tab located on the left of the Canvas website
2. Select the Short Writing Assignment or Argumentative Essay you would like to view.
3. You will see a screen with a link “Submission Details” on the right. Click on that.
4. On the next screen you will see a link (upper right corner) that says “View Feedback.” Click on that.
5. You will then have a preview of the graded work with our in-text comments. You can look at it there or download it, using the link on the upper left corner. We recommend downloading it and opening it separately; it should be much easier to read that way. The download will be a PDF file with the comments. (Make sure you are able to view comments in your PDF reader.)

For additional help on seeing the in-text comments can be found here: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10542-4212352349>.

Table 1: Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to Philosophy and Argumentation	<p>Readings: Beardsley & Beardsley, “What is Philosophy?”; Plato <i>Laches</i>; Cornman, Lehrer, and Pappas, “Tools of the Trade”</p> <p>Assignments: Logic Exercise (05/19); Discussion Board (05/20)</p>
Week 2	Knowledge & Skepticism	<p>Readings: Haack, “Epistemology, Who Needs It?”; Pollock, “A Brain in a Vat?”; Descartes, “Meditation 1”</p> <p>Assignments: Unit 1 Test (05/23); Discussion Board (05/24)</p>
Week 3	Knowledge & Skepticism	<p>Readings: Moore, “Certainty”; Smith, “Moore and Descartes Meet in a Bar”</p> <p>Assignments: Short Writing Assignment 2.1 (05/29); Discussion Board (05/31)</p>
Week 4	Knowledge & Skepticism (Essay Week)	<p>Readings: None</p> <p>Assignments: Unit 2 Test (06/05)</p>
Week 5	Free Will	<p>Readings: d’Holbach, “Of the System of Man’s Free Agency”; Hobart, “Free Will as Involving Determination and Inconceivable Without it”</p> <p>Assignments: Argumentative Essay 2.3 (06/12); Discussion Board (06/15)</p>
Week 6	Free Will	<p>Readings: Foot, “Free Will as Involving Determinism”</p> <p>Assignments: SWA 3.2 (06/19) Discussion Board (06/21)</p>
Week 7	BREAK WEEK	BREAK WEEK
Week 8	Free Will (Essay Week)	<p>Readings: None</p> <p>Assignments: Unit 3 Test (07/03)</p>

Week 9	Meta-Ethics	<p>Readings: Corvino, “The Fact/Opinion Distinction”; Satris, “Student Relativism”</p> <p>Assignments: Argumentative Essay 3.4 (07/10); Discussion Board (07/13)</p>
Week 10	Meta-Ethics	<p>Readings: Harman, “Ethics and Observation”; Bennett, “The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn”; Hills, “Faultless Moral Disagreement”</p> <p>Assignments: SWA 4.3 (07/17); Discussion Board (07/19)</p>
Week 11	Meta-Ethics (Essay Week)	<p>Readings: None</p> <p>Assignments: Unit 4 Test (07/24)</p>
Week 12	Happiness & Meaning	<p>Readings: Parfit, “What Makes Someone’s Life Go Best?”; Nozick, “The Experience Machine”; Aristotle, <i>Nichomachean Ethics</i></p> <p>Assignments: Argumentative Essay 4.4 (07/31); Discussion Board (08/02)</p>
Week 13	Happiness & Meaning	<p>Readings: Wolf, “The Meaning of Life?”</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board (08/09); Unit 5 Test (08/13); SWA 5.2 (05/13)</p>

