

PHP 4784 Analytic Philosophy

Class Number 22709 Fall 2023

Each student is responsible for reading the complete course syllabus and being familiar with the policies and procedures set out therein. You should be sure to review it prior to the end of the drop/add period.

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1. Basic information

1.1 Meeting times and location

Tuesdays periods 5-6 (11:45AM - 1:40PM)
Thursdays period 6 (12:50PM - 1:40PM)
Anderson Hall 13

1.2 Instructor and contact information

D. Gene Witmer
Email: gwitmer@ufl.edu
Web: <https://people.clas.ufl.edu/gwitmer>
Office: 330A Griffin-Floyd Hall
Office phone: (352) 273-1830

1.3 Office hours

Office hours are times set aside so that I am available for you to ask questions, discuss material, and so on. You do not need special appointments to show up for regular office hours. In case there are problems meeting during regular office hours and we need to meet, we can make appointments at other times.

Tuesdays 2:00PM to 5:00PM
And by appointment

Regular office hours are not held during holidays or after the last day of classes (during exam week). However, it is possible to make appointments during exam week if needed.

1.4 Required texts

Readings for this course are drawn from multiple individual papers, three (short) books, and selections from two other books. The individual papers and selections from books are made available on the Canvas site as PDFs. The three short books include one that must be purchased; the other two could be purchased but are also available freely on the web.

The book that needs to be purchased is:

- Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*. Harvard University Press, 1980. ISBN: 9780674598461.

There is one other version of this same book (published by Wiley-Blackwell) that would be fine to purchase instead if that is easier. The version above is the one ordered for the bookstore.

The other four books have been ordered for the bookstore as optional for the course, and each of these comes in a number of different printings. The versions ordered for the bookstore are:

- Ayer, A. J. *Language, Truth and Logic* (2nd edition). Dover Books, 1946. ISBN: 0486200108.
- Russell, Bertrand. *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1912. ISBN: 0195002121.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Routledge, 2001. ISBN: 0415254086.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. ISBN: 9781405159289.

We will be reading all of Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* as well as the entirety of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, but we will be reading only two chapters out of Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* and several selections from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

The different printings of the Ayer and Russell books all contain the same text (the second edition of Ayer's book has an introduction to the second edition not in the first edition, but the first edition is long out of print anyway and unlikely to be found!). The two books from Wittgenstein are originally in German and come in a number of different translations; for our purposes, however, those differences won't be big enough to matter.

Complete reference information for all readings is available on the Readings page on Canvas, which includes links to the PDFs as well.

Access to readings during class meetings. It is very important that you have access to the readings under discussion when we meet during class sessions. While many of the readings are online and not in a hard copy you can carry to class, *I insist that you have some way to access them while in class.* You might use a laptop or an electronic "pad" to access the electronic copies; or you might print out hard copies for your own use and bring those. I suggest you *not* rely on a smartphone to access the readings in class, simply because the small size of the screen would likely make it harder to find what you're looking for in the text.

2. Course overview

2.1 Course description

Much of contemporary philosophy owes its general approach, its stylistic habits, and its central concerns to a legacy of philosophical work from the first half of the twentieth century stemming from a number of revolutionary movements aimed at putting the discipline on a secure footing. One way to see the importance of this legacy is to note that many contemporary philosophers continue to call their own work “analytic philosophy,” despite the fact that many of the claims advanced and defended in that period (including, famously, the claim that the job of philosophers is to analyze concepts) are very far from a consensus now. This course examines that history with special attention to the philosophy of language, epistemology, and meta-philosophy so as to appreciate how the stage was set for the contemporary scene.

Readings are drawn from the early American pragmatists, the foundational work of Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein, the logical positivist movement, critical reactions to that movement, and more recent work reflecting on where things currently stand.

2.2 Subjects and readings

There are many ways one might organize this sort of survey. In this course, after some introductory material, we will focus on the following six topics:

- Pragmatism (Peirce, James)
- Language, knowledge and metaphysics in Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein
- The logical positivists (Carnap, Schlick, Ayer, Neurath)
- Quine and the debate about analyticity
- The later Wittgenstein (selections from his posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations*)
- The impact of Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*

In the last week we will read a few more recent things that reflect on the history of analytic philosophy.

An initial schedule is provided, but it will almost surely be adjusted as we go along. I reserve the right to remove or add readings and adjust the schedule as needed to accommodate our progress through the material.

