

PHI 3650 Moral Philosophy Spring 2024

Instructor: Dr. Arina Pismenny

Pronouns: She/her and they/them

Email: arinapismenny@ufl.edu

Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall, room 306

Office Hours: **M:** 1 – 2 PM in person or by [Zoom](#); **R:** 10:30 AM – 12 PM by [Zoom](#) only, or by appointment

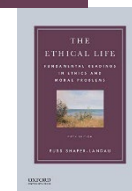
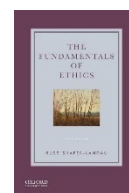
Class meets on MWF 9:35 – 10:25 AM in Matherly Hall 115

Communication: please contact us by email. It is best to send an email to us via Canvas because it tells us which section you are in. In your email, please indicate your name, course and section. Please allow 24 hours for an answer.

Proper ways to address us: Please address Dr. Arina Pismenny as Dr. Pismenny only.

Required Texts:

1. Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Ethical Life: Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems* (2020), 5th Edition, Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0190058242 [EL]
2. Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics* (2020), 5th edition, Oxford University Press, ISBN: 0190058315 [FE]



Additional reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them. The readings posted on Canvas are designated by [CN] on the syllabus.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to problems of moral philosophy, or ethics. We will be asking the following questions: 1. Where does morality come from? 2. What do we do when we make a moral judgment? 3. What should morality be like? 4. What does morality do for us? 5. Why should we be moral? In attempting to answer these questions, we will examine and scrutinize various views, theories, and arguments. For instance, we will look at the popular view of Cultural Relativism (“What’s right is whatever my culture says is right”), examine the role of religion in morality (e.g., “What’s right is just what God says is right”), and, most importantly, attempt to understand the role of reason in morality

with views like Social Contract Theory, Kantian Ethics, and Utilitarianism. We will work with historical as well as contemporary texts and look at the ways in which they attempt to provide systematic procedures for answering questions about right and wrong. In addition, we will discuss a variety of specific moral issues such as assisted suicide, racial biases, and drug policies and drug addiction among others. Our discussion will also draw on empirical data pertaining to these issues. Throughout the course we will seek not so much to form judgments about specific moral issues—most of us do that on our own anyway, though with varying degrees of certitude—but to improve our thinking about the considerations that may count as reasons for and against the moral judgments we are tempted to make.

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.

PHI 3650 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with some key philosophical topics and arguments concerning knowledge, personal identity, and the nature of ethical truths as well as others. Students will become adept at thinking critically, analyzing arguments, and writing clearly and persuasively.

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 some key philosophical concepts as well as central arguments in the discipline. The **COMMUNICATION SLO** will be achieved by two Short Writing Assignments (500-750 words each), regular participation in class, and team debates. Students will be required to explain and evaluate various philosophical views. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the **CRITICAL THINKING SLO** through the Short Writing Assignments and team debates, which will be on assigned topics designed to test students' critical

thinking abilities. Writing assignments and 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 some traditional philosophical positions as well as common objections to these.
- Analyze, evaluate, construct, and present persuasive and cogent arguments for particular philosophical positions
- Think critically about difficult and complex topics

Teaching Philosophy:

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

II. DOING YOUR PART

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, think of your decision as a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, take responsibility for your education, and be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to it. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, and seriously prepare for the assignments.

III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63; E: 0-59.

What do grades mean at UF?

A is for excellent work.

B is for very good work.

C is for adequate or average work.

D is for below average, inadequate work.

E is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

Components of Course Grade

Canvas Reading Quizzes: 24% (8 quizzes, but only 6 will count)

Perusall Ethics in the Public Sphere: 11%

Short essays (2): 30% (15% each)

Team Debates: 25%

Attendance: 5%

Participation: 5%

Total: 100%

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Homework: You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials and answering study questions at the end of the readings.

Canvas Reading Quizzes: (almost) every week, due Fridays (at 11.59 pm the latest), there is a short multiple-choice Canvas quiz based on the readings due that week. You will be tested on the comprehension of what you have read. There are 10 quizzes in total. Two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. This means that only 8 quizzes out of 8 count towards your final grade. Each quiz is worth 4 points, and 6 quizzes constitute 24% of your total grade.

