

PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy

Summer B 2025

Class #11660

1. General Information

Instructor

Mr. Jacob Haun

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Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall 200

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday (1:00-2:30)

Meeting Times and Locations

MTWRF period 2 (9:30 AM – 10:45 AM)

Matherly Hall 113

Required Texts

All readings are available on Canvas as PDFs.

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.

Customized Course Description

This course is designed to introduce the foundational questions asked in philosophy. Such questions include the following four:

- What is knowledge? What can we know?
- What is free will? Should we think we have it?
- What is morality? Are there facts about what is right and wrong?
- What makes up our identity? When do we stop existing?

We will survey just some of the work that has been done to answer these topics, reflecting on each piece as a class. The goal will be to develop an ability to critically examine the many challenging questions that life impresses upon us.

General Education Credit: Humanities

This course is a State Core Humanities course in the UF General Education program. To receive credit towards the General Education requirements, a student must earn at least a C for the course. As spelled out at <https://undergrad.ua.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>, every General Education Humanities course includes the following objectives:

Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastery 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.

PHI2010 pursues these objectives by familiarizing students with philosophical works on a variety of topics, including knowledge, free will, morality, and personal identity. The specific methodology of careful, explicit argumentation, central to this humanities discipline, is illustrated by these works and exercised by students in their graded work. Such argumentation involves consideration of objections and multiple views on the same topic even while aiming to discern the truth about these questions.

General education courses in Humanities must incorporate Student Learning Outcomes as specified at <https://undergrad.ua.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-gen-ed-courses/slos-and-performance-indicators/student-learning-outcomes/>. For Humanities, these are:

1. Content. Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.
2. Critical Thinking. Identify and analyze the relevant factors that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.
3. Communication. Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

In this course, students will satisfy these as follows:

1. Content. Demonstrate a mastery of several of the critical arguments and concepts within the discipline of philosophy by writing three papers, completing an in-class essay, and actively participating in class discussion, where these are assessed for how well students accurately identify key philosophical claims and arguments.
2. Critical Thinking. Create and assess arguments for philosophical claims in written argumentative essays, anticipating objections and defending a thesis at some length.
3. Communication. Present philosophical claims and arguments in clear and organized written form, avoiding mechanical errors and using the philosophical techniques needed for explicit argumentation on difficult topics, and articulate cogent reading questions which display clear signs of thoughtful engagement with assigned readings.

General education credit: Writing Requirement

This course provides 4000 words of writing requirement (WR) credit. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures that students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher in the course as a whole *and* must also satisfactorily complete the writing component of the course. Satisfactory completion of the writing component requires the timely submission of both papers and an average grade of C or better on all three papers.

Evaluation of the papers in this course will include feedback on grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. These essays will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the writing assessment rubric at the end of this syllabus. Students will find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page (<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>), including a link to an electronic version of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>), the recommended style manual for this course.

II. Course Goals

Course Goals. This course is designed to introduce students to the practice of philosophy through the study of central philosophical questions and arguments, as represented by a selection of historical and/or contemporary readings. Students will learn some of the basic principles of good reasoning, including how to understand arguments, represent them clearly and fairly, and evaluate them for cogency. Students will also learn to develop their own arguments and views regarding the philosophical questions meticulously studied in the course. In these ways, the course aims to develop student's own reasoning and communication skills in ways that will be useful in any further study of philosophy they undertake and beyond the bounds of philosophy itself.

Course Objectives. Students will demonstrate their competence in understanding and assessing the philosophical theories studied in the course primarily via a set of assigned papers, in which they will be assessed for their abilities to: (i) understand and apply basic concepts of good reasoning, (ii) accurately describe and explain philosophical views represented in works assigned for the course, (iii) formulate arguments of their own while anticipating possible lines of objections and responding conscientiously, and (iv) speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and challenging matters of the sort raised by the material in the course.

Statewide Student Learning Outcomes

All versions of PHI2010 aim to achieve the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop critical thinking skills.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of classical western philosophical views.
- Students will analyze, explain, and evaluate foundational concepts of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

Student papers and participation in class discussions are designed to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills, as well as to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the foundational views presented in the course. Finally, the analysis, explanation, and evaluation of concepts forms the core of each of the assigned papers in the course.

III. Assignments and Grade Determination

Your course grade is determined by the following factors:

Perusall annotations and replies	15%
In-class essay	15%
Two shorter papers	40%
One longer paper	30%

Perusall annotations and replies. To help you stay on top of the readings, there will be weekly assignments on Perusall. Perusall is an online platform that allows you to annotate readings. Each week, you will be expected to annotate one of the readings for the week in Perusall and to reply to another student's annotations. You can access Perusall and the relevant readings through our Canvas site. These will be graded based on effort; I will be looking for serious attempts to understand the relevant material. I will be dropping the lowest grade for this assignment.

