

# PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy

*NOTE: it is your responsibility to read this document carefully. This is an agreement between you and your instructor. If you email me about something that is obviously stated in the syllabus, you will either receive no answer or I will reply, simply, "Read the syllabus!" However, if you read the syllabus and you still do not have an answer, then email me with your question.*

## 1 Course Information

- Course number: PHI 2010.
- Class 22072, section 3E83.
- Classes:
  - Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Period 4 (10:40 AM – 11:30 AM).
  - Location: Matherly Hall 0118.
- Instructor:
  - Rodrigo Borges
  - Office: Griffin–Floyd Hall, room 314.
  - Office Hours: Mondays 2:30pm – 4:30 (or by appointment).
  - Contact Information: [rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu](mailto:rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu).

### General Education and Writing Requirement

PHI2010 is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program, a General Education Core Course in Humanities, and a UF Writing Requirement (WR4) course. A minimum grade of C is required in the course for general education credit.

## 2 Course Goals and Objectives

### 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 studied in the course in a compelling fashion. In these ways the course aims to develop students' 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 competencies 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 and fairly 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 in a conscientious fashion, and (iv) speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and challenging matters of the sort raised by the philosophical material in the course.

## 3 Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available through Canvas.

## 4 Attendance and Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course.

Attendance is required (see below for details) and expected.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and otherwork in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

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

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit ONE.UF for screening/testing and vaccination opportunities.
- 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.

This course will NOT be synchronously taught on Zoom.

## 5 Course Requirements

Six different instruments will be used in order to measure student progress through the course. The name of each instrument, and the relative weight each of them carries in determining your final grade is the following; a brief description of each instrument follows.

Assignment	Total Number	% of Course Grade
ShortWriting Assignments	3	30%
Writing Exercises	3	20%
Final	1	20%
Quizzes	6	10%
Debate	1	10%
Attendance	32	10%

### 5.1 ShortWriting Assignments (SWAs)

There will be three (3) short (1100 – 1300 words) writing assignments. Each SWA will either ask you to present someone else’s argument in your own words, or they will ask you to evaluate someone else’s argument. The lowest grade will be dropped.

No outside readings will be required for SWAs. A *sample SWA* is available on Canvas.

*Students must complete ALL SWAs in order to satisfy the Writing Requirement for the course.*

## 5.2 Writing Exercises (WEs)

Students will write three (3) short essays (300–500 words) and sample answers will be analyzed in class anonymously (i.e., without the instructor revealing who wrote them).

*Students must complete ALL WEs in order to satisfy the Writing Requirement for the course.*

## 5.3 Writing Requirement Credit

This course provides 4000 words of credit towards the Writing Requirement at UF. As such, it aims to ensure that you 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. More information on UF's Writing Requirement can be found at the following link: [link](#).

As a matter of university policy, you receive, in addition to the course grade, a *separate* grade indicating whether you get WR credit. In order to receive WR credit, you must:

1. Get *at least* a C for the course;
2. Do well enough specifically on written work that is graded for grammar, organization, and so on;
3. Complete all Short Writing Assignments.
4. Complete all Writing Exercises

Writing Assignments are assessed on several different factors (the rubrics themselves can be found at the end of this document):

1. *Comprehension*: whether you understand accurately the material you are writing about.
2. *Clarity*: whether you write in a way that can be understood by others, avoids ambiguity, and is focused and organized.

3. *Mechanics*: whether you avoid grammatical or formal errors.
4. *Thesis Support*: whether you provide good reasons to believe the thesis you advance in your essay.
5. *Defense against Objections*: whether you anticipate how someone might object to what you say and defend it against those objections.

When grades are released for your SWAs and WEs, you will probably look first to see what grade you received. That is understandable. But you will be doing yourself no favors if you don't also look at the other feedback on your work, since that is what you will learn from.

When you review your graded work, you will always find:

1. The grade and the specific marks on the rubric.
2. A general comment on your performance.

More often than not, you will also find:

3. In-text or inline comments on the text itself.

Make sure you read that feedback; we provide it so as to enable you to improve your writing skills.

