

PHI2010: Introduction to Philosophy

Class#21271; Section 2021

Fall 2023

INSTRUCTOR

Mr. Marcus Davis

University of Florida

Email: lucydavis@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Fridays: 9:30AM -12:30PM

Office Location: Griffin-Floyd Hall, Room 303 (Philosophy Department Library)

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: 12:50PM – 1:40PM

Matherly Hall 0115

GENERAL EDUCATION AND WRITING REQUIREMENT

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 (WR6) course. A minimum grade of C is required in the course for general education credit.

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

There are no required texts to purchase for this course. All required readings will be made available as pdfs on Canvas.

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 and a General Education Core Course in Humanities. 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.

PHI2010 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with figures and ideas that have shaped the course of philosophical thought and discussion. Students will come to understand how different philosophers both defined and sought to answer problems in central areas of philosophy including epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and metaethics.

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 these SLO's by: (i) preparing written responses on central ideas and arguments in the philosophical works being read in the class that will serve as the basis for class discussion at regular intervals throughout the semester; (ii) participating actively in the small-group and full-class discussions, in which students will consider the effectiveness of their fellow students' ideas and reasoning; and (iii) writing two philosophical papers on assigned topics designed to test students' critical thinking abilities, to be graded according to a rubric that specifies as criteria for assessment competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class, perspicuous identification of the issues raised by the assigned topics, and development of a response that cogently supports the students' claims with little or no irrelevance.

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes (10%)

There will be six quizzes to take on Canvas in this course, each covering a different module, and each worth 2 points. Late quizzes will not be accepted, but you can retake quizzes that are submitted on time as many times as you like. All quizzes will be due by 11:59PM on their official due date. The lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester. This means that only five quizzes out of six will count towards your final grade. Quizzes will be released on the last day of each module and will be due 72 hours after release.

Argumentative Essays (65%)

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

- AE 1 (10 pts: 10%): 1500 words; due 10/1
- AE 2 (15 pts: 15%): 1500 words; due 10/31
- AE 3: (20 pts: 20%): 1500 words; due 11/14
- AE 4: (20 pts: 20%): 1500 words; due 11/28

Some information about argumentative essays:

- You will need to complete each essay assignment satisfactorily (C or higher) in order to receive credit towards the writing requirement (6000 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.

Group Presentations (25%)

Students will be randomly assigned to different groups, and, towards the end of the semester, students will present an article from a list of offered choices. Presentations require students to reconstruct the arguments presented in the article, as well as explain key concepts and theories. They will also be expected to present potential objections to the arguments and raise questions for clarification about the material. Students must also prepare questions about the reading for the audience. The presentation is worth a total of 25 points.

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. There is no penalty for missing class, however. 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 6000 words toward the UF Writing Requirement. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures student 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 four 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.bluer.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

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, Arguments, and Philosophical Problems

W 8/23	Introduction to the course	No readings
F 8/25	Arguments	Cahn, Kitcher, and Sher, The Elements of Arguments (from <i>Exploring Philosophy</i>)
M 8/28	Fallacies	McCarty, "A Brief Introduction to Logic"
W 8/30	Philosophical Problems	No readings
F 9/1	Review	No readings; QUIZ 1 RELEASED
Su 9/3	No classes	QUIZ 1 DUE

Relativism and the Problem of Contradiction

W 9/6	Moral Objectivism	Enoch, "Why I am an Objectivist about Ethics (and why you are, too)"
F 9/8		(Reread) Enoch, "Why I am an Objectivist about Ethics (and why you are, too)"
M 9/11	Relativism and its Problems	Shafer-Landau, Ethical Relativism (Chapter 19 from <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>)
W 9/13		(Reread) Shafer-Landau, Ethical Relativism (Chapter 19 from <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>)
F 9/15	Defending Relativism	Prinz, Dining with Cannibals (Chapter 5 from <i>Emotional Construction of Morality</i> , <u>section 5.2.4 to the end</u>)
M 9/18		(Reread) Prinz, Dining with Cannibals (Chapter 5 from <i>Emotional Construction of Morality</i> , <u>section 5.2.4 to the end</u>)
W 9/20	How to Write a Philosophy Paper	No readings; AE 1 TOPICS RELEASED & QUIZ 2 RELEASED

Morality and the Jaxn Problem

F 9/22	Utilitarianism	Mill, "Utilitarianism" (excerpts); QUIZ 2 DUE
M 9/25		
W 9/27	Kantian Ethics	Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" (excerpts)
F 9/29		
Su 10/1	No classes	AE 1 DUE
M 10/2	The Jaxn Problem	Watch Jaxn's apology: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1Q4nsoLseg&t=327s
W 10/4	Morality and God	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> ; QUIZ 3 RELEASED
F 10/6	Homecoming (No classes)	QUIZ 3 DUE