In-class essay. This will be a short-answer essay assignment which will assess your comprehension of the philosophical work you have read throughout the course. There will be several prompts provided, but you can only answer three of them (I will only look at the first three answers you give). Answers will be assessed based on both clarity of thought and comprehension of the relevant material.

Two shorter papers. These will be two 1000-1250 word papers on prompts related to the reading material. More details will be provided once the assignment is posted on Canvas.

One longer paper. This will be a 2000-2300 word paper on prompts related to the reading material, which will be assessed. More details will be provided once the assignment is posted on Canvas.

Writing Assessment Rubric

A	B	C	D	E
• 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 does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. • 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 easy to follow.	• 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 enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. • 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 easy to follow.	• 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 identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. • 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 follow in places.	• 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 identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. • 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 is difficult to follow or incomplete.	• 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 discussed in the rest of the paper. • 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.

Grade Scale. The following grade scale will be used to determine final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-76=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

IV. Policies

Academic Honesty. 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.

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a failing grade for the entire course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Attendance and Classroom Policies. Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned readings in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of smartphones during class is not permitted. If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

IMPORTANT: Poor attendance will affect your grade. If you are absent for three or more class sessions without a good reason, a third of a letter grade will be taken off of your final paper. Each additional absence will bring the letter grade down by another third.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies which can be found clearly explicated at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Canvas E-Learning Environment. This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "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 regarding computer issues.

Online Course Evaluation. 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.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities who would like to request academic accommodations should contact the disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) to receive an accommodation letter. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their needs as early as possible in the semester.

V. Course Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule for the course. Any official changes to the schedule will be announced on Canvas, and the Canvas version of the syllabus will be modified accordingly. The texts listed for a given course meeting are to be read before the class meets for that day.

Week	Date	Readings & activities	Assignments (due midnight that day)
1	Monday 6/30	Course overview & syllabus review	
	Tuesday 7/1	Beardsley & Beardsley, "What is Philosophy?" John Corvino, "The Fact/Opinion Distinction"	Perusall Annotation
	Wednesday 7/2	Plato, Laches (selection)	Perusall Reply
	Thursday 7/3	Cornman, Lehrer, Pappas, "The Tools of the Trade"	
	Friday 7/4	NO CLASS - HOLIDAY	
2	Monday 7/7	Susan Haack, "Epistemology: Who Needs It?" René Descartes, "Meditation 1."	
	Tuesday 7/8	G. E. Moore, "Certainty" (excerpt) John Pollock, "A Brain in a Vat"	Perusall Annotation
	Wednesday 7/9	Renee Smith, "Moore and Descartes Meet in a Bar"	Perusall Reply
	Thursday 7/10	Continue discussing previous readings	
	Friday 7/11	Baron d'Holbach, "Of the System of Man's Free Agency" (selections)	First Essay
3	Monday 7/14	R. E. Hobart, "Free Will as Involving Determination and Inconceivable Without It"	
	Tuesday 7/15	Philippa Foot, "Free Will as Involving Determinism"	Perusall Annotation
	Wednesday 7/16	Continue discussing previous readings	Perusall Reply
	Thursday 7/17	Stephen Satris, "Student Relativism"	
	Friday 7/18	Gilbert Harman, "Ethics and Observation"	Second Essay
4	Monday 7/21	Jonathan Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn"	Perusall Annotation*
	Tuesday 7/22	Bernard Williams – "The Self and the Future"	Perusall Reply
	Wednesday 7/23	Continue discussing previous readings	
	Thursday 7/24	Derek Parfit – "Personal Identity"	
	Friday 7/25	Continue discussing previous readings	
5	Monday 7/28	Discussing final papers	
	Tuesday 7/29	Derek Parfit, "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best?"	Perusall Annotation

		Robert Nozick, "The Experience Machine"	
	Wednesday 7/30	Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics (selection) Susan Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives"	Perusall Reply
	Thursday 7/31	Continue discussing previous readings	
	Friday 8/1	In-class essay	
			Sunday 8/3: Final paper
6	Monday 8/4	Reading on Student Chosen Topic	
	Tuesday 8/5	Reading on Student Chosen Topic	
	Wednesday 8/6	Reading on Student Chosen Topic	
	Thursday 8/7	Extra credit task in class	
	Friday 8/8	Extra credit task in class	

*NOTE: The last week of class will use student input to determine the readings. In the third week, I will create an assignment (which will **not** count towards your grade) asking for topics of interest to the class. I will then take that feedback and find readings related to these topics for us to discuss.

Because of family obligations, I will not be present for the last two days of class. Instead, Professor Gene Witmer will lead those two sessions, and an extra credit opportunity will be provided. More details on this opportunity will be provided later in the semester.

VI. Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

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.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.