

## PHI 4930 Ethic of Identity 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 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. We will attempt to understand the role of reason in morality with views like Virtue Ethics, 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 which may include assisted suicide, racial biases, and abortion. 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

**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 Discussions (5): 8 pts/post; 40%**

**The Art of Asking Questions: 10%**

**Final project: 30%**

**Attendance: 10%**

**Participation: 10%**

**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 discussions:** almost every other week, (part I due Saturdays; part II due Sundays) (available until 11.59 pm the latest), you will need to post on a Canvas Discussion Board. You will need to make at least two posts. In the first post, you will answer the question posted to the whole class, and ask a question about a reading that is due next week. You will need to read the readings due next week to do that. After your first post, you will see your classmates' posts. Then you will need to make a second post, answering someone's question. There are specific instructions provided for posting, asking, and answering questions. The discussion posts are worth 40% of the final grade.

**The Art of Asking Questions:** The students are divided into pairs. The pairs are assigned a particular reading or topic, on the basis of which they will need to formulate a question, submit it on Canvas, and present it in class, followed by a short in-class discussion (about 15 minutes). It is worth 10% of your 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 10% of your final grade.

**Final Project:** At the end of term each student will develop and defend their final project in front of the rest of the class. You will need to choose a topic, develop a thesis, and defend it by providing evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course. It is worth 30% of the final grade. A list of suggested topics will be provided. After the in-class presentation, each student will submit the final paper (2000-4000 words) that corresponds to the project they've presented in class. The presentation is worth 15%, the paper is worth 15%.

**\*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 make up 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, 10% 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/](http://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](mailto: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://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](http://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:

#### **WEEK 1 8/23 WELCOME!**

Familiarize yourself with the syllabus

**Syllabus quiz due on 8/30**

#### **WEEK 2 8/26, 8/28, 8/30 Introduction to Social Ontology**

Readings: John Searle, "The Building Blocks of Social Reality" from *The Construction of Social Reality*; Ian Hacking, "Why Ask What?" from *The Social Construction of What?*

**Recommended:** ["Social Ontology"](#) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

**Syllabus quiz due on 8/30**

**Introduce Yourself Discussion Board due 9/6**

#### **WEEK 3 9/4 & 9/6 What is Social Constructionism?**

**9/2 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

Readings: Ian Hacking, "Why Ask What?" from *The Social Construction of What?*, and "Making Up People" from *London Review of Books*

**Recommended:** ["Social Ontology"](#) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

## Discussion Board #1 due 9/7 11:59 PM

### WEEK 4 9/9, 9/11, & 9/13 Race and Social Construction

Readings: Michael Bamshad and Steve Olson, "[Does Race Exist?](#)" *Scientific American*; Sally Haslanger, "Gender, race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?"; Chike Jeffers, "Cultural Constructionism"

**Recommended:** Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "The Theory of Racial Formation" from *Racial Formation in the United States*; Linda Martín Alcoff, "Is Latina/o Identity a Racial Identity?"

AAQ# 1 9/13

### WEEK 5 9/16, 9/18, & 9/20 Reparations

Readings: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "[The Case for Reparations](#)" from *The Atlantic*; Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, "Reconsidering Reparations: The Movement for Black Lives and Self-Determination"

**Recommended:** Colleen Murphy, "The Movement for Black Lives and Transitional Justice", Bernard R. Boxill and J. Angelo Corlett, "[Black Reparations](#)" *SEP*

Discussion Board #2 due 9/21 11:59 PM

### WEEK 6 9/23, 9/25, 9/27 Intersectionality & Gender

Readings: Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist theory and Antiracist Politics"; Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia"

**Recommended:** Watch [Berkeley professor explains gender theory](#) with Judith Butler; Watch Sojourner Truth's "[Ain't I a Woman](#)" Performed by Kerry Washington

AAQ# 2 9/27

### WEEK 7 9/30, 10/2, & 10/4 Transgender and Intersex Perspectives on Sex and Gender

Readings: Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" and "The Five Sexes Revisited"; Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Identities and First-Person Authority"

**Recommended:** Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans 101"; Robin Dembroff, "Beyond Binary: Genderqueer as Critical Gender Kind"; Watch *Every Body* documentary (2023) by Julie Cohen ([Amazon Prime](#))

Discussion Board #3 due 10/5 11:59 PM

### WEEK 8 10/7, 10/9, & 10/11 Gender Identity and Its Limits

Readings: Burkay Ozturk, "The Negotiative Theory of Gender Identity and the Limits of First-Person Authority"

**Recommended:** Watch *Disclosure* (2020) documentary by Sam Feder (available on Netflix)

**AAQ# 3 10/7**

**WEEK 9 10/14, 10/16, & 10/18 Sexual Orientation**

Readings: Kathleen Stock, "Sexual Orientation: What Is It?"; Arina Pismenny, "Pansexuality: A Closer Look at Sexual Orientation"

**Recommended:** Robin Dembroff, "What Is Sexual Orientation?"; Raja Halwani, "Sexual Orientations, Sexual Preferences, and Well-Being"; Watch: John Corvino, ["What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?"](#)

**Discussion Board #4 due 10/19 11:59 PM**

**WEEK 10 10/21, 10/23, & 10/25 Sexual Identity**

Readings: Matthew Andler, "The Sexual Orientation/Identity Distinction"; Kim Hall, "Thinking Queerly about Sex and Sexuality"; Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (only pp. 11-13, and 17-20)

**Recommended:** Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer and Now" from *Tendencies*

**AAQ# 4 10/25**

**WEEK 11 10/28, 10/30, & 11/1 Disability**

Readings: Shelley Tremain, "On the Government of Disability"; Phillip Ferrigon and Kevin Tucker, ["Person-First Language vs. Identity-First Language: An examination of the gains and drawbacks of Disability Language in society"](#)

**Recommended:** Watch: *Crip Camp* on Netflix

**Discussion Board #5 due 11/2 11:59 PM**

**WEEK 12 11/4, 11/6, & 11/8 Neurodiversity**

Readings: August Gorman, "Neurodiversity and The Ethics of Access"; Bradley Lewis, "A Mad Fight: Psychiatry and Disability Activism"

**Recommended:** TBA

**AAQ# 5 11/8**

**WEEK 13 11/13 & 11/15 Final Project Workshops**

**11/11 – NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY**

Bring your laptop to class

**Discussion Board:** Post your thesis and comment on your peers' theses by 11/15

**WEEK 14 11/18, 11/20, & 11/22 Final Project Presentations**

No new readings

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

**WEEK 16 12/2 & 12/4 Summing Up**

No new readings

Final Project due 12/6

**WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

A	B	C	D	E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li>   <li>• The introduction does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li>   <li>• The main ideas of the paper are clear and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.</li>   <li>• The introduction does a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li>   <li>• The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li>   <li>• The introduction does not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li>   <li>• The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class.</li>   <li>• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li>   <li>• The main ideas of the paper are only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials discussed in class.</li>   <li>• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.</li>   <li>• It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be.</li> </ul>

<p>convincing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.</li> <li>• The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument advances in a manner that is easy to follow.</li> </ul>	<p>convincing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.</li> <li>• The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow.</li> </ul>	<p>and convincing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material.</li> <li>• Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument is difficult to follow in places.</li> </ul>	<p>marginally clear and convincing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material.</li> <li>• None of the interpretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent.</li> <li>• The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelevant material.</li> <li>• None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.</li> <li>• The argument is very difficult to follow.</li> </ul>
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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)