Perusall Ethics in the Public Sphere: (almost) every week, due Thursday (at 11.59 pm the latest), there is a nonacademic article assigned that is related to our in-class discussion. Articles in this assignment are intended to show the relevance and applicability of philosophical approaches to everyday issues. Each student needs to receive a 'complete' on any 4 of the 8 assigned articles in order to get full credit for this assignment. To do so, they need to access the article through Perusall via Canvas, highlight important points, and leave thoughtful, engaging, and critical comments on the article. The assignment is worth 11% of the total score.

Short Analytic Essays: Each student will write two short essays (500-750 words) on specific texts covered in class. Each student will be randomly assigned two particular texts to write on, with a specific question they'll need to answer. Short analytic essays are worth 15% each.

Team debates: As your final course project, you will participate in a debate on an ethical issue. We will hold three in-class debates following the format of the [Ethics Bowl](#). The class will be divided into six teams, with five to six people per team. Each team should

prepare its positions on two moral issues assigned to them, come up with arguments to defend the position, anticipate potential objections they might face, and rebut the objections presented by the other team. Team members will receive one grade, and, for this reason, are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member will e-mail me their peer review reports, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own. Team debates are worth 25% of the final grade.

Participation: Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. Your class participation will be tracked primarily through your contribution to Friday discussions. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

***Late Work** will not be accepted. There will be no make-ups for missed assignments. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to makeup an assignment, the following conditions must be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the missed assignment must be made-up within one calendar week.

Attendance: Your presence in class is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. More than **four** absences, for any reason, create an academic problem, which may result in you being dropped from the course. Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 5% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worth 5% of your final grade.

Latenesses will also affect your attendance record. Two latenesses will count as one absence. If you do arrive late, make sure to notify me at the end of the class that you were here. Otherwise, once marked absent, the attendance record will not be changed.

Note taking: [Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned](#)

< <https://tinyurl.com/h98vbgr> >. When taking notes, you should write down ideas. You should **not** be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them. Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn. You should always take notes in class. Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

Electronic devices class policy: Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*.

If you wish to record a lecture, be sure to obtain permission from me first.

Recording lectures and discussions:

Please be advised that a recording of a class lecture is not allowed without a permission from the instructor. The lectures and other class material may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.

- **Publish** is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a Recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.
- A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet.
- A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Accommodations and other services:

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.

Counseling services: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 352-392-1575. The instructors of this course are committed to supporting all of our students. Please let us know about accommodations that will ensure a welcoming space for you.

Health and Wellness Resources:

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) 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](#) 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](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) 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](#).

Cheating and Plagiarism policy: If you are cheating on an assignment, you will receive an F on that assignment (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

Copying and pasting sentences generated by AI such as ChatGPT is cheating. You will receive a zero for the assignment with no retakes.

Here is **University of Florida's Policy on Academic Honesty**

https://flexible.dce.ufl.edu/media/flexible.dce.ufl.edu/documents/uf_policy_student_conduct.pdf

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

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."

A. Cheating. A Student cannot use unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another Student without the other Student's express Consent or without proper attribution to the other Student.

2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to the Student.
3. Using additional time, or failing to stop working when instructed, on any time-bound academic activity.
4. Failing to follow the directions of a proctor of any academic activity, when such conduct could lead to an academic advantage or benefit.
5. Collaborating with another person, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.

B. Complicity in Violating the Student Honor Code. Attempting, aiding, encouraging, facilitating, abetting, conspiring to commit, hiring someone else to commit, giving or receiving bribes to secure, or being a participant (by act or omission) in any act prohibited by the Student Honor Code.

C. False or Misleading Information.

1. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement during the Investigation or resolution of an alleged Student Honor Code violation.
2. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement for the purpose of procuring an improper academic advantage for any Student.
3. A Student must not use or present fabricated information, falsified research, or other findings if the Student knows or reasonably should be aware that the information, research, or other finding is fabricated or falsified.

D. Interference with an Academic Activity.

1. A Student must not take any action or take any material for the purpose of interfering with an academic activity, through any means over any medium.
2. A Student must not be disruptive to the testing environment or other academic activity.

E. Plagiarism. A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

F. Submission of Academic Work Purchased or Obtained from an Outside Source. A Student must not submit as their own work any academic work in any form that the

Student purchased or otherwise obtained from an outside source, including but not limited to: academic materials in any form prepared by a commercial or individual vendor of academic materials; a collection of research papers, tests, or academic materials maintained by a Student Organization or other entity or person, or any other sources of academic work.

G. Unauthorized Recordings. A Student must not, without express authorization from Faculty, make or receive any Recording, through any means over any medium, of any academic activity, including but not limited to a Recording of any class or of any meeting with Faculty. Students registered with the Disability Resource Center who are provided reasonable accommodations that include allowing such Recordings must inform Faculty before making such Recordings.

