

Reasoning

PHI 3114 Spring 2026

Prof. Ray

PHI 3114 - Syllabus

Philosophy is especially concerned with bringing reason to bear on tough questions. Philosophical texts and discourse are rich in reasoned case-making in the form of argumentation and dialogic disputation. In this course, we will develop our skill in the identification and extraction of arguments from philosophical texts. This is primarily a skill-building class. We focus on practical techniques that help us understand, and will make central use of diagrammatic techniques for representing the structure of arguments. We will learn strategies for understanding challenging arguments and developing clear, defensible interpretations/criticisms of them. Finally, we will turn things around and show how these very same techniques make writing a thesis-defense essay dramatically easy. (You will never look on a paper assignment the same way again!) The skills gained in this class will improve your own reasoning skills and critical discernment. The content of this course will be of value to every student.

Note: This is not a course in logic and no training in logic is presupposed. Students of logic will learn a fundamental complementary skill.

This course will help you develop and exercise many skills that are a goal of the major; in terms of learning outcomes (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/liberalarts/alc/philosophy.aspx>), see especially SLOs 4,5,6 & 7. To wit, improving your skill in reading/understanding complex philosophical and other argumentative casemaking; discerning the structure of arguments and representing them fairly and clearly, evaluating them for cogency; formulating well-targeted original and critical arguments; writing clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters; improving critical thinking skills applicable to a wide variety of intellectual areas.

More information is available at:

More Info (<https://meta.phil.ufl.edu/class/reasoning-promo/index.html>)

Course Work:

Regular exercises (40%), two exams (30%), and project (30%).

Be not fooled, attendance will be essential to your success in this class. To help you rise to the occasion, attendance in this class is required. Students who stop attending class

regularly may be barred from completing further homework and exams.

Course Materials:

This course requires subscription to a web-based diagramming service for the duration of the course. (Free to you; monthly service fee is paid by us.) There is no required textbook to purchase.

Course materials will be made available in lecture, through Canvas, the companion website with its integrated Reasoning Toolbox software, or via the *Reasoning UF* mapping site. Local documents (e.g. course notes) will typically be in PDF format (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>). These course materials may be password protected. In order to view and print them you need to know a password—which will be given to you in class...

Some homework for this course will be handed in via Canvas (aka e-Learning).

This course does not require a textbook.

Some interactive course materials, like online practice problems and sample demonstrations, will be made available on this class web site. You are strongly urged to make use of these helpers throughout the course.

Rules of Engagement:

1) The materials on the Canvas site or companion site (as applicable) do not belong to you. You may not give access to or share them with anyone outside the class. 2) The use of recording devices in the classroom is circumscribed by law (<https://aa.ufl.edu/policies/in-class-recording/>), and permitted under three particular auspices. Students may not share, transmit, circulate, distribute to any person any such recording, nor upload such to any media platform. 3) The use in class of any digital device for any unsanctioned or non-class-related purpose (e.g. messaging, surfing, social media, searching the internet for info) is strictly prohibited. All digital devices are unsanctioned by default. Thank you.

Nota bene:

The use of AI assistance (e.g. ChatGPT) for the production of any work for (or engagement in) this class is generally contrary to the central pedagogical aims of the course. All uses of such AI assistance are unauthorized, unless expressly permitted by the instructor. Violations of this policy will be treated as with any other academic honesty violation.

Academic honesty violations are not tolerated and will result in i) immediate failure in the course and ii) referral to the Dean of Students for further action. All assignments are to be completed on your own. (Rule of Thumb: Study and practice together, but do homework alone. If you are homeworiking in the (physical or virtual) presence of someone else in the class, it is a practical certainty that you will violate the honor code.) It is your responsibility to know and understand the UF Student Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>).

Note 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. 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.

UF General Policy:

Compliance:

This course complies with UF academic policies (<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>). The foregoing link will direct you to these official University policies.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations (<https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. UF emails students with specific times when they are open. Summary results (<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>) of these assessments are made available to students. UF has specific guidance (<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>) on how to give professional (and respectful) feedback.

Conformality:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with prevailing university policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

Grade Points:

Information on how UF calculates grade points from grades can be found here (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Minimum Requirement:

Please note that a minimum course grade of C is required to get general education credit for taking it (if this course is a listed Gen Ed class).

University-Wide Academic Policies:

This course complies with all university-wide academic policies. In case of unintended overlap, the University policy rules. Follow this link for more information on these UF Academic Policies (<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>).

Useful Disclaimer:

Our schedule of topics/readings/assignments are subject to change. So, stay informed as we go along.

Personnel & Contact

- Prof. Greg Ray, 300 FLO
gregray.ufl.edu

Office Hours

- Wed 11:45-1:00
- Fri 11:45-2:00
- And by appt

Topical Schedule:

- 01/12- Casemaking
- ¶ Structure—representing argument structure
- 01/14- Elements of Argument
- 01/21- FRAGmenting
- 01/26- SUPPort Relations
- 02/09- TIS Mapping
- ¶ Development—developing arguments
- 02/16- MYSTery
- ¶ Extraction—extracting argument from larger contexts
- 02/23- EXtraction
- 03/02- Midterm A
- 03/04- Midterm B
- ¶ Rebuttal—structuring effective criticism
- 03/09- REButtal
- ¶ Presentation—rendering argument in essayical form
- 03/23- Pathing
- 03/30- reTEXTing
- 04/06- reTEXTing Rebuttal
- ¶ Final Projects—bringing it all together
- 04/13- Final Projects
- 04/20- Endterm Exam A
- 04/22- Endterm Exam B
- ¶ The End of Reason (as you knew it)

Class Meetings:

- Lecture--MWF 10:40-11:30 [GR] MAT 115