## 5.4 Basic Writing Assistance

You may find it helpful to use the influential guide by Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, available free online at [www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/).

Another very useful resource is Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, also known as the 'OWL.' It is especially good for getting detailed information on how to cite sources properly. You can find it at [owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/).

UF has a dedicated writing program with a 'writing studio' that is intended to provide students with several resources for improving their writing. The site includes several resources, including links to the OWL site just mentioned and other items. You can find that site at [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/).

The writing program provides assistance with writing for UF students, including

distance students who are pursuing online-only courses. You can login to [tutortrac.clas.ufl.edu/](http://tutortrac.clas.ufl.edu/) to make arrangements to meet with a tutor. We must warn you, however, that while those tutors are surely good at helping you avoid certain kinds of problems, many writing tutors are not familiar with writing philosophy papers. What counts as a good paper for, say, an English class might not count as a good paper for philosophy. In philosophy, clear structure and explicit argumentation is at a premium. If you do meet with a tutor, you would be well advised to share with the tutor the sample argumentative essay so that he or she knows what sort of paper is needed in this class.

## 5.5 Outside Readings

No outside readings are required for the completion of SWAs or WEs. *However*, if you do plan to use an outside reading, you **MUST** check with your instructor or TA whether the particular reading you have in mind is an appropriate source. There are **ONLY TWO EXCEPTIONS** to this rule:

1. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy;
2. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

If you do not follow these instructions on the use of outside readings, you risk seriously harming your grade.

## 5.6 Final

There will be a final exam covering all the readings in the course.

## 5.7 Quizzes

There are six (6) quizzes. They are designed to check your understanding of the materials. Each test consists of ten multiple choice questions. Quizzes are 'open notes' and you are encouraged to consult the readings and/or your notes when you take them.

Different students will get different questions as determined in part by a random draw from the bank of questions. The questions cover only the material we discussed in class. The lowest grade will be dropped.

*If you receive a grade lower than 85% for any quiz, YOU MUST discuss your test with*

Rodrigo ASAP. Failure to do so will result in inability to take future quizzes.

## 5.8 Debate

The class will be divided into small groups of 2-3 students. Groups will be responsible for preparing a debate on an assigned topic. The goal is for students to articulate and defend an answer (thesis) to a specific question on an assigned topic.

## 5.9 Attendance

Attendance will be taken using the iClicker system. For information on this system, please see:

<https://classrooms.at.ufl.edu/classroom-technology/iclicker-response-system/>

For this class, you will use the iClicker Reef application, either on a smartphone or a computer.

You must register your clicker Reef as soon as possible, but certainly before attendance becomes required after the drop/add period on Wednesday 9/7/22. See the iClicker registration page for more details.

Attendance will be expected but not required before and during the add/drop period. This will give everyone time to install and familiarize themselves with the iClicker application.

We will test the iClicker application in the second week of the semester. This will allow you to check your clicker is working properly. At all times during the semester, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have your clicker with you, and that it is working properly.

## 6 Grade Scale

See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

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

	Grade Scale	Grade Value
A	100 - 93	4.00
A-	92 - 90	3.67
B+	89 - 86	3.33
B	85 - 82	3.00

B-	81 - 79	2.67
C+	78 - 75	2.33
C	75 - 72	2.00
C-	71 - 69	1.67
D+	68 - 66	1.33
D	65 - 62	1.00
D-	61 - 60	0.67
E	59 - 0	0.00

## 7 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 Honor Code

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. 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 or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of 'E' for the 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.

## 8 Students with disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp>). The Dean of Students Office will provide



documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

## 9 Online course evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

## 10 Office Hours

I strongly encourage you to set up a meeting to discuss anything related to the course. Rodrigo will hold office hours on Mondays 2:30pm – 4:30pm (or by appointment via [rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu](mailto:rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu)).

## 11 Technical Issues

Please, direct any questions about technical issues you might have to UFHelpdesk. The website is <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>. You may also call them at 352 392 4357.

## 12 Campus Resources

- Health and Wellness:
  1. 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 ([www.umatter.ufl.edu](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu)) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
  2. Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website ([www.counseling.ufl.edu](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu)) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

3. 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 ([www.shcc.ufl.edu](http://www.shcc.ufl.edu)).

