

PHI3641: Ethics & Innovation

Class#15868; Section 801B
Summer C 2023

INSTRUCTOR

Mr. Marcus Davis
University of Florida
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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays: 9:00AM-10:30AM
Office Location: Griffin-Floyd Hall, Room 303 (Philosophy Department Library)

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: 11:00AM – 12:15PM
Keene-Flint Hall 0111

GENERAL EDUCATION AND WRITING REQUIREMENT

PHI3641 satisfies the Ethics Requirement for the Innovation Minor and satisfies the General Education – Humanities (H) requirement.

Students in this course can earn 2000 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 C or higher for the final course grade as well as a C or higher on the writing component of the course.

COURSE GOALS

This course is designed to familiarize students with some of the ethical issues surrounding innovation as well as some of the psychological and social obstacles to acting ethically. Our focus is somewhat narrow: we discuss some ethical issues arising from current innovations in bioengineering and ethical concerns engendered by social media. We also consider how psychological and social factors inhibit ethical behavior, with an eye towards identifying strategies to combat them.

We begin with some preliminaries to frame our discussions: laying some conceptual groundwork and getting clear on our methodology. We then jump into things and discuss some of the ethical concerns arising from bioengineering, especially germ-line engineering. We next turn to an examination of how psychological (biases and heuristics) and social factors (authority and echo chambers) can affect our ability to act ethically. We then turn to ethical concerns with respect to AI text generating machines (ChatGPT particularly). Finally, we turn to some ethical worries surrounding social media – e.g. concerns about harms done, privacy, and autonomy.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts to purchase for this course. All required readings will be made available as pdfs on Canvas or links in the schedule section of the syllabus.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND RESOURCES

- *On writing well generally*: Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. (Pearson, 1999).
- *On writing a philosophy paper*: Pryor, Jim. "A Brief Guide to Writing a Philosophy paper" (2008).

Both pdfs are available in the 'Writing Information' folder under 'Files' on Canvas.

COURSE WEBSITE

This course is supplemented by online content in the Canvas e-Learning environment. PDF readings, an electronic copy of the syllabus, and assignment submission portals can be found on the course website.

- To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.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 PHI2010 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 or <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.
- Please do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues (I am unlikely to be able to help you!).

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Announcements

Course announcements will be posted on Canvas. You are responsible for checking Canvas at least once a week to make sure that you do not miss important announcements.

Contacting Mr. Davis

Please feel to reach out to me directly by email (lucydavis@ufl.edu) if you have any questions (or would just like to chat about the course).

- Email is the most reliable way to get in touch with me outside of class.
- I make effort to respond to email from students within two (2) business days. Note that emails do sometimes get lost – due to spam filtering, for instance. Please do send me another email or come up to me after class if you do not hear back within two business days.

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

PHI3641 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with key ethical concepts and their application to current and potential future practices. Students will consider technological innovations and become adept at identifying the aspects of such innovations that raise ethical issues. We will consider and critically evaluate arguments for and against certain practices, such as germ-line engineering, through an ethical lens. Finally, PHI3641 delves into some of the psychological and social pressures that inhibit ethical behavior with an eye towards identifying strategies for combatting them and promoting ethical behavior.

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 key ethical concepts, the ability to identify features of a new technology or innovation likely to give rise to ethical issues, and the ability to identify and to anticipate inhibitors of ethical behavior. Evaluation here will mainly consist of quizzes. The COMMUNICATION SLO will be achieved by two papers (approximately 1000-1200 words), a final discussion response, and participation in class. Students will be required to explain various ethical concepts and to apply them in their evaluation of the morality of certain practices or policies. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the CRITICAL THINKING SLO through the papers, which will be on assigned topics designed to test students' critical thinking abilities. Papers will be graded on the bases of a student's comprehension of the relevant issues, development, and cogent defense of her or his position, clarity of expression, and mechanics.

