PHI4930 Philosophy of Animal Minds

3.0 credits

Spring 2026

No Laptops / Smartphones / Internet use during class

I. Basic Information

Class Meeting Time and Location:
    T: Period 4
    R: Periods 4-5
    MAT 002

Professor: Amber Ross
    Email: **please contact me through Canvas inbox**
    Office: FLO 115c
    Phone: 352-273-1811
    Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00 & Thursdays, 12:45-1:45 (and by appointment)

Course Description

How do animals experience the world, and how is their experience similar to and different from ours?

We need to be able to answer this question for many practical and theoretical purposes- what are the limits, both scientific and philosophical, of our ability to answer it? In this course we will address questions such as:

- What is a mind? Which animals have minds? How can we learn about them?
- What kinds of emotions and thoughts do nonhuman animals have?
- Who is self-conscious?
- Can animals have moral agency? Can they have culture?

The course is an examination of the philosophy of animal minds, and also draws from natural and social sciences: cognitive ethology and psychology. We will use a philosophical approach to examine several empirical examples and case studies, including: Cheney and Seyfarth's ververt monkey research, Thorndike's cat puzzle boxes, Jensen's research into humans and chimpanzees and the ultimatum game, Pankseep and Burgdorf's research on rat laughter, and Clayton and Emery's research on memory and metamemory in scrub-jays.

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

1. Identify and explain the philosophical dimensions of foundational concepts in economics and public policy as they pertain to technology.
2. Develop a basic vocabulary for discussing the ethical dimensions of technology.
3. Analyze issues and policies concerning emerging technology through the application of ethical concepts.
4. Critique public policies, social practices, and political-economic institutions that shape, and are shaped by, scientific discovery and technological design.

5. Discern the structure of arguments, representing them fairly and clearly, and evaluating them for cogency.
6. Formulate original arguments, anticipating objections, and responding in a conscientious fashion.
7. Read and discuss complex philosophical texts from both historical sources and contemporary works
8. Speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters.

Student Learning Objectives:

Students will gain a basic understanding of philosophy with a focus on contemporary metaphysics and learn how to utilize this knowledge to evaluate and develop their own ideas. Students will pursue these goals across these three categories:

- *Content*: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used within the discipline. Assessment by short written assignments, essays, discussion, and formal in-class debates.
- *Communication*: Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written or oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Assessment by short written assignments, essays, discussion, and formal in-class debates.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems. Assessment by short written assignments, essays, discussion, and in-class debates.

Students will satisfy these SLO's by:

1. Participating in writing focused on central ideas and arguments in the philosophical works being read in the class that will serve as the basis for class discussion at regular intervals throughout the semester;
2. Participating actively in class discussions, in which students will consider the effectiveness of their fellow students' ideas and reasoning;
3. Writing two papers- one on an assigned topic and one of the student's design- which will test students' critical thinking abilities, to be graded according to a rubric that specifies as criteria for assessment competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class, perspicuous identification of the issues raised by the assigned topics, and development of a response that cogently supports the students' claims with little or no irrelevance;

Course Materials

The main source of our readings will be chapters from *The Animal Mind, 2nd Edition,* by Kristin Andrews (Routledge, 2020)

All other readings will be linked within the Syllabus on our Canvas website: https://elearning.ufl.edu

Materials Fee: there is NO materials fee for this course

III. Grade Determination and Policies

Grade Determination

Your course grade is determined by the following factors:

Assignments

Research Project (50%)

Research Paper (40%): Length: 2500-3200 words

The main goal of this course is select and complete your own original research project and to present that research to the class. The class will read an article that you select to accompany your presentation which engages with your own original research.

Research work-in progress Presentation, A/V component, and article selection (5%):

The content of the last several weeks of the course will be determined by students' research projects.

Each student will select an article for the class to read for the week that they are giving their research work-in-progress presentation. You must **submit your article choice to me one week in advance of your presentation** (so that your classmates have time to read it).

Each student will give a **short (max 15 min) work-in-progress presentation** on their research topic, followed by a short (10 min) Question and Answer session. You are required to provide the class with a **A/V component** to accompany the presentation (usually a slideshow) that summarizes the main points of your presentation.

Research Paper Proposal & Outline (5%):

A proposal for your research paper is due at approximately mid-term. We will discuss how to complete this assignment as the date approaches.

There will be a rolling deadline for the outline of the content and structure of your research paper, depending on the date of your research presentation. (Outlines are due at least 1 week ahead of your presentation). We will discuss how to complete this assignment as the date approaches.

The proposal and outline will be worth a combined total of **5%** of your final grade.

Other Written Work (45%):

Short Paper (25%):

Due *** Length will be approx. 900–1200 words, and I will provide you with a paper topic.

