

PHI 2630 Contemporary Moral Issues Fall 2024

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Pronouns: She/her and they/them

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Office Hours: **M** 10:30 – 11:30 AM; **W** 12:45 – 1:45 PM

Class meets on MWF 11:45 AM - 12:35 PM in Matherly Hall 116

Communication: please contact me by email. It is best to send an email via Canvas because it tells me 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 me: Please address Dr. Arina Pismenny as Dr. Pismenny only.

Required Texts:

There are no textbooks required for this course. All reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to philosophical thinking about contemporary moral topics. In addition to briefly exploring frameworks for ethical thinking, we will tackle the following topics: abortion, ethics of technology, and ethics of intimate relationships: sexual, romantic, and friendship.

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 2630 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 Writing Assignments (1500-2000 words each), Reflection Journals (200 words each), regular participation in class, and group presentations. Students will be required to explain and evaluate various philosophical views. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the **CRITICAL THINKING SLO** through the Writing Assignments and group presentations, 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

Writing Requirement credit

This course provides 4000 words of credit towards the Writing Requirement at UF. As such, it aims to ensure that you complete a minimum of 4000 words of writing evaluated for its effectiveness, organization, and clarity as well as grammar, punctuation, and usage of standard written English. (More information on UF's Writing Requirement can be found at catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-requirement.aspx)

As a matter of university policy, you receive, in addition to the course grade, a separate grade indicating whether you get WR credit. Passing the course with a C or better is not automatically enough to get the WR credit. You must at least get a C for the course, but you must also do well enough specifically on written work that is graded for grammar, organization, and so on.

In this class, whether you get the WR credit will depend on certain aspects of your grades for the two essays and reflection journal entries. Those assignments are assessed on several different factors; the two that are plainly relevant for the WR credit are Writing Mechanics and Writing Flow and Coherence. To get WR credit for this class, you need to earn at least a C average in these categories on the assignment rubrics. This average is determined by your scores in those categories for of your Writing Assignments.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via **GatorEvals**. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **Learning Objectives** on the syllabus (pp. 1-2).

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: 30% (8 quizzes, but only 6 will count)

Essays (2): 40% (20% each)

Group Presentations: 15%

Reflection Journal: 5%

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 (10 questions/quiz) Canvas quiz based on the readings due that week. You will be tested on the comprehension of what you have read. There are 8 quizzes in total. Two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. This means that only 6 quizzes out of 8 count towards your final grade. Each quiz is worth 5 points, and 6 quizzes constitute 30% of your total grade.

Papers: You are asked to write two papers (1500-2000 words each) for this course. Both papers are thesis papers. You will be given a specific essay question to answer. You will

need to develop a thesis, and defend it by providing evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course. Each paper is worth 20% of your grade.

Group presentations: Each section will be divided into roughly 6 groups, with approximately 6-7 people in each one. During a Friday session, a given group will be asked to present a specific argument from an article they've been assigned. The group will reconstruct the main thesis, provide background information, reconstruct the argument, present potential objections, and attempt to refute them. The presentation will be followed by a 10-minute Q&A with their peers. Each student should sign up for the group presentation by a specified date. Your group presentation is worth 15% of your final grade.

Reflection Journal: You should always take notes in class. I will be asking you to spend 5 minutes or so in class or after class to write on a specific question. Then I will ask you to read what you wrote aloud to the class. Your reading your reflections will contribute to the class discussion. You will also need to upload your in-class reflections into the journal entry on Canvas by Wednesdays. You may do so by typing up your response and uploading it in .doc, .docx, or a .pdf format. You may also take a picture of your hand-written reflection journal response, and upload the picture of your work on Canvas. Your responses should be about 100-200 word. You should keep track of the dates on which you've written your reflections, and the question you were attempting to answer. This exercise will also help you track your thoughts throughout the semester. It will be fun to track your progress throughout the semester. This assignment counts towards the writing component of your grade, and will be evaluated on content, organization and coherence, effectiveness, style, grammar, and punctuation.

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 misses 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.

Here is what this means. For 4 or fewer absences: Attendance grade = 100% (full attendance grade).

For 5 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 5% = 95%; 6 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 10% = 90%; For 7 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 15% = 85%; For 8 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 20% = 80%; For 9 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 25% = 75%; For 10 absences: Attendance grade = 100% - 30% = 70%; **For 11 absences or more: Attendance grade = 0% (dropped from the course).**

Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit.

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: Laptop, cell phone, or 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 tablet with a stylus 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/flexibleuceufl.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

Course Outline* Subject to Change:

I. INTRODUCTION: ETHICS AND REASONING

WEEK 1 8/23 WELCOME!