2.3 Learning objectives

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- 1) Describe the major philosophical claims and arguments advanced in the history of analytic philosophy in the 20th Century;
- 2) Identify both strengths and weaknesses of several major arguments that played a role in that history;
- 3) Present a concise and explicit argument regarding one of the contentious theses advanced in that history; and
- 4) Present a sustained argument for some significant thesis regarding one of the key questions in epistemology, philosophy of language or meta-philosophy that arise in the history of analytic philosophy.

3. Class routine

3.1 Schedule

A complete version of the schedule will be available as a PDF document on the Canvas site for the course. Changes in our schedule will be reflected in that document, which will include information on when it was last updated.

The schedule conforms to the following pattern. We meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, where Tuesday is a longer two-hour period. Because this class has a long "weekend"—that is, from Thursday to Friday—you should think of it as a class where you do the bulk of new reading over the weekend, where Tuesday's longer meeting is followed soon by some additional discussion on Thursday. So, in keeping with this, readings assigned for a given week should always be read prior to Tuesday's class (unless noted otherwise).

The most common assignment is a writing exercise, and those are always assigned to be done over that long weekend and be handed in by the end of the day Monday. Other assignments (short papers and the final paper) don't fit into the pattern—see the schedule for details. And pop exams can happen anytime.

3.2 Lecture and discussion

Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion. While I will normally bring to the class an outline of what I expect to do that day, we will remain flexible on exactly how we proceed. As this is an advanced seminar style class, I expect a mostly informal atmosphere where students participate very frequently. You should feel free to ask questions or make comments at any point during the class session. If I think it best to leave the question or comment till later, I will ask you to wait, but usually I am happy to address your thoughts immediately.

3.3 Canvas site use

In addition to discussion when we are in class, you can make use of the discussion boards on Canvas. It is entirely up to you whether you post or contribute to those discussions. Nonetheless, I certainly encourage you to do so. Remember that you are allowed to cite in your own work other students' posts with appropriate credit, as described in §6.3 below.

I may put on Canvas, in addition to readings as PDF files, two other kinds of documents. First, I might, depending on how things proceed, post on the Canvas site special lecture notes that supplement our discussion in class. If this happens it will most likely be a copy of something presented during class time, e.g. a PowerPoint or Word document that I provide in class to help ensure a particularly challenging or tricky bit of material is more accessible. A separate discussion board topic ("Lecture Notes") is set aside for posting these things. Second, I will frequently make use of the writing exercises by sharing with the class anonymized writing exercises for discussion and review in class. These will also be posted on the Canvas site on a discussion board topic ("Sample Writing Exercises") set aside for such exercises. Of course, you should understand that the posted anonymized exercises are taken from your fellow students' work and cannot be presumed accurate! This is in contrast to the notes I prepare and include online, which can be presumed accurate. (Not that I'm infallible, but it's acceptable for you to presume that what I put up is correct!)

3.4 Attendance and participation

Given the importance of participation, attendance is critical to your success in this class. Attendance is therefore mandatory. I keep records of attendance at every session. The general rule is that you must be

present within the first five minutes of class to be counted as present. Late entries are frankly distracting and annoying, and if you are excessively late I may refuse to let you in on the session.

Attendance is not counted as a separate factor in determining your course grade except by way of potential damages. After four unexcused absences, some penalties kick in. For details, see the attendance policy spelled out in §6.1.

Merely showing up is obviously not enough, of course. I expect both that you will come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to discuss that material with the class. I urge you to make the most of class time by making some notes for yourself when doing assigned readings, where those notes specify things that puzzle you, objections that occur to you, and so on. *Doing such preparatory work will make the class time more fruitful for us all.*

The best way to learn in philosophy is by taking an active role in thinking about, discussing, and writing on the readings and arguments presented. It is essential to appreciate the material that you make the effort to work your own way through it, doing your best to decide what you think about it and confronting those thoughts with questions and objections you encounter in discussion with other people. Because participation is in this way important, *I have a policy of "cold-calling" on students.* That is, I will call on people even if they don't volunteer, and even if others are volunteering. I do this as a matter of course, aiming to get everyone to participate. The reason I do it is to help you get past any reluctance you may have in articulate your thoughts in a challenging environment. I have seen many students in the past switch from being silent observers to eager participants as a result of being prodded to participate, and it is clear they benefit from being able to do so.