H. Unauthorized Taking or Receipt of Materials or Resources to Gain an Improper Academic Advantage. A Student, independently or with another person or other people, must not without express authorization take, give, transmit, or receive materials, information, or resources in any manner, through any medium, for the purpose of gaining or providing an improper academic advantage to any Student.

I. Using ChatGPT or similar AI. A student must not use sentences produced by an AI, aiming to pass them as their own.

IV. USEFUL LINKS

University of Florida

Canvas:

<https://ufl.instructure.com/>

Canvas help: <http://guides.instructure.com> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact UF's Computing Help Desk: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Zoom www.ufl.zoom.us

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>

Counseling and Wellness Center
<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, (352)392-1575

University Police Department
<https://police.ufl.edu/> (352)392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies
Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources
<https://titleix.ufl.edu/full-sexual-harassment-and-misconduct-policy/>

Writing Studio
<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Libraries
<https://www.ufl.edu/academics/libraries/>

LGBTQ Affairs
<https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/>

Philosophy at UF:

Philosophy Department
<https://phil.ufl.edu/>
Philosophy Discussions – Food and Talk
<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-food&talk.html>

Undergraduate Philosophy Society
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8317358197/about/>

Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements
<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-major.html>

Hare Essay Competition
<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad.html?page=hare>

Philosophy Research Sources

How to write a good philosophy paper:
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

Philosophy Bites Podcast

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

Philosophy of TED Talks

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE

The source of the reading is indicated by the following abbreviations:

EL – *The Ethical Life* by Russ Shafer-Landau

FE – *The Fundamentals of Ethics* by Russ Shafer-Landau

CN – Canvas

Course Outline* Subject to Change:

I. INTRODUCTION: ETHICS AND REASONING

WEEK 1 1/8, 1/10, & 1/12 WELCOME! What is Ethics?

Readings: Introduction [FE], Introduction [EL]

Recommended: "[Ethics](#)" *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Trolley Problem" [CN], "[Thought Experiments](#)" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

WEEK 2 1/17 & 1/19 Ethics and Reasoning I

1/15 NO CLASS – DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Readings: Anthony Weston, "Introduction" and "Short Arguments: Some General Rules" [CN], James Cornman, Keith Lehrer, and George Pappas, "The Tools of the Trade" [CN]

Recommended: Logic Exercises [CN], Rosen et al., "A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation" [CN]

WEEK 3 1/22, 1/24, & 1/26 Ethics and Reasoning II

Readings: Stephen Barker, "Improving Your Thinking" [CN]

Recommended: Logic Exercises [CN], Rosen et al., "A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation" [CN]

Canvas Reading Quiz 1 due 1/26 at 11:59 PM the latest

II. METAETHICS

WEEK 4 1/29, 1/31, & 2/2 Moral Subjectivism & Objectivism

Readings: Chapter 19 – Ethical Relativism [FE], Chapter 18 – Why I am an Objectivist about Ethics (and You Are Too), David Enoch [EL], Tom Regan, “How Not to Answer Moral Questions” [CN]

Recommended: ["Objectivity in Ethics"](#) *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Perusall: Practice Ethics in the Public Sphere due 2/1 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 2 due 2/2 at 11:59 PM the latest

III. NORMATIVE ETHICS

WEEK 5 2/5, 2/7, 2/9 Consequentialism I

Readings: Chapter 8 – Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill [EL], Chapter 9 – Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions [FE], Chapter 1 – Hedonism, John Stuart Mill [EL]

Recommended: Bernard Williams "A Critique of Utilitarianism" [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 2/8 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 3 due 2/9 at 11:59 PM the latest

Short Analytic Essay I due Saturday, 2/10 at 11:59 PM the latest for some students only

WEEK 6 2/12, 2/14, & 2/16 Consequentialism II

Readings: Chapter 10 – Consequentialism: Its Difficulties [FE], Louis Pojman, "Assessing Utilitarianism" [CN]

Recommended: Neera Badhwar, "Why It Is Wrong to be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship" [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 2/15 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 4 due 2/16 at 11:59 PM the latest

Short Analytic Essay I due Saturday, 2/17 at 11:59 PM the latest for some students only