4. University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website ([www.police.ufl.edu](http://www.police.ufl.edu)) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

5. UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website ([www.ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://www.ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center)).

## 13 Academic Resources

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

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

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

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

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

6. Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage ([here](#)) for more information.

7. On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process ([www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process](http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process)).

# 14 Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

*[SEE UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE ON CANVAS]*

## 1. Arguments

8/24 - QA about Introductory Video on the syllabus,  
- The Validity and Soundness of Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p. 9-10)

8/26 - Proving the Validity of Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p.10-16)

8/29 - Non-Deductive (i.e., Inductive) Arguments (reading: Perry et al. p.16-24)

8/31 - Fallacies (reading: Perry et al. p. 19-24)

9/2 - Discussion

9/5 - Holiday (no class)

## 2. Tools for Doing Philosophy

9/7 - Doing (Thought) Experiments (reading: Williamson p.50-60)

9/9 - Discussion

9/12 - Concerns about Doing Thought Experiments (reading:Williamson p.60-65)

9/14 - Reading andWriting Philosophy (reading: Perry et al. p. 1-8) - Grading your  
written work (reading: how to read/write slides and Pryor webpages)

9/16 - Discussion

## 3. Some Philosophical Questions

9/19 - Do we know anything? (reading: Descartes meditation 1 and 2)

9/21 - Does God exist?

9/23 - Discussion

9/26 - Are we responsible for our own behavior?

9/28 - Are we minds or bodies?

9/30 - Discussion

#### **4. Do we know anything?**

10/3 - Common Sense: we know things, and we have many reasonable beliefs. (reading: Moore)

10/5 - Probabilism: we know nothing, but we have many reasonable beliefs.

10/7 - Discussion

#### **5. Does God Exist?**

10/10 - Theism: we know he does.

10/12 - Atheism: we know he doesn't.

10/14 - Discussion

#### **6. Are we responsible for our own behavior?**

10/17 - Reponsabilism: we are responsible for our own behavior.

10/19 - Irresponsabilism: we are not responsible for our own behavior

10/21 - Discussion

#### **7. Are we minds or bodies?**

10/24 - Interactionism: minds and bodies interact, but we are our minds.

10/26 - Reductionism: the mind is the body. (reading: Churchland)

10/28 - Discussion

## **8. How are scientific theories discovered?**

10/31 - The "Eureka" account. (reading: French ch2)

11/2 - The heuristic account (reading: French ch3)

11/4 - Discussion

## **9. How are scientific theories justified?**

11/7 - Verification and confirmation (reading: French ch4)

11/9 - Falsifiability (reading: French ch4)

11/11 - Holiday (no class)

## **10. In what sense are observation and experimentation objective?**

11/14 - Observation (reading: French ch5)

11/16 - Experimentation (reading: French ch6)

11/18 - Discussion

## **11. What counts as science?**

11/21 - Naturalism (reading: Williamson and Rosenberg p.29-35)

11/23 - Holiday (no class)

11/25 - Holiday (no class)

11/28 - Naturalism (reading: Williamson and Rosenberg p.36-42)

11/30 - Debate

12/2 - Debate

12/5 - Debate

12/7 - Evaluation

12/19 - Grades are due

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS

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 convincing</li> <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>	<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 convincing.</li> <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>	<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 and convincing.</li> <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>	<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 marginally clear and convincing.</li> <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>• 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> <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>

**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:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper formation of plurals and possessives ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Failure of agreement between subject and verb ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Run-on sentence (<i>Basic Grammar §1</i>) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Run-on sentence (<i>Basic Grammar §2</i>) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Grammar §3) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Unclear Pronoun Reference (<i>Basic Grammar §4</i>) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Grammar §5) ( - 2 points)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion of <i>it's</i> and <i>its</i> ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Sentence fragment (<i>Basic Grammar §6</i>) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Faulty Modification (<i>Basic Grammar §7</i>) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Faulty Parallelism (<i>Basic Grammar §8</i>) ( - 2 points)</li> </ul> |
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