3.5 Philosophy and respectful dialogue

Philosophy is a highly critical enterprise; we are in the business of evaluating the merits of different arguments and claims. As a result, philosophical discussion can seem intimidating or even mean-spirited at times, at least when the participants let their enthusiasm bypass their usual sense of diplomacy. In no way do I want to discourage enthusiasm, but I want to stress that the critical points made in philosophy can all be directed at ideas and arguments, not people. Your aim should be to assess whether a given claim is plausible, whether certain arguments are cogent, and so on. Even if you decide a particular argument is a very bad one, you need not go on to think ill of the person who made the argument. The fact is that philosophy is *difficult*. In class discussion you should recognize that your fellow students are struggling with the ideas just as you are, and while you should feel free to criticize their ideas, you should also welcome their criticism of your own ideas.

So: you should be vigorous and engaged in class discussion, but keep your 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! 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.

4. Requirements

4.1 General expectations

As a student in this class, you are expected to

- be familiar with all policies and requirements as set out in the complete course syllabus
- attend and participate in all class sessions (unless excused for a legitimate reason)
- be aware of all deadlines throughout the semester
- stay informed by keeping up with all announcements made in class
- keep up with reading assignments and hand in work on time
- 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

4.2 Assignments overview

There are four factors that determine your course grade:

- Ungraded but mandatory writing exercises
- Unannounced short exams ("pop exams")
- Two papers of modest size (about 1000 words)
- A final longer paper (about 2000 words)

For the ways these affect the course grade, see the section on course grade determination (§5.3). You can find more information on each kind of assignment in this section.

Note that while attendance and participation are not explicitly given in the list above, without regular attendance and participation you will have virtually no chance of doing well in the course. In addition, excessive unexcused absences will trigger some grade penalties; see §6.1 for details.

4.3 Writing exercises

What I call "writing exercises" or just "exercises" are short, mandatory writing assignments that are not individually graded. They are meant to force you to practice thinking and writing about the issues in the class without causing you anxiety about a grade. The credit you earn here is basically credit for effort. Just do your best to answer the question as well as you can while being as clear as you can.

Writing exercises are to be handed in online via Canvas. There is no specific word count target for exercises; you should simply do your best to answer the question. While you do not get individual feedback on your exercises, I always read all of them and select some of them for use in class. Keep in mind that there are *two* main ways in which you learn from these exercises. First, in the process of writing them, you will have to think more about the material and gain skills in writing about these issues. Second, when we go over selected exercises in class, you can correct your misunderstandings by comparison with what we get clear on in that discussion. Be sure to compare the thoughts you arrived at in your exercises with class discussion of the same material.

For any week in which an exercise is due, it is due via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Monday. This ensures that I have time the next morning to read all of them, get a sense of how well the class is understanding the material, and select some for all of us to discuss in class the next day—keeping them anonymous, of course. How extensively we look at these in class will depend on various factors—including whether we are behind schedule on other things—but I will always provide some level of feedback of this sort on the exercises, and you are always welcome to discuss any one of your exercises with me in office hours.

Exercises figure into your final course grade as the “exercise participation” grade. Your score for that portion of your course grade is determined simply by how many of these you do—at least, so long as you make a real effort for each one. These are not individually graded, but if you hand in an exercise that seems to show no effort, you will be given one warning; if you do it again, that exercise will not be counted.

Here is how the exercise participation portion of your grade is determined. If you do all of them and make a real effort, you get a perfect A (4) grade for the exercise participation portion of your course grade. For each one you fail to hand in (or which is not counted because you didn't make any real effort), that grade goes down by a full letter. The rule is simple: the grade drops by one letter for the first three missing exercises, after which the exercise participation part of your grade goes to zero:

Number of exercises you <i>failed</i> to do	Exercise participation grade
0	A
1	B
2	C
3	D
4 or more	E

I call these *exercises* because doing them on a regular basis vastly improves your chances of understanding the issues and being able to engage in philosophical discussion. They should also be a rather easy way to bolster your course grade. You don't want to neglect them.

4.4 Pop exams

Instead of traditional large-scale exams, you will be tested by means of several short “pop exams”—exams that are not announced until the time they are administered. A number of such exams are held during the semester at various times. Each will require you to answer one question in 15 minutes. The question will require you to write a paragraph or two in response, probably taking up much of one side of a piece of paper, perhaps both sides. (I will provide you with answer sheets to write on). There will always be a choice of at least two questions. While the questions are likely to focus on material most recently covered in class, you should be aware that each exam is officially cumulative in the sense that anything covered up to that point is fair game; further, the pop exams may cover points made in lecture but not in the readings. The number of exams is not settled in advance.