Perusall assignments, quizzes, other small assessments and in-class activities (20 %):

There will be several Perusall reading assignments, quizzes, write-at-home assignments, and in-class writing activities throughout the term. Some of these will be announced ahead of time, some will be spontaneous during class time.

Class Participation (5%)

Grading Policies

In this class, we will use the following grade scale (rounding up from .5):

(A+)	97-100
A	94-96
A-	90-93
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

IV. General Expectations

As a student in this class, you are expected to
- be familiar with all policies and requirements as set out in the course syllabus;
- attend and participate in all class sessions (unless excused for a legitimate reason);
- be aware of all deadlines throughout the semester;
- stay informed by keeping up with all announcements made in class and via Canvas;
- keep up with reading assignments and hand in work on time;
- maintain academic integrity in all of your work—or risk failing the entire course;
- be respectful of your classmates, even when engaged in lively critical dialogue with them;
- inform the instructor promptly of any emergencies or problems that will affect your ability to do what is needed in the course ask questions and seek help when you need it.

A Note On Philosophy Writing Assignments:

Please keep in mind that what makes for good writing in philosophy is not always the same thing as what makes for good writing in other disciplines. If you get help from a tutor for written work in philosophy, you should be sure to provide the tutor with appropriate information about what is expected in philosophy. This could be a sample of a good philosophy essay, a guide for writing in philosophy, or other resources that might be made available to you in this class.

For this course, I recommend you consult a writing style manual such as **Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*.** Here is a link to a free online version of the first edition: http://www.bartleby.com/141/.

UF has a dedicated writing program with a "writing studio" that is intended to provide students with several resources for improving their writing, including style guides, access to tutors, and more. See http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/.

A note on citation. Any time you quote someone or some text you must provide a reference for that quotation, including page numbers. There are several different, equally acceptable ways of providing reference information. A good general resource is a page on citation made available by the UF libraries: https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/libraryresearch/citingsources.

V. Class Policies

Attendance and Make-Up Policies

Attendance is expected at every class session [including both lectures and discussion sessions]. Taking an active role in class is crucial to success and you cannot take an active role when you are absent. Of course, it can happen that you become ill or have another good reason to miss class. If you are ill, please stay home and call your primary health care provider or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.

If you need to miss lecture or discussion section for any reason, please contact your Discussion Section Leader as soon as possible so that we can discuss whether the absence will be excused and what sort of documentation will be necessary (if applicable). If you do not contact your Discussion Section Leader about an absence within one week following the absence, it will not be excused except under extraordinary circumstances.

Poor conduct in class will result in a deduction from your participation grade. Examples of poor conduct include arriving late, disruptive behavior, falling asleep, failing to participate in small group activities, sending text messages, checking email, etc.

Policies for Late Submission of Written Work:

Make-up work: If you are absent for an in-class writing assignment, alternative arrangements must be made with your instructors for completing the assignment in a similar environment (in-person, 50 minutes). In-Class Writing Assignments CANNOT be completed remotely (online, over Zoom, etc.). Make-up assignments for unexcused absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to a late penalty. Official UF or University Excused absences will receive full credit on any make-up assignment.

Late penalties: The penalty for **unexcused late work is 1/3 of a letter grade per day late.** This means that 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted immediately at the deadline, and again at each 24-hour mark beyond the deadline until the work is submitted (this includes weekend days).

No assignments will be accepted which are more than one week late. Exceptions to this require instructor approval.

To repeat: **Absence due to illness <u>will</u> be excused,** and assignments submitted late due to documented illness will **not** be subject to penalty. If you are sick or injured, please prioritize taking care of yourself and safeguarding others from contagious illness. Email your TA when you can and let them know you were ill so we have a digital record of your absence due to illness and can accommodate you accordingly.

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

Additional Course Expectations and Policies:

<u>**Regular Attendance, Reading, and Note-Taking in Lecture:**</u> In order to have the fullest understanding of the material you will need to be present for each class meeting and take notes on the class discussion.

Bring Pen and Paper to each Lecture meeting: During lecture you may have short writing assignments that you will complete **by hand on paper**. You will need to have a pen or pencil and paper with you during each class for both note-taking and short in-class writing assignments.

No Laptops / Smartphones / Internet Use during class: During lecture you will need to listen to and reflect on the content being presented in order to complete the in-class writing assignments. Use of device with keyboard will be allowed when necessary to comply with documented university-approved learning accommodations.

Use of AI tools (Generative AI, etc) is prohibited in this course: The purpose of this course is for you to examine the ideas discussed in the readings and class and arrive at a clearer understanding of what you believe. Using AI for course assignments will interfere with this process. We will discuss this further in class.