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

- Explain and apply central ethical concepts
 - Apply those concepts to various practices and policies, especially those concerning innovations
 - Analyze, evaluate, construct, and present persuasive arguments for particular ethical positions
 - Identify and describe some inhibitors to ethical behavior.
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ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes (35%)

There will be seven quizzes to take on Canvas in this course, each covering one of the seven major sections of the course, and each worth 5%. Late quizzes will not be accepted, but you can take each quiz up to three times. All quizzes will be due by 11:59PM on their official due date.

Argumentative Essays (55%)

You will write two argumentative essays (AE), each of which will count towards the university writing requirement:

- AE 1 (25%): 1000-1200 words; due 6/25
- AE 2 (30%): 1000-1200 words; due 7/23

Some information about argumentative essays:

- You will need to complete both essay assignments satisfactorily (C or higher) in order to receive credit towards the writing requirement (2000 words).
- Topics and deadlines will be posted on Canvas eleven days before their due date.
- All essay submissions will be done on Canvas.
- No essay will be accepted after its due date except by 24-hour prior arrangement with the instructor. All papers will be due by 11:59PM on their official due date.
- I do not read drafts. However, I am happy to meet with you to discuss the ideas in your essay (as well as provide writing advice) in office hours.
- Essays will be evaluated in accordance with the Writing Assignment Rubric at the end of this syllabus.

Discussion Response (10%)

The final assignment is a typed response (approximately 500 words) to a topic from a provided list of topics. These topics cover every innovation we have considered since the beginning of the term. This assignment is fairly open-ended; the task is to offer additional thoughts, concerns, criticisms, or worries that you did ***not*** discuss in your Argumentative Essays. These responses will be graded as either 'complete' or 'incomplete'.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES

Philosophy is a team sport, and you will perform best in this course if you are present and participate actively in our class. Your attendance and active participation in every class is strongly recommended and the best guarantee of succeeding in the class. However, there is no penalty for missing class. You are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned readings in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect your ability to perform well in this course. If you do attend a class meeting, it will be

assumed you are prepared to participate. If you miss a class meeting, you will still be responsible for all course content and logistical information covered during the class. 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/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

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.

Laptop and cellphone policy

Laptop and cellphone use is prohibited in this class. Please turn off your phone as soon as you enter the classroom.

GRADING SCALE

The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-76=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

Grades that fall exactly on the upper threshold are awarded the higher grade. See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> for more information about UF grading policies.

UF WRITING REQUIREMENT

Students who successfully complete the major writing assignments in this course will earn 2000 words toward the UF Writing Requirement. 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 C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Evaluation of the two argumentative essays in this course will include feedback on grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. These essays will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the writing assessment rubric at the end of this syllabus. Students will find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page (<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>).

For more information on the writing requirement, please see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-requirement.aspx>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COVID-19 Recommendation

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.ufl.edu 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.

Academic Honesty

Please review the following guidelines on academic honesty:

1. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>
2. <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty>

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university.

All sources and assistance used in preparing your papers and presentations must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. The web creates special risks here. Cutting and pasting even a few words from a

web page or paraphrasing material without a reference constitutes plagiarism. If you are not sure how to refer to something you find on the internet, you can always give the URL.

Accommodations 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.

Online Course Evaluation

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/>.

Counseling and wellness/Emergencies

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575;

The University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshop

Read, Think, Write (RTW) days

There will be three scheduled RTW days for this course. These are days that come immediately after Argumentative Essay topics or Discussion Response topics have been released. During these days, we will not hold class so that you may have a day dedicated to rereading the relevant material, thinking about what you will write for your papers/responses, and beginning to write your papers/responses.

SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND READINGS

IMPORTANT: Read all assigned material carefully **before** coming to class. **Make sure to read the article for each class that it is assigned:** i.e. if an article is assigned for more than one class, read it before *each* class during which we will discuss it. Be prepared to bring up any questions or objections you have and to join in a general discussion. This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and via Canvas Announcements.