The exams are designed so that if you have been attending regularly, putting in a reasonable amount of effort, and following what is going on, you should have no trouble doing well. As I think of exams in general, they are tools that do two things. First, they inform me of your level of comprehension and skill; second, they serve as an incentive for you to not tune out or neglect the class. Other sorts of written work in this class will help you learn, while these exams merely keep you on your toes and keep me informed. They are not intended to be terribly stressful but only to serve those two purposes.

I prefer these kinds of exams instead of one or two major exams for the following reason. In my experience (both as a student and as a teacher) major mid-term and/or final exams encourage “cramming” and induce a lot of stress. Having to study frequently throughout a semester is much better in terms of helping you comprehend and retain the material. By contrast, one or two big tests can well be counterproductive, causing you to do worse on the exam than your abilities should allow. Of course, some stress is inevitable if one is going to take any tests at all, but frequent exams that are lower stakes each time should be less stressful.

One general piece of advice about these pop exams: 15 minutes is actually a fairly long period of time to write out an answer to just one question. It is important that you pace yourself. If you start writing in a rush you can cause yourself more grief than necessary. Instead, I suggest you take your time to think through what you want to say, jot down a few notes first, and then write out the answer with care. (Make sure any notes are kept separate from the answer itself.) I will mark on the board the time remaining for the exam so that you know how much time you have left. Use your time wisely.

After the end of the 15 minutes I will collect the exams and we will discuss the questions and correct responses immediately. If you come late to class when an exam is in progress, you can sit down and take the exam but will have to finish at the same time as everyone else.

If you miss one of the exams because of an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero for that exam. *Fair warning:* when attendance is especially low, I am likely to spring an exam on the class.

If you miss one of the exams because of an *excused* absence, that exam will not be counted in determining the exam portion of your course grade (i.e., it will be "dropped" from calculating that average). But this can only happen *once*; if you miss more than one exam because of an excused absence, you will be required to make (all of) them up by taking a special final exam. Students in such a situation (missing two or more exams with a good excuse) will need to make arrangements to take the special exam at the end of the term (as a group if possible). The questions on the special final exam will all be new—none will be taken from earlier exams—and they will in fact be more difficult than the usual exam questions to make up for the fact that you have the advantage of knowing ahead of time just when you have to take the exam. If you are taking the special final exam and have missed n exams with good excuse, you will have to select n questions from the options made available and will have $n \times 15$ minutes to take the exam. Each answer is assessed just as if it were a single exam and the grade for it entered in the gradebook as if it were the grade for the missed exam.

4.5 Graded writing assignments

There are three assigned papers in this class: two modest papers (in the range of 750 - 1250 words each) and one longer paper (in the range of 1750 to 2250 words). Each will require you to take a stand on some philosophical issue relevant to the readings and argue for it.

Topics. For each of these assignments I will provide a list of suggestions for coming up with your main thesis. Be clear that *these suggestions do not constitute exact blueprints for what you should write*. They are not exam questions; they are not orders telling you to do exactly this kind of thing, then that kind of thing, or so on. Your graded written work—in contrast to the exercises, which are much less formal—must be structured around your thesis and the argument you offer for it. If you wish to pursue a topic of your own which does not fit comfortably in the range of the suggested topics, check with me first for approval.

Assessment. I will also provide on Canvas some additional resources to help you with your writing, including some basic assessment rubrics for each kind of assignment. But as a brief way to remember what I look for in graded writing, just remember three factors: **CLARITY**, **COMPREHENSION**, and **ARGUMENTATION**. The ideal paper will be very clear, show a good comprehension of the material and issues at hand, and present an argument that has at least some genuine merit, demonstrated in part by your showing how it can be defended against anticipated objections. See the "Philosophical Writing: Advice for Students" document on the Canvas site.

Writing style. Philosophy essays and papers may be importantly different from papers or essays you've written in other sorts of classes; you should not assume that advice you may have been given for writing in other classes will be appropriate in a philosophy class. For example, many students have been taught not to use "I" in their papers, but it is perfectly standard to use "I" in an argumentative paper in

philosophy, as you need to say things like “I am going to argue that...” and “I respond to this objection as follows....” For another example, in philosophy, clarity is highly valued, much more so than elegance or being “pretty” in any way. “Logic before beauty” is a good slogan to keep in mind: if you have written something that sounds lovely but is hard to understand, redo it to make it easier to understand. If you have written something clear but doesn’t seem especially beautiful, that’s fine: just keep it clear!