God and the Problem of Evil

M 10/9	The Cosmological Argument	Taylor, "The Principle of Sufficient Reason"
W 10/11		
F 10/13	The Problem of Evil	Antony, "No Good Reason – Exploring the Problem of Evil"
M 10/16		
W 10/18	Solving the Problem of Evil (?)	Swinburne, "Why God Allows Evil";
F 10/20		AE 2 TOPICS RELEASED & QUIZ 4 RELEASED
Su 10/22		QUIZ 4 DUE

Determinism and the Free Will Problem

M 10/23	Determinism	D'Holbach, "Of the System of Man's Free Agency"
W		

10/25		
F 10/27	Libertarianism	Taylor, "Libertarianism, A Defense of Free Will"
M 10/30		
T 10/31	No classes	AE 2 DUE
W 11/1	Compatibilism	Dennett, "I Couldn't Have Done Otherwise—So What?"
F 11/3		AE 3 TOPICS RELEASED & QUIZ 5 RELEASED
Su 11/5		QUIZ 5 DUE

Knowledge and the Problem of Skepticism

M 11/6	Certain Knowledge	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 1 & 2
W 11/8	The Problem of Skepticism	Pritchard, <i>Epistemic Angst</i> , chapter 1
M 11/13		
T 11/14	No classes	AE 3 DUE
W 11/15	Solving the Problem of Skepticism (?)	Moore, "Proof of an External World" (excerpts)
F 11/17		AE 4 TOPICS RELEASED & QUIZ 6 RELEASED
Su 11/19		QUIZ 6 DUE

Group Presentations

M 11/20	Groups 1 & 2 Present	Readings for Groups 1 & 2 (TBD)
M 11/27	Groups 3 & 4 Present	Readings for Groups 3 & 4 (TBD)
T 11/28	No Classes	AE 4 DUE
W 11/29	Groups 5 & 6 Present	Readings for Groups 5 & 6 (TBD)
F 12/1	Groups 7 & 8 Present	Readings for Groups 7 & 8 (TBD)
M 12/4	Groups 9 & 10 Present	Readings for Groups 9 & 10 (TBD)
W 12/6	Groups 11 & 12 Present	Readings for Groups 11 & 12 (TBD)

WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Minimal	Unacceptable
Comprehension	<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"> - MAX GRADE OF C FOR ASSIGNMENT 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"> - MAX GRADE OF D FOR ASSIGNMENT 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.
Thesis Support	<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.
Defense Against Objections	<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 	<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 	<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 answer the objection. The 	<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>of the issues at hand. • The response is well-developed and has significant merit. • The response shows creative and independent thought.</p>	<p>good understanding of the issues at hand. • The response is mostly well developed and is prima facie plausible.</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>response is either not well developed, or it lacks any prima facie plausibility.</p>	
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no points at which it is difficult to understand both what is being said and why. • The text is focused and organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no egregious mechanical errors. • There are very few, if any, moderate mechanical errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 1-2 egregious mechanical errors OR There are some moderate mechanical errors, posing a small distraction to the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 3 egregious mechanical errors OR There are many moderate mechanical errors, posing a greater distraction to the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 4 or more egregious mechanical errors OR A majority of the text is afflicted with moderate mechanical errors.

PHI2010 Scoring Rubric for Group Presentations

Excellent	Poor				
PRESENTATION SKILLS	1	2	3	4	5
Were the main ideas presented in an orderly and clear manner?	,	,	,	,	,
Did the presentation fill the time allotted?	,	,	,	,	,
Were the overheads/handouts appropriate and helpful to the audience?	,	,	,	,	,
Did the presentation maintain the interest of the audience?	,	,	,	,	,
Was there a theme or take-home message to the presentation?	,	,	,	,	,
Were the presenters responsive to questions/objections from the other team questions?	,	,	,	,	,

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Was proper background information on the topic given?	,	,	,	,	,
Was the material selected for presentation appropriate to the topic?	,	,	,	,	,
Was enough essential information given to allow the audience to effectively evaluate the topic?	,	,	,	,	,
Was irrelevant or filler information excluded?	,	,	,	,	,
Did the presenter have a clear understanding of the material presented?	,	,	,	,	,

CRITICAL THINKING

Were the main issues in this area clearly identified?	,	,	,	,	,
Were both theoretical positions and empirical evidence presented?	,	,	,	,	,
Were the strengths and weaknesses of the argument(s) adequately explained?	,	,	,	,	,

OVERALL IMPRESSION _____

COMMENTS