Introduction and Arguments

M 5/15	Introduction to the course	No readings
W 5/17	Arguments	Cahn, Kitcher, and Sher, <i>The Elements of Argument</i> (from <i>Exploring Philosophy</i>)
F 5/19		(Reread) Cahn, Kitcher, and Sher, <i>The Elements of Argument</i> (from <i>Exploring Philosophy</i>)
M 5/22	Intro to Logic & Fallacies	McCarty, "A Brief Introduction to Logic"
W 5/24		(Reread) McCarty, "A Brief Introduction to Logic"
F 5/26	Review/Discussion	No readings; QUIZ 1 OPENS
Su 5/28		QUIZ 1 DUE

Metaethics

M 5/29	Memorial Day	No classes
W 5/31	Answering Moral Questions	Shafer-Landau, "What is Morality?" & Regan, "How Not to Answer Moral Questions"
F 6/2	The Cultural Differences Argument	Rachels, <i>The Challenge of Cultural Relativism</i> (from <i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>); QUIZ 2 OPENS
Su 6/4		QUIZ 2 DUE

Genetic Enhancement (GE)

M 6/5	In Favor of GE	Savulescu, "New Breeds of Humans: The Moral Obligation to Enhance"
W 6/7		(Reread) Savulescu, "New Breeds of Humans: The Moral Obligation to Enhance"
F 6/9	Against GE	Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"
M 6/12		(Reread) Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection"

W 6/14	How to Write a Philosophy Paper	No readings; ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY 1 TOPICS RELEASE
F 6/16	RTW Day	No classes; QUIZ 3 OPENS
Su 6/18		QUIZ 3 DUE

Obstacles to Acting Ethically

M 6/19	Processes in Decision Making	Rogerson et. al., "Nonrational Processes in Ethical Decision Making"
W 6/21	Obedience	Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience"
F 6/23	Discussion	Ross & Nisbett, "Putting it all together, Stanley Milgram and the Banality of Evil"; QUIZ 4 OPENS
Su 6/25		ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY 1 DUE & QUIZ 4 DUE
6/26-6/30	Summer Break	No classes

ChatGPT

M 7/3	ChatGPT & Understanding	Read OpenAI's description of ChatGPT: https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt & Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs" (excerpts)
W 7/5	Discussion	No readings
F 7/7	Bullshit	Frankfurt, <i>On Bullshit</i> (excerpts)
M 7/10	Contract Cheating	Walker & Townley, "Contract Cheating: a new challenge for academic honesty?"
W 7/12	Discussion	(Recommended) Wilkins, "LSU Faculty, Students Weigh How ChatGPT Will Change College" https://www.govtech.com/education/higher-ed/lsu-faculty-students-weigh-how-chatgpt-will-change-college ; ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY 2 TOPICS RELEASE
F 7/14	RTW Day	No classes; QUIZ 5 OPENS
Su 7/16		QUIZ 5 DUE

Social Media (Harms & Benefits)

M 7/17	The Attention Economy	Castro and Pham, “Is the Attention Economy Noxious?”
W 7/19	Our Attention Spans	Ashrof, “Impact of Social Media on Our Attention Span and its Drastic Aftermath”
F 7/21	Body Image	(WSJ) Hobbs, Barry, and Koh, “‘The Corpse Bride Diet’: How TikTok Inundates Teens with Eating Disorder Videos” & “How Social Media’s Toxic Content sends teens into ‘a dangerous spiral’”
Su 7/23		ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY 2 DUE
M 7/24		“Just how harmful is social media?”
W 7/26	Social Media’s Benefits	“Social Media Use can be Positive for Mental Health and Well-Being”
F 7/28	Discussion	No readings; QUIZ 6 OPENS
Su 7/30		QUIZ 6 DUE

Social Media (Privacy)