Target word count ranges. Graded writing assignments will include a target word count range. These word count ranges are *targets*, not hard and fast requirements. It is possible to go over or under those ranges without penalty. They are meant to give you a sense of how extensive the paper or essay should be. Think of them this way: if you haven’t written at least that much, you likely haven’t done enough work; if you’ve written much more the upper limit of the target range, then you likely need to work on being more concise. *Under no circumstances should you simply pad the paper with filler material to make it reach the target word count range.* A shorter paper full of good content is preferable to a longer one burdened with pointless filler.

Feedback on your written work. Essays and papers are returned to you via Canvas. When they are returned, you should be able to see not only the grade but also marginal (that is, in-text) comments and an overall comment. You will probably look first to see what grade you received. That is understandable. But you will be doing yourself no favors if you don’t also look at the other feedback on your work. The best way to improve your papers is by taking the time to seriously review that feedback and try to apply the lessons to the next paper. Remember that you can always meet with me for more clarification of that feedback and discussion of how to improve. For directions on how exactly to see the in-text feedback, see the Canvas instructions here: <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-view-annotation-feedback-comments-from-my-instructor/ta-p/523>.

Late work. Late essays and papers are not accepted for credit unless by prior arrangement for a good excuse or some legitimate emergency has made it impossible for you to hand it in on time. I do not offer the option of handing in written work with a late penalty. If there is no good excuse, a later paper receives a zero. If there is a good excuse, you won’t be penalized.

5. Grading information

5.1 General grade information

In accordance with UF policy, a grade of C- or lower for the course is not a qualifying grade satisfying any requirements beyond a sheer number of credits. Other information on current UF grading policies in general can be found in the UF catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

The grading system I use is rather different from that used by many other instructors. I will use the Canvas gradebook, but the way I use it makes use of the grade scale described below. You'll see that on the Canvas gradebook every graded assignment is worth 4 points total; you should see the appropriate letter grade show up, but the underlying mechanics uses 4 points and percentages of those points.

5.2 Grade scale

Many faculty use a grade scale based on 100 points—defining an A as a score between (for example) 94 and 100, an A- as 90 to 93, and so on. For various reasons I am convinced this is not a good method for calculating grades in a philosophy class. Instead, all grades in my classes are based on the 4-point scale for letter grade values, where an A is 4 points, an A- is 3.67 points, and so on.

Grades are initially determined according to a letter grade; they are then entered into the gradebook as numeric values. Going from the grade symbol to the numeric value looks like this:

Letter	Numeric		Letter	Numeric
A	4		C	2
A-	3.67		C-	1.67
B+	3.33		D+	1.33
B	3		D	1
B-	2.67		D-	0.67
C+	2.33		E	0

If you get a B+ on a particular assignment, for example, I enter that grade in my gradebook as 3.33. Each graded element is given a number in this way. For those courses in which pop exams are a factor, I don't use the standard letter grade. Instead, they are graded on a coarse-grained "check scale" of just five possible values:

Symbol	Numeric
★	4
✓+	3.5
✓	2.5
✓-	1.5
∅	0

The reason I use this other scale for pop exams is that I do not believe it makes sense to try to assign a grade any more precise than this for one answer to one question done in only 15 minutes.

For the course grade, *each element is multiplied by its percentage weight for the course grade and the results summed* for the course grade as a numeric value. The result is a numeric value between 0 and 4. How, then, is that numeric value translated back to a letter grade? Consider a course grade of 3.44. Now, a B+ is 3.33 and an A- is 3.67. Should this be a B+ or an A-? One option here counts the midpoint between two adjacent letters as the threshold. On that option, a 3.44 is a B+, not an A-. Another option

is to think of the range of numeric values that count as an A- as extending from 3.67 all the way down to 3.33—or, rather, just a smidgen (say, .01) over 3.33. There are various pros and cons here, but in this class, anyway, I am using the second, more generous scheme, which is illustrated below:

Numeric	Letter		Numeric	Letter
3.68 - 4.00	A		1.68 - 2.00	C
3.34 - 3.67	A-		1.34 - 1.67	C-
3.01 - 3.33	B+		1.01 - 1.33	D+
2.68 - 3.00	B		0.68 - 1.00	D
2.34 - 2.67	B-		0.34 - 0.67	D-
2.01 - 2.33	C+		0.00 - 0.33	E

5.3 Course grade determination

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

Exercise Participation	20%
Pop Exams	20%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	15%
Final Paper	30%

Note that there is a potential penalty for excessive unexcused absences, and that penalty applies in a way that can't be accommodated by the Canvas gradebook. *If you have an excessive number unexcused absences, they will not show up on the Canvas gradebook but will affect your course grade nonetheless; see §6.1 below for details.*

6. Policies

6.1 Attendance and make-up policy

If you miss a class, excused or not, *you need to take responsibility* for finding out what you have missed. You are advised to get to know some of your fellow classmates so that you can consult them for help in such cases. If you need to, you can contact me about what was missed, but I cannot reproduce lectures or the details of class discussion for you; I can only indicate what sort of material was covered and convey information about scheduling, assignments, or the like.

If you do have a good excuse for an absence or a missed assignment, you need to get in contact with me in a reasonable amount of time and make any relevant arrangements and/or provide me information on the cause of your absence. Of course, in the case of serious illness or emergency, you should not worry about class and focus on the immediate illness or emergency, getting in touch with me only after it is feasible to do so.

UF's general policy on attendance, including an official statement of what counts as an acceptable reason for missing class, can be found in the catalog at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. In general, I aim to give students the benefit of the doubt about excuses, but I may demand documentation on a case-by-case basis. Your previous attendance and history of participation may make a difference to your credibility.

Absences and work done outside of class. For assignments completed outside of class, an excused absence from class doesn't automatically translate into any kind of extension or make-up. You should be planning your time outside of class to allow you time to complete the graded work before the due dates. But of course illness or other disruptions can make it unreasonable to expect you to be able to complete the work in a timely fashion. In such a case, I will offer either an extension or a make-up opportunity. For writing exercises, you will normally be asked to do a make-up exercise at a later date. For graded writing assignments, an extension is more likely. Keep in mind, of course, that I may require documentation for any such excuse, depending on your credibility at that point in the class.

Excessive absences and penalties. Attendance and participation in class discussion is too important in philosophy classes to be cavalier about excessive absences. For that reason, for this class, the following policy (which is consistent with UF's general attendance policy linked above) is in effect.

You can accumulate up to 4 unexcused absences without penalty. However, at that point every further unexcused absence incurs serious penalties. For each unexcused absence past those four, your *otherwise final course grade is reduced by half a letter* (.5 on the 4 point scale).

I take this to be a very severe penalty. It's hard enough to get a decent grade for the entire course grade; you certainly do not want it chopped down so quickly in such a blunt fashion because of unexcused absences. Of course, this only applies to *unexcused* absences; you will not be penalized for any *excused* absences.

6.2 Academic honesty

As stated in the UF Student Honor Code [<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>], all UF students are bound by the following "Honor Pledge"

The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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 policy in my classes for academic dishonesty is simple:

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All incidents are reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY MEANS AN AUTOMATIC FAILING GRADE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE.

In submitting a report of academic dishonesty I recommend *at minimum* a failing grade for the course and cite this warning in the syllabus.

If you are at all unsure whether something might violate the code, it is your responsibility to find out. Please consult the code and/or ask the instructor. Do not be afraid to ask!

In philosophy classes, the most common kind of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. In academic writing (including any writing exercise, essay, or paper you write in this class) if you use an idea you got from someone else—whether it's one of the assigned readings, another student, something you saw online, or the like—you are obliged to inform the reader of the source of that idea. Failure to do so is plagiarism. (For information on how to cite sources, see the section on basic writing assistance §7.3 below.)

If you are ever tempted to cheat, please keep in mind that it would be better to get a failing grade for a particular assignment than to get both a failing grade for the entire course and a record of academic dishonesty on file with the University of Florida.

6.3 Academic honesty and collaboration

The honor code specifies a number of activities that constitute academic dishonesty as well as the sanctions (that is, penalties) that may result, including suspension and expulsion. Please note that *collaboration in this class is forbidden unless stated otherwise*. No student may collaborate with any other person (in this class or not) on any assigned work. If group work is assigned or this policy changes, I will provide that information in writing on individual assignment instructions.

