

Syllabus – Intro to Philosophy

PHI 2010 (section 12665) * Summer B, 2022 * University of Florida

Please read all of this information carefully! The answers to many of your questions are here!

Class: M, T, W, R, F, Period 5 (2:00-3:15) * Matherly Hall, 113
Office hours: W, R, F, 12:30-1:30 or by appointment * Griffin-Floyd Hall, 303
Instructor: Schuyler Sturm * tsturm@ufl.edu

Overview

Instead of a “greatest hits” model, this class will attempt to immerse you in contemporary philosophy as it is practiced. The papers we read may be old or new, and they may come from different locations or philosophical traditions, but working philosophers draw from many sources, and this class is an introduction to philosophy both as a topic and as a discipline.

Because philosophy has such a tremendous range, I have had to restrict the focus of the class somewhat, and I decided to select readings that bear upon something that each one of you has probably thought about before: “Who am I?”

The first unit of the class will introduce you to the basics of logic and argumentation, along with the general idea of what philosophy is. After that, each week will address a broad philosophical topic through a sample of readings from within that area. The weekly topics will be, in order, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and applied social philosophy.

None of the questions raised will be thoroughly addressed, and they will certainly not be answered! Instead, you will be given a taste of the ways in which philosophers try to tackle them. Hopefully, you will be inspired to look more deeply into those questions that are most interesting or most perplexing to you