M 7/31	Privacy	Orwell, 1984 (Chapter 1)
W 8/2		Santanen, “The Value of Protecting Privacy”
F 8/4	Discussion	Wired, “How Facebook and other Sites Manipulate your Privacy Choices”; DISCUSSION RESPONSE TOPICS RELEASE & QUIZ 7 OPENS
Su 8/6		QUIZ 7 DUE
M 8/7	Conclusion	No readings
W 8/8	RTW Day	No classes
F 8/11		No classes; DISCUSSION RESPONSE DUE

WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A	B	C	D	E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response to the prompt shows significant insight into the issues relevant to the prompt. • All relevant aspects of the material are fully and correctly explained. • The discussion is sensitive and responsive to major potential objections to the student's position found in the relevant course material. • There are no significant misunderstandings of the relevant issues or texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most relevant aspects of the material are fully and correctly explained. • The discussion is generally sensitive and responsive to major potential objections to the student's position found in the relevant material. • There are no significant misunderstandings of the relevant issues or texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many relevant aspects of the material are fully and correctly explained • The discussion is somewhat sensitive and responsive to major potential objections to the student's position found in the relevant material • There is no more than one significant misunderstanding of the relevant issues or texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some relevant aspects of the material are fully and correctly explained, but the discussion also seems 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 discussion is only minimally sensitive to major potential objections to the student's position found in the relevant material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few relevant aspects of the material are fully and correctly explained. • There is no evidence of understanding the relevant issues or texts beyond a trivial level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument that answers the prompt. • The main thesis is well supported. • All relevant premises are properly supported. • The argument shows creativity or independent thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument that answers the prompt. • The main thesis is well supported. • All relevant premises are properly supported OR most of the crucial premises are supported and the argument shows creativity or independent thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument that answers the prompt. • The argument has enough merit to be worth considering, but either the argument for the main thesis is only moderately developed or crucial premises need support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main thesis is supported by a discernible argument that answers the prompt. • The argument is at least somewhat relevant to the main thesis, but crucial lines of support need significantly more development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either there is no discernible argument for the main thesis, any discernible argument is so lacking in merit and relevance that it is not possible to find anything in it that might be worked into an argument worth considering, or the argument does not answer the prompt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A serious potential objection to the student's argument is well-explained and sufficiently developed such that the objection has prima facie plausibility. • The response is relevant to the objection considered and shows a good understanding of the issues at hand. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A serious potential objection to the student's argument is generally well-explained and sufficiently developed such that the objection has prima facie plausibility. • The response is relevant to the objection considered and shows a generally good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A serious potential objection the student's argument is somewhat well explained and sufficiently developed such that the objection has some prima facie plausibility. • The response is at least somewhat relevant to the objection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A serious potential objection to the student's argument is somewhat explained, but not enough to make it prima facie plausible. • The response may be aimed at the objection considered but it doesn't in fact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No serious potential objection is provided, or there is no serious effort at developing the objection. • The response to the objection is hasty, careless or entirely without merit.

<p>The response is well-developed and has significant merit. • The response shows creative and independent thought.</p> <p>• 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.</p> <p>• There are no egregious mechanical errors. • There are very few, if any, moderate mechanical errors.</p>	<p>understanding of the issues at hand. • The response is mostly well developed and is prima facie plausible.</p> <p>• There are no points at which it is difficult to understand both what is being said and why. • The text is focused and organized.</p> <p>• There are no egregious mechanical errors. • There are a few moderate mechanical errors but not so many as to be a distraction to the reader.</p>	<p>considered, though it shows some lack of understanding of the issues at hand. • The response is somewhat well developed and has some prima facie plausibility.</p> <p>• 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.</p> <p>• There are 1-2 egregious mechanical errors OR There are some moderate mechanical errors, posing a small distraction to the reader.</p>	<p>answer the objection. • The response is either not well developed, or it lacks any prima facie plausibility.</p> <p>• 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.</p> <p>• There are 3 egregious mechanical errors OR There are many moderate mechanical errors, posing a greater distraction to the reader.</p>	<p>• 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.</p> <p>• There are 4 or more egregious mechanical errors OR A majority of the text is afflicted with moderate mechanical errors.</p>
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