This prohibition on collaboration does not mean that you cannot make use of ideas from others that arise during the class, *so long as you give credit in an appropriate way*. For instance, in class discussion a student might say something that you want to use in your paper. You can refer to that idea in your work, so long as you include a reference like this:

as suggested in class discussion on March 1, 2016.

You can also cite the work of other students when that work is put online for the class to see. In that case, you might include a reference like this:

as suggested by an anonymous student for writing exercise #6 on March 1, 2016.

If the class includes discussion boards online where students' names are used, you can cite posts on that board with both the date and the actual student's name.

6.4 Outside sources

There are many resources out there about philosophy, including on the internet. I cannot stop you from looking at those sources, but I 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. This is not an acceptable way to go about writing a philosophy paper. You are supposed to come out of this class with skills in both thinking for yourself and being critically rigorous. If you merely assemble other people's ideas, you are not developing those skills.

6.5 AI as an outside source

A new issue in college work is raised by the advent of a certain kind of artificial intelligence—namely, the Large Language Models most famously illustrated by ChatGPT. As you no doubt are aware, ChatGPT is an application that does an astonishingly good job of appearing to be an intelligent interlocutor, and it is possible to ask it to write things for you that meet certain descriptions. ("Write me an essay on the dangers of grade inflation!") As a result, I count ChatGPT—and any relevantly similar AI application—as a kind of outside source one might use as a student but with the following difference. Unlike the external sources described in §6.4, where you are discouraged from using them but are not prohibited from using them, the rule for this particular kind of outside source is different:

AI SOURCES PROHIBITED

The use of ChatGPT or similar AI applications **in generating text for any assignment** in this course is strictly prohibited.

This includes all writing assignments, including both graded papers and ungraded writing exercises.

Use of such counts as academic dishonesty and merits the standard penalty for academic dishonesty, namely, a failing grade for the entire course.

There are various telltale signs of a ChatGPT generated essay, but it is true that they are far from conclusive. Here, however, is something that is a very good method of detection. If you did not write the paper yourself, you will have a hard time explaining it in person. Let me make this clear: I reserve the

right, for any written work you hand in for an assignment, to require you to meet with me in person—very soon, as soon as possible—to answer questions about your written work so that I can establish the degree of your understanding of what you handed in. If you cannot talk about your work in a way that makes it believable that you are the author, I may then require you to write about the same topic in my office or another controlled environment where you cannot make use of external aids.

I am sorry to have to issue you this kind of threat, but let me say something about why this is the policy. One of the most important skills developed by taking philosophy is that of writing and thinking clearly about very confusing issues. Use of ChatGPT or similar applications will take away the primary method of gaining that skill—letting something else do the hard work of formulating points, seeing connections between points, and assessing the merit of various arguments. I understand that some professors see ChatGPT as a technology that might be fruitfully used as a learning tool, and I am willing to consider that in the future, but for now I don't see how it can be used without making it too easy to succumb to the temptation to not do the work in writing and thinking for oneself that is crucial to developing the cognitive and verbal skills prized in philosophy. I recommend you simply never venture into playing around with ChatGPT when it comes to issues in any philosophy classes you take. In any case, the policy is as given above: no use of such AI is allowed, and as a precaution, I may request anyone to come in to talk about their work to test their understanding, with further in-person writing as an additional test.

One other comment about ChatGPT and Large Language Models in general. If you know the basic story behind how they work, you might see them as a kind of fantastic *imitation* machine: they take what others have said already and says something that is aimed at fitting the patterns evident in what others have already said. Now consider what you are trying to do when trying to answer philosophical questions. Is your goal to say things that fit the patterns evident in what others have already said? Recall that your work in this class will be to try to provide your own, original arguments for positions regarding the issues we will discuss; you cannot let your work be guided by the idea of imitating the patterns in what others have already said.

6.6 Help with papers

For philosophical writing, there are at least two relevant documents on the Canvas site that are intended to help: "A Brief Primer on Argumentation" and "Philosophical Writing: Advice for Students." You should be sure to download and review those *well in advance* of starting work on writing any of your argumentative papers.

I am happy to meet with you in office hours to discuss your work in progress on philosophy papers. I have a policy, however, that I will *not* look at any actual *drafts* of those papers. You can bring to our meeting a draft and/or notes on your paper and talk through what you are doing in the paper instead.

