

## PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy Spring 2025

Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:50-1:40; Fridays 9:35-10:25 (sect. 2003), 11:45-12:35 (sect. 2004), and 12:50-1:40 (sect. 2005)

Location: Florida Gymnasium 0270 (Monday and Wednesday); McCarty Hall A 2196; Antevy Hall 0423; Matherly Hall 0002 (Friday)

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:50-2:50

### I. Course Description

This course introduces students to the discipline of philosophy. After an initial discussion of what philosophy is, the course will turn to methods and techniques that are essential for understanding philosophical ideas. The main part of the course will then introduce students to different subdisciplines of philosophy by dealing with select questions philosophers have grappled with. Examples include the following: What is morally right and wrong? How should we live our lives? (Ethics) How do we know that the external world exists? What is knowledge? (Epistemology) Does God exist? What makes it true that a person at one time is identical to a person at another time? (Metaphysics)

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program and a UF Writing Requirement (WR4) course.

**Catalog course description:** In this course, students will be introduced to the nature of philosophy, philosophical thinking, and major intellectual movements in the history of philosophy, including topics from the western philosophical tradition, and various problems in philosophy. Students will strengthen their intellectual skills, become more effective learners, and develop broad foundational knowledge.

**General Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will develop demonstrate an understanding of classical western philosophical views, develop critical thinking skills, and analyze, explain and evaluate foundational concepts of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics

### II. Learning Outcomes

In this class, students will learn to

- explain important philosophical problems and analyze and evaluate different answers to these problems that philosophers have given.
- classify different kinds of arguments, identify arguments in texts, and evaluate them for cogency.
- speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters.

### **III. General Education Outcomes and Learning Objectives**

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program and a General Education Core Course in Humanities. Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon. 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 relevant factors 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 2010 accomplishes these goals by discussing a selection of philosophical texts ranging from antiquity to today, focusing on philosophical questions that continue to be relevant to the discipline of philosophy. In addition, since much of philosophy centers on advancing a point of view and backing up this view with reasons, this course focuses on teaching students how to classify, identify, and evaluate philosophical arguments.

The General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) divide into three areas: **CONTENT** – students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline; **COMMUNICATION** – students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline; and **CRITICAL THINKING** – students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Students will satisfy these SLO's as follows: **CONTENT** – by engaging with readings outside of class, taking part in lectures and discussions, and completing writing assignments, students will learn about central philosophical problems that showcase a plurality of different methodologies, use key terms and concepts, and lay out important theories in the discipline of philosophy; **COMMUNICATON** – by attending lectures and class discussions, and completing a variety of writing assignments, students will learn to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral form appropriate to the discipline of philosophy. **CRITICAL THINKING** – by participating in class discussions and completing exercises and written assignments, students will learn to analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using methods specific to the discipline of philosophy, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### **IV. Writing Requirement**

This course provides 4000 words of writing credit towards the UF's Writing Requirement. As such, it aims to ensure that students 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. A more detailed writing assessment rubric can be found at the end of the syllabus. More information on UF's Writing Requirement can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/student-responsibilities/writing-requirement/>

### **V. Required Texts**

All readings will be made available on Canvas.

If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Do not contact the course instructor or teaching assistant regarding computer issues.

## **VI. Expectations**

Students who take this class for credit should

- be respectful of fellow students and the instructor.
- read all the assigned texts for the session and be prepared for discussion.
- submit all assignments in a timely fashion.
- attend class regularly and be on time.
- bring a copy of the week's reading to class.
- participate in group work and class discussions.
- refrain from eating during class (discuss exceptions with the instructor or the teaching assistant).
- refrain from using cell phones and computers in class (discuss exceptions with the instructor or the teaching assistant).

## **VII. Attendance Policy**

Attending class is an integral part of successfully completing this course; philosophical skills are best honed in community with others. Therefore, students should make an effort to attend all meetings. If students have to miss class, they are encouraged to come to office hours and schedule a meeting with the instructor to catch up on material they missed.

**Students may miss six lectures and three recitations in the semester without any effect on their grade. Each absence, beyond the six lectures and three recitations, will incur a 20-point penalty.**

If students come late to class regularly (i.e. more than five times over the course of the semester) or come very late to class, the instructor will count the lateness as an absence.