Familiarize yourself with the syllabus

Syllabus quiz due on 8/30

WEEK 2 8/26, 8/28, 8/30 What is Ethics?; Ethics and Reasoning

Readings: Russ Shafer-Landau, Introduction; Anthony Weston, "Introduction" and "Short Arguments: Some General Rules"; James Cornman, Keith Lehrer, and George Pappas, "The Tools of the Trade"

Recommended: Watch: [Trolley Problems](#) – real experiment; Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Trolley Problem"; ["Thought Experiments"](#) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Syllabus quiz due on 8/30

WEEK 3 9/4 & 9/6 Ethics and Reasoning

9/2 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Readings: Stephen Barker, "Improving Your Thinking"

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

Canvas Reading Quiz 1 due Friday, 9/6

II. METAETHICS

WEEK 4 9/9, 9/11, & 9/13 Moral Subjectivism & Objectivism

Readings: James Rachels, "Cultural Relativism", David Enoch, "Why I am an Objectivist about Ethics (and You Are Too)"; Tom Regan, "How Not to Answer Moral Questions"

Recommended: John Corvino, "The Fact/Opinion Distinction"

Canvas Reading Quiz 2 due 9/13 at 11:59 PM the latest

III. NORMATIVE ETHICS

WEEK 5 9/16, 9/18, & 9/20 Consequentialism

Readings: Russ Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions"; Russ Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Difficulties", Louis Pojman, "Assessing Utilitarianism"

Recommended: Bernard Williams "A Critique of Utilitarianism"

Group Presentation 1 9/20

Canvas Reading Quiz 3 due 9/20 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 6 9/23, 9/25, 9/27 Kantian Ethics

Readings: Russ Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice"; Russ Shafer-Landau, "The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect"

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

Group Presentation 2 9/27

Canvas Reading Quiz 4 due 9/27 at 11:59 PM the latest

IV. CONTEMPORARY MORAL ISSUES

WEEK 7 9/30, 10/2, & 10/4 The Ethics of Abortion

Readings: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion", Don Marquis, "Why Abortion is Immoral", Elizabeth Harman "What Amy Coney Barrett doesn't understand about abortion"

Recommended: Recommended: [Thinking Critically About Abortion](#) (2019) by Nathan Nobis & Kristina Grob, especially Ch 5 "Better Arguments: Philosopher's Arguments", Saima May Sidik, "The Effects of Overturning Roe v. Wade" Nature, Celia Edell, ["Witches and 'Welfare Queens': The Construction of Women as Threats in the Anti-Abortion Movement"](#)

Group Presentation 3 10/4

WEEK 8 10/7, 10/9, & 10/11 The Ethics of Abortion continued

Readings: Alycia LaGuardia-LoBianco, "Reframing Abortion Lessons"

Canvas Reading Quiz 5 due 10/11 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 9 10/14, 10/16, & 10/18 Essay I Writing Week

No new readings

Bring your laptop to class

Essay I due Saturday, 10/19, at 11:59PM the latest

WEEK 10 10/21, 10/23, & 10/25 The Ethics of Sex

Readings: Thomas Mappes, "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using Another Person"; Howard Klepper, "Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons"

Recommended: Immanuel Kant, "Duties Towards the Body in Respect of Sexual Impulse" from *Lectures on Ethics*, Quill Kukla, ["Sex Talks"](#)

Group Presentation 4 9/20

Canvas Reading Quiz 6 due 10/25 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 11 10/28, 10/30, & 11/1 Ethics of Emerging Technologies

Readings: Langdon Winner, "Technologies as Forms of Life"; Cathy O'Neil (2016) *Weapons of Math Destruction*, Chapter 5, "Civilian Casualties"; Caroline Haskins,

["Dozens of Cities Have Secretly Experimented With Predictive Policing Software"](#)

Group Presentation 5 11/1

Canvas Reading Quiz 7 due 11/1 at 11:59 PM the latest

WEEK 12 11/4, 11/6, & 11/8 The Ethics of Punishment

Readings: James Rachels & Stuart Rachels, "Retribution and Utility in the Theory of Punishment"; Louis Pojman, "A Defense of the Death Penalty"; Stephen B. Bright, "Why the United States Will Join the Rest of the World in Abandoning Capital Punishment"

Group Presentation 6 11/20

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

WEEK 13 11/13 & 11/15 Movie Week

11/11 – NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY

Readings: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, Introduction

In-class screening of “13th” by Ava DuVernay.

WEEK 14 11/18, 11/20, & 11/22 Essay II Writing Week

No new readings

Bring your laptop to class

WEEK 15 11/25, 11/27, & 11/29 – NO CLASSES – THANKSGIVING

WEEK 16 12/2 & 12/4 Summing Up

No new readings

Essay II due Friday, 12/6

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 	<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 does not 	<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

<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 	<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 	<p>adequately 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. 	<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 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 interpretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent. • The argument 	<p>be 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
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advances in a manner that is easy to follow.	manner that is for the most part easy to follow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The argument is difficult to follow in places. 	is difficult to follow or incomplete.	to follow.
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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)