Course Slides: Slides for each lecture will be posted to Canvas AFTER the conclusion of that lecture (they will not be distributed before class). These slides will be available for you to review when working on your writing assignments and studying for you In-class Writing Assignments.

Electronic Device Policy
No Laptops / Smartphones / Internet Use during class, unless necessary in order to comply with documented university-approved learning accommodations.

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.

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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class Students are responsible for knowing that these behaviors are prohibited.

All sources and assistance used in preparing your papers and presentations must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. Please review the guidelines on attribution and plagiarism found here: https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright/plagiarism. The web creates special risks here. Cutting and pasting even a few words from a web page or paraphrasing material without a reference constitutes plagiarism. If you are not sure how to refer to something you find on the internet, you can always give the URL.

AI Policy
Use of AI tools (Generative AI, etc) is prohibited in this course: The purpose of this course is for you to examine the ideas discussed in the readings and class and arrive at a clearer understanding of what you believe. Using AI for course assignments will interfere with this process.
Therefore, students are not permitted to use large language models (such as ChatGPT) or other AI-based tools to complete written assignments for this course. Submitting work produced in whole or in part using one of these tools without prior written authorization constitutes academic dishonesty.

Consequences of academic dishonesty

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university. If you remain enrolled in this class past the end of the drop/add period, this will be understood as agreement with this policy.

Please take the following advice to heart. If you find yourself having trouble with a particular assignment and are tempted to cheat, keep in mind that a poor grade for one assignment without a record of dishonesty kept in the Dean's Office is obviously better than a failing grade for the entire course with a record of dishonesty in that office. You can always seek help to improve in later work.

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. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: (1) The email they receive from GatorEvals; (2) their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals; or (3) the central portal at https://my-ufl.bluera.com/. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. 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 experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See "Get Started With the DRC" Disability Resource Center webpage (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.

General Grading Rubric for Philosophy Papers

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.	• Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class.	• 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.	• Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class.	• Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials 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 introduction does a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper.	• 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 clear and convincing	• The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and convincing.	• The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear and convincing.	• The main ideas of the paper are only marginally clear and convincing.	• It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be.
• All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.	• Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material.	• The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material.	• The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material.	• How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelvant material.
• The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.	• None of the inter-pretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent.	• None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence.
• The argument advances in a manner that is easy to follow.	• The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow.	• The argument is difficult to follow in places.	• The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete.	• The argument is very difficult to follow.

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)
- Failure of agreement between subject and verb (- 2 points)
- Run-on sentence (*Basic Grammar* §2) (- 4 points)
- Unclear Pronoun Reference (*Basic Grammar* §4) (- 2 points)
- Confusion of *it's* and *its* (- 2 points)
- Sentence fragment (*Basic Grammar* §1) (- 4 points)
- Faulty Modification (*Basic Grammar* §3) (- 2 points)
- Faulty Parallelism (*Basic Grammar* §5) (- 2 points)

VI. Course Schedule

The schedule below provides information on topics, readings, and due dates for assignments. It is possible the schedule may need to be adjusted to accommodate disruptions or student needs; any such changes will be announced both in class and on Canvas.

TOPIC & READING SCHEDULE (Including Assignment Due Dates)

This Schedule is Subject to Revision – please read all class announcements

WEEK 1 (JAN 12-16)

<u>Tuesday</u> – Introduction to the course

<u>Thursday</u> – **Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2nd Ed. Introduction (6 pages)**

WEEK 2 (JAN 19-23)
OTHER MINDS
<u>Tuesday</u> – **Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2nd Ed. Chapter 1 (pp7-28)**

Thursday –

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WEEK 3 (JAN. 26-30)
UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

</div>

Tuesday- Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. Chapter 2 (pp29-47)

Thursday-

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WEEK 4 (FEB. 2-6)
THE SCIENCE OF OTHER MINDS

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Tuesday- Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. Chapter 3 (pp48-72)

Thursday-

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WEEK 5 (FEB. 9-13)
CONSCIOUSNESS

</div>

Tuesday- Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2ⁿᵈ Ed. Chapter 4 (pp73-106)

Thursday-

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WEEK 6 (FEB 16-20)
SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

</div>

Tuesday- Bekoff and Sherman, "Reflections on Animal Selves", *TRENDS in Ecology and Evolution* **Vol.19 No.4 April 2004 pp176-180**

Thursday- Short Paper Topic Posted

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WEEK 7 (FEB 23-27) SSPP 26-28
SHORT PAPER WRITING WEEK

</div>

Tuesday – Writing Day (no class meeting)

Thursday – Writing Day (no class meeting)