Requirements for all make-up work is consistent with university policies specified at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

## **VIII. Evaluation**

The final course grade will be based on the following six components

- Reading Posts and Exit Tickets (100 points = 10% of the final grade)
- Argument Exam (100 points = 10%)
- Paper 1 (150 points = 15 %)
- Paper 2 (200 points = 20%)
- Paper 3 (200 points = 20%)
- Final Exam (250 points = 25%)

## Reading Posts

Prior to class meetings on Monday, students are required to post a short reading reflection on the week's readings. These have the following function:

- (1) They help students engage with the philosophical texts to be examined in lecture and recitation.
- (2) They give students an opportunity to practice writing in a low-pressure environment.
- (3) They facilitate exchange among students outside of the classroom.
- (4) They give the instructor and teaching assistant feedback on what students thought was interesting about a particular reading.
- (5) They allow the instructor and teaching assistant to give students individual feedback on their philosophical ideas and questions.

These posts consist of a short note (of not more than 100 words) on the week's readings. Posts should substantially engage with the philosophical ideas of the assigned readings. They could:

- ask for clarification in regard to certain ideas, arguments, or concepts in the reading,
- comment on ideas, arguments, or concepts in the reading,
- raise an objection against an idea or argument in the reading,
- draw comparisons between ideas in the reading and ideas in other readings (from class or that students encountered in a different context),
- draw connections between the reading and some contemporary phenomenon, etc.

**Posts for any given week have to be submitted by Monday at 9 am via Canvas, starting February 2. Late reading posts submitted by Wednesday at 9 am will receive partial credit. Reading posts submitted after Wednesday 9 am will not receive credit.**

Posts will be graded for content and completion, with emphasis on the latter: Students are not expected to master a reading, but to show that they substantially engaged with it before coming to class. There are 10 opportunities to complete reading posts this semester and each post is worth 5 points.

Sample reading posts can be found on Canvas.

## Exit Tickets

Students will complete a short summary ('exit ticket') of the week's lectures at the end of class on Wednesday, starting January 29. The main purpose of these exit tickets is to give the instructor on his teaching and help the teaching assistant structure discussions in section. Accordingly, these summaries will be primarily graded on completion. There are 12 opportunities to complete exit tickets. Students must complete 10 exit tickets in order to receive full credit for this part of their grade; each exit ticket is worth 5 points. If students complete more than 10 exit tickets, these will be counted as extra credit. **Exit tickets cannot be made up.**

## Argument Exam

The argument exam will ask students to analyze short texts and write out arguments contained therein in premise-conclusion form. Details on how to complete this exam successfully will be discussed in the first weeks of the semester.

### Papers

The papers will invite students to more deeply engage with the thinkers and ideas discussed in the course. The instructor will post the topic(s) at least two weeks before the due date; a writing assignment rubric is found at the end of the syllabus. The first paper (1000 words) will be due Friday, February 21; the second paper (1500 words) Friday, March 28; and the third paper (1500 words) Friday, April 23.

### Final Exam

The final exam will comprehensively cover the content of the course. It will take place on April 30 from 10 am to 12 noon. At the end of the semester, the instructor will provide more detailed information on the exact format and topics that will be covered on the exam.

## **IX. Grade Scale**

The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Grade Scale	Grade Value
93-100=A	A=4.0
90-92=A-	A-=3.67
87-89=B+	B+=3.33
83-86=B	B=3.00
80-82=B-	B-=2.67
77-79=C+	C+=2.33
73-76=C	C=2.00
70-72=C-	C-=1.67
67-69=D+	D+=1.33
63-66=D	D=1.00
60-62=D-	D-=0.67
0-59=E	E=0.00

## **X. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. <<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>> It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

## **XI. Academic Dishonesty**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class. **Note that any case of academic dishonesty, no matter how minor it may be, may immediately result in the failure of the course as a whole.**

## **XII. Online 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/>.

## **XIII. Tentative Schedule of Meetings and Topics**

\* = Meetings before which a reading response is due.

### Week 1

- M 1/13      What is philosophy?
- W 1/15      Course logistics
- F 1/17      Getting to know each other  
                What is philosophy?

### Week 2

- M 1/20      No Class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- W 1/22      What is an Argument?
- F 1/24      Argument Exercises                              Complete Exercises I

### Week 3

- M 1/27      What is an Argument? Evaluating Arguments
- W 1/29      Evaluating Arguments