Table 2: Grading Rubric

Criteria	4 pts	3 pts	2pts	1pts	0pts
Comprehension	The response to the prompt is definitely plausible; The response to the prompt shows significant insight into the issues relevant to the prompt; There are no significant misunderstandings of the relevant issues or texts.	The response to the prompt is definitely plausible; There are no significant misunderstandings of the relevant issues or texts.	The response to the prompt is not definitely plausible, but it is understandable how someone with a decent understanding of the relevant issues or texts could propose that response; There is no more than one significant misunderstanding of the relevant issues or texts.	The response to the prompt is definitely not plausible, seeming to be based in some confusion or lack of attention; There is evidence of some non-trivial understanding of the relevant issues or texts despite significant confusion as well.	The response simply does not address the prompt; the basic directions were not followed; The response to the prompt is definitely not plausible, seeming to be based in some confusion or lack of attention; There is no evidence of understanding of the relevant issues or texts beyond a trivial level.
Clarity	There are no points at which it is difficult to understand both what is being said and why; The text is focused and organized; The text is efficient, lacking extraneous filler or irrelevant material.	There are no points at which it is difficult to understand both what is being said and why; The text is focused and organized.	There is at most one point at which it is difficult to understand both what is being said and why; While the text may lack some focus, it is possible to relate most parts of it to the main points being made.	There are several points at which it is not possible to understand, without significant effort, both what is being said and why; The text has some discernible organization.	There are several points at which it is not possible to understand, without strenuous effort beyond what any reader should be expected to make, both what is being said and why.
Mechanics	There are no egregious mechanical errors; There are only a few moderate mechanical errors, if any.	There are no egregious mechanical errors; There are some moderate mechanical errors but not so many as to be a distraction to the reader.	There are at most two egregious mechanical errors; There are some moderate mechanical errors but not so many as to be a distraction to the reader.	There are at most four egregious mechanical errors; There are many moderate mechanical errors, but they do not affect the majority of the text.	There are four or more egregious mechanical errors; A majority of the text is afflicted with moderate mechanical errors.

Table 3: Grading Rubric Cont.

Criteria	4 pts	3 pts	2pts	1pts	0pts
Thesis Support	There is an easily located thesis in the essay that takes an evaluative position towards one of the topics in the prompt; The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument; The argument is appropriate and relevant to the main thesis; The argument is original to the student author and not just a rehash of an argument presented in readings or lecture; The argument has significant merit.	There is an easily located thesis in the essay that takes an evaluative position towards one of the topics in the prompt; The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument; The argument is appropriate and relevant to the main thesis; While the argument may be mostly a matter of using ideas in the readings and lectures, it makes use of those ideas in an intelligent way; The argument has some merit.	There is an easily located thesis in the essay that takes an evaluative position towards one of the topics in the prompt; The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument; The argument is appropriate and relevant to the main thesis; While the argument may be mostly a matter of using ideas in the readings and lectures, it makes use of those ideas in an intelligent way; The argument has some merit but would have been significantly better if more seriously developed.	There is an easily located thesis in the essay that takes an evaluative position towards one of the topics in the prompt; The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument; The argument can, with some effort, be seen as relevant to the main thesis, even if only partially or in a confused way; The argument might have some merit if more seriously developed.	Either there is no discernible argument for any appropriate main thesis or any such argument is so lacking in merit and relevance that it cannot be worked into any argument worth considering.

Table 4: Grading Rubric Cont.

Criteria	4 pts	3 pts	2pts	1pts	0pts
Defense Against Objections	The paper includes consideration of serious potential objections to the thesis of the paper; The considered objections include any that should be obvious to anyone familiar with the material; Objections are addressed at sufficient length as to make clear what the response is supposed to be; The responses are relevant to the objections considered and show a good understanding of the issues at hand; The objections and/or responses exhibit some original thinking; The responses have significant merit.	The paper includes consideration of serious potential objections to the thesis of the paper; The considered objections include any that should be obvious to anyone familiar with the material; Objections are addressed at sufficient length as to make clear what the response is supposed to be; The responses are relevant to the objections considered but may show some lack of understanding of the issues at hand; The objections and/or responses exhibit some original thinking.	The paper includes consideration of serious potential objections to the thesis of the paper; The considered objections include any that should be obvious to anyone familiar with the material; Objections are addressed at sufficient length as to make clear what the response is supposed to be; The responses are at least somewhat relevant to the objections considered, though they show some lack of understanding of the issues at hand; The objections and/or responses exhibit some original thinking.	The paper includes consideration of serious potential objections to the thesis of the paper; The considered objections fails to include one or more objections that should be obvious to anyone familiar with the material; Objections are addressed but not at sufficient length to make clear what the response is supposed to be; The responses are not actually relevant to the objections.	The paper either fails to anticipate any potential objections to its own thesis or there is no serious effort at responding to the objections anticipated; Responses to objections are hasty, careless or entirely without merit.