WEEK 7 2/19, 2/21, & 2/23 Consequentialism and Moral Problems

Readings: Chapter 2 – The Experience Machine, Robert Nozick [EL], Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 2/22 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 8 2/26, 2/28, & 3/1 Kantian Ethics I

Readings: Chapter 9 – The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative, Immanuel Kant [EL], Chapter 11 – The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice [FE], Chapter 12 – The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect [FE]

Recommended: Christine Korsgaard, "The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil" [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 2/29 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 9 3/4, 3/6, & 3/8 Kantian Ethics II

Readings: same as last week

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 3/7 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 5 due 3/8 at 11:59 PM the latest

Short Analytic Essay I due Saturday, 3/9 at 11:59 PM the latest for some students only

WEEK 10 3/13, 3/15, 3/17 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

WEEK 11 3/18, 3/20, & 3/22 Virtue Ethics

Readings: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I and II [CN], Chapter 17 – Virtue Ethics [FE], Julia Annas, "Applying Virtue to Ethics: Applying Virtue to Ethics" [CN]

Recommended: Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" [CN], Bernard Williams, "Moral Luck" [CN]
EXTRA CREDIT EVENT 3/21 Vanessa Wills

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 3/21 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 6 due 3/22 at 11:59 PM the latest

Short Analytic Essay II due Saturday, 3/23 at 11:59 PM the latest for some students only

WEEK 12 3/25, 3/27, & 3/29 Social Contract Theory

Readings: Chapter 13 – The Social Contract Tradition: The Theory and Its Attractions [FE], Chapter 14 – The Social Contract Tradition: Problems and Prospects [FE], Chapter 10 – Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes [EL]

Recommended: Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 3/28 at 11:59 PM the latest

Canvas Reading Quiz 7 due 3/29 at 11:59 PM the latest

Short Analytic Essay II due Saturday, 3/30 at 11:59 PM the latest for some students only

WEEK 13 4/1, 4/3, & 4/5 Feminist Ethics and Care Ethics

Readings: Chapter 13 – Feminist Ethics, Hilde Lindemann [EL], Chapter 18 – Feminist Ethics [FE], Virginia Held, "Ethics of Care as a Moral Theory" [CN]

Recommended: ["Feminist Ethics" Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), Julia Driver, "Consequentialism and Feminist Ethics", Florence Villesèche, Sara Louise Muhr, and Martyna Śliwa, "From radical black feminism to postfeminist hashtags: Re-claiming intersectionality" [CN]

Perusall: Ethics in the Public Sphere due 4/4 at 11:59 PM the latest
Canvas Reading Quiz 8 due 4/5 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 14 4/8, 4/10, & 4/12 Team Debates Workshops

To do: study your team’s two assigned cases; prepare to develop your team’s stance

WEEK 15 4/15, 4/17, & 4/19 Team Debates Week

4/15 Teams 1 & 2

4/17 Teams 3 & 4

4/19 Teams 5 & 6

WEEK 16 4/22 & 4/24 Summing Up

No new readings

WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A	B	C	D	E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the paper does an excellent job of responding to the topic question and reflects a more than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. • The introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. • The introduction does a good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the paper provides a merely sufficient response to the topic question and reflects a less than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. • The introduction does not adequately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class. • The introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials discussed in class. • The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be

<p>does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main ideas of the paper are clear and convincing • All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material. • The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. • The argument advances in a manner that is 	<p>enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and convincing. • Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material. • The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. • The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part 	<p>identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear and convincing. • The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material. • Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. • The argument is difficult to 	<p>does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main ideas of the paper are only marginally clear and convincing. • The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material. • None of the inter-pretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent. 	<p>discussed in the rest of the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be. • How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelevant material. • None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. • The argument is very difficult to follow.
---	--	---	---	---

easy to follow.	easy to follow.	follow in places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete. 	
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	--	--

Grammar: The document *Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments* posted under the "Resources" tab discusses some common grammatical errors you must avoid. Grammatical errors will incur deductions as follows:

- Improper formation of plurals and possessives (- 2 points)
- Confusion of *it's* and *its* (- 2 points)
- Failure of agreement between subject and verb (- 2 points)
- Sentence fragment (*Basic Grammar* §1) (- 4 points)
- Run-on sentence (*Basic Grammar* §2) (- 4 points)
- Faulty Modification (*Basic Grammar* §3) (- 2 points)
- Unclear Pronoun Reference (*Basic Grammar* §4) (- 2 points)
- Faulty Parallelism (*Basic Grammar* §5) (- 2 points)