F 1/31	Argument Exercises	Complete Exercises II
Week 4		
M 2/3	<b>Argument Exam</b>	
W 2/5	Can we know anything?	Al-Ghazali, <i>Deliverance from Error</i> 1-17 Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> I-II Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument"
F 2/7	How to write philosophy papers	
Week 5		
M 2/10	Can we know anything?	Moore, "Proof of an External World" Putnam, "Brains in a Vat"
W 2/12	What is knowledge?	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
F 2/14	Skepticism and knowledge	
Week 6		
M 2/17	Does God exist?	Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I, q. 2, a.3 Anselm of Canterbury, <i>Proslogion</i> , preface and ch. 1-4
W 2/19	Should we believe in God?	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> #233 James, "The Will to Believe"
F 2/21	Does God exist? Should we believe in God? <b>Paper 1 due</b>	
Week 7		
M 2/24	Catch-up/review	
W 2/26	What makes me identical to my past self?	McMahon, <i>The Ethics of Killing</i> (excerpt)
F 2/28	Personal Identity	
Week 8		

M 3/3            How does the mind relate to the body?            Descartes, *Meditations* VI (excerpt)  
Descartes-Elizabeth correspondence (excerpt)  
Ryle, "Descartes' Myth"  
Armstrong, "The Causal Theory of the Mind"

W 3/5            Can computers think?            Turing, "Can Computers Think?"  
Searle, "Minds, Brains, Programs"

F 3/7            Personal identity  
The mind-body problem  
Can computers think?

Week 9

M 3/10           How should I live my life?            Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I and II (excerpt)

W 3/12           How should I live my life?            Confucius, *Analects* (excerpt)

F 3/14           Virtue Ethics

### Spring Break

Week 10

M 3/24           What actions are morally right?            Bentham, *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (excerpt)

W 3/26           What actions are morally right?            Mill, *Utilitarianism* (excerpt)

F 3/28           Consequentialism  
**Paper 2 due**

Week 11

M 3/31           What actions are morally right?            Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (excerpt)

W 4/2            What actions are morally right?            (continued)



F 4/4	Deontology	
Week 12		
M 4/7	How should goods in society be distributed?	Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (excerpt)
W 4/9	How should goods in society be distributed?	Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> (excerpt)
F 4/11	Distributive Justice	
Week 13		
M 4/14	What is art?	Plato, <i>Republic X</i> (excerpt) Tolstoy, "What is Art?" Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics" Dickie, "Defining Art"
W 4/16	Philosophy of Film/ Philosophy and Film	Movie TBD by vote
F 4/18	Aesthetics	
Week 14		
M 4/21	Catch-up/Bonus/Review	
W 4/23	Review <b>Paper 3 due</b>	
<b>W 4/30</b>	<b>Final Exam 10 am-12 noon</b>	

#### XIV. Addendum: Writing Assignment Rubric

Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
Introduction and Thesis	Engaging introduction with the necessary context, sharply focused, insightful thesis well-aligned with goal of the assignment.	Clear introduction, relevant thesis but may lack nuance or originality.	Functional introduction, basic context, thesis somewhat generic or loosely connected.	Unclear or ineffective introduction; thesis vague, poorly developed, or marginally related.	Introduction and thesis missing, irrelevant, fail to address the prompt.
Organization and Structure	Exemplary organization, logical, clear structure enhancing readability and coherent idea development.	Well-organized with a clear structure; minor issues do not hinder the flow or coherence.	Organization evident but flawed; disjointed sections or lack of transitions.	Poor organization, difficult to follow sections, lacking logical progression, impacting clarity.	Structure chaotic or non-existent, severely obstructing readability and understanding.
Clarity of the Argument	Logical argument promoting easy comprehension and engagement throughout the essay.	Generally clear argument, minor ambiguities not significantly affecting the overall point.	Periodically unclear or confusing argument, weakening understanding of main points.	Argument lacks clear direction and clarity, often confusing or obscuring main points.	Argument incoherent or poorly articulated, fails to convey a meaningful point.
Analysis and Strength of Argument	Deep, insightful analysis, logically sound, and compelling, clearly strengthening overall argument.	Solid analysis; persuasive but might lack depth, support, or rigorous logic in parts.	Superficial/generic analysis; mostly logical argument not very persuasive, lacking depth or support.	Minimal/flawed analysis; weak, poorly formulated or largely unpersuasive argument with little support.	No meaningful analysis; unfounded, illogical, or absent argument.
References	High-quality, relevant references effectively integrated, substantially strengthening the claims.	Adequate references from relevant sources; integration may be clumsy, additional references might enhance claims.	References present but insufficiently integrated or occasionally irrelevant; needs more/high-quality references.	Provides weak/minimal references for claims, few or dubious references fail to substantiate claims.	Lacks appropriate references, irrelevant, improperly integrated, failing to support claims.
Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation	Free from grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, meticulous attention to detail and proofreading.	Minor errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation not distracting from readability.	Noticeable errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, affecting readability/professionalism.	Frequent errors disrupting readability, lack of proofreading evident.	Severe, pervasive grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, impairing comprehension.