The reason for this policy is that I have learned from (frustrating) experience that commenting on actual student drafts often does more harm than good. Students find it very hard to resist reacting to such comments by thinking that their job is to make no changes in the paper other than those that are direct responses to specific comments made by the professor. And this, I can tell you, is not a good approach. Most of the time, the revisions you need to do are much more extensive than that, and it is often a good idea just to start a new file—a blank document—and start writing again, as opposed to constant tinkering with what you already wrote.

On a related note: While I am happy to talk with you in office hours about your work in progress, I do not appreciate it when students come in for help at the last minute and make it plain that they have not started in any serious way. You need to get started on your papers early, and if you want any help with it you must meet with me for such help a few days at least prior to the due date. I reserve the right to decline to help if you come to me for assistance at a time when there are fewer than 3 weekdays remaining before the paper itself is due.

6.7 Disability accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center [<https://disability.ufl.edu/>]. It is important for you to share your accommodation letter with your instructor so we can discuss any special access needed as early as possible in the semester.

6.8 Course evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful [<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>] feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Please note that these evaluations are anonymous and only made available to the instructor after the final grades for the course have been submitted. I always read through all of these evaluations so as to find ways to improve the course and I encourage you to complete one at the assigned time.

You will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

Public data providing summaries of course evaluation results are available online at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

7. Resources

7.1 Philosophy at UF

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Florida includes a great community of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. If you visit the department's web page (<https://phil.ufl.edu>) you can find many items of interest, including announcements of upcoming philosophy-related events, an archive of previous events, information on the major, minor, and the undergraduate curriculum generally.

One of the things that make the philosophy community here great is the lively **UF Undergraduate Philosophy Society**. The group normally meets once a week during fall and spring semesters; they organize reading groups, visiting speakers, and have for several years organized an annual undergraduate philosophy conference bringing philosophy student from both UF and elsewhere together to present their work, get feedback, and enjoy good philosophical discussion. Getting involved in the Undergraduate Philosophy Society—affectionately called “Phil Soc”—is a great way to get to know your fellow philosophy students, get advice on courses, find out how other philosophy students think about post-graduation plans, and so on. I strongly recommend getting involved.

7.2 Basic writing assistance

You may find it helpful to use the influential guide by Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*, available free online at www.bartleby.com/141/.

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 at owl.english.purdue.edu/.

UF has a dedicated writing program with a “writing studio” that is intended to provide students with several resources for improving their writing. The site includes several resources, including links to the OWL site just mentioned and other items. See writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/.

The writing program provides assistance with writing for UF students, including distance students who are pursuing online-only courses. You can login to <https://tutortrac.clas.ufl.edu/> to make arrangements to meet with a tutor. I must warn you, however, that what makes for a good paper in philosophy is not always the same thing that makes for a good paper in other disciplines, and if you get help from a tutor for a philosophy paper, you should share with him or her the “Philosophical Writing” document and the model philosophy paper available on the Canvas site.

Citation. Any time you quote someone or some text you must provide a reference for that quotation, including page numbers. There are several different, equally acceptable ways of providing reference information. (See owl.english.purdue.edu/ for information on major style guides.) If you are only citing material provided in class, I am not going to be picky about how you cite them, so long as you make it clear what you are citing and what page the material is on. If you refer to outside materials at all, however, I need to insist on two things. First, you must refer to that source wherever you use it in your own essay; second, you must include a “works cited” list at the end that provides information on the author(s), title, publisher, and date of publication. If you use an online source (other than the webpage for this class) you must also provide the complete URL and the date accessed.

7.3 Technical support for Canvas

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 instructor. Instead, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk through one of the following:

- Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu
- Web: <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>
- Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)

In addition, there is a UF help page specifically for distance learning [<https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/>] that you may find helpful.

One thing in particular that might cause some issues for you is seeing the marginal or “in-text” feedback on writing assignments. See Canvas’s instructions [<https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-view-annotation-feedback-comments-from-my-instructor/ta-p/523>] for seeing that feedback. If you have trouble I can always individually prepare for you a PDF version of your work with comments easily visible, so let me know if you need me to do that.

7.4 Other support services

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit the U Matter, We Care website [<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>] to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website [<https://counseling.ufl.edu>] or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website [<https://shcc.ufl.edu/>].

University Police Department: Visit the UF Police Department website [<https://police.ufl.edu/>] or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608. Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website [<https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>].

Library Support [<https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>] provides various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.