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WEEK 8 (MAR 2—6)
EMOTION

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Tuesday – Robert Roberts, "The Sophistication of Non-human Emotions" (19 pages)

Thursday – Short Paper Due /
Start thinking about research paper topic

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WEEK 9 (MAR 9-13)
EMOTION (CONTINUED)

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Tuesday – Mason & McCarthy, *When Elephants Weep: the emotional lives of animals,* Ch 4, "Love and Friendship" (19 pages)

Thursday – Mason & McCarthy, *When Elephants Weep: the emotional lives of animals,* Ch 5, "Grief, Sadness, and the Bones of Elephants" (13 pages)

Continue developing ideas for research paper

WEEK 10 (MAR 16-20)
SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11 (MAR 23-27)
CAN ANIMALS THINK?
Tuesday – **Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2nd Ed. Chapter 5 (pp107-135)**

Thursday – Research Paper proposal due

WEEK 12 (MAR 30-APR 3)
COMMUNICATION
Tuesday – **Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2nd Ed. Chapter 6 (pp136-171)**

Thursday – Research Paper Outline Due

WEEK 13 (APR 6-10)
SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE- KNOWING OTHERS

Tuesday- **Kristin Andrews, The Animal Mind, 2nd Ed. Chapter 7 (pp172-199)**

Thursday-

WEEK 14 (APR 13-17)
WIP PRESENTATIONS AND POSTER SESSIONS
Tuesday – WIP Presentations and Poster Session
        All Posters Due

Thursday – WIP Presentations and Poster Session

WEEK 15 (APR 23)
WIP PRESENTATIONS AND POSTER SESSIONS

Tuesday – WIP Presentations and Poster Session

Research Papers due April 28, 11:59pm

VII. 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.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

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. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, Call 352-392-2010, or to make a private appointment: 352-392-6420. Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.

Appendix: On Reading Philosophy Texts

On Reading Philosophy Texts:

You will be expected to have done the assigned reading before you come to class to be able to follow the lecture and participate in tutorial discussion. Learning philosophy is as much learning a style of thinking and reasoning as it is learning certain contents. Therefore it is important that you try to participate actively and learn to engage with the readings critically.

You should budget enough time for the reading to be able to read each piece at least three times. Don't expect to be able to 'breeze through' the texts and you can avoid a lot of frustration. For all the readings you should have a pen and paper ready to take notes as you read. Philosophical writing is concerned with advancing and defending arguments. Your task will be to try to reconstruct the arguments and to critically evaluate them.

The first reading of the text should be fairly quick. Your goal here should be to get a first, rough sense of the general argument the author is advancing and the rough structure of the text. What is his or her main thesis? (write this down!) Where in the text is s/he arguing for it? Where does s/he address objections? Where does he discuss qualifications? Where does s/he motivate the argument? Don't worry, if during the first reading you don't yet understand how precisely the author is arguing for a thesis.

The second reading should be devoted to giving a reconstruction of the argument that is as sympathetic as possible. Now you should spend a lot of time on trying to understand how the author supports the main thesis, and how s/he might address potential objections. Here it is usually useful to try to jot down the following: What are the premises of the argument? How are the premises themselves supported? For example the author might appeal to shared intuitions or might claim that the premises are self-evident. What are the steps which are meant to get the author from the premises to the conclusion? (Here worlds like 'because' and 'therefore' can provide a clue.) You might think of yourself as engaging in a dialogue with the text here. Ask critical questions of the text, such as "You say that all simple ideas are copies of impressions. Why should I be compelled to accept this?" Then search the text for answers. At this stage your aim should not yet be to try to discover flaws or problems in the argument. Aim to make the argument as strong as possible.

Finally it is time to be critical. During a third reading you ought to try to see if you can uncover weaknesses in the arguments. If someone would want to disagree with a conclusion, there are two general ways in which one might attack the author's arguments. One, you can disagree with one or more of the premises. That is you might accept that *if* we grant the premises, *then* the conclusion follows, but you might disagree with one or more of the premises. (But then you should ask yourself how you would respond to the attempt to motivate the premises.) Or, two, you might disagree with one or more of the steps in the argument. That is, you might be willing to accept the premises, but you might deny that this commits you to the conclusion as well. If you have an objection of the latter kind you should try to explain why it is possible to accept the author's premises and yet deny his or her conclusions. (Of course you also might have objections of both kinds.)

A careful reading of a difficult text takes time. Learn to read patiently and slowly, and before you get frustrated, remember that even professional philosophers struggle with some of the texts you are reading. One of the most wonderful aspects of reading philosophy is that it allows you to engage in conversations with some of the deepest and most original thinkers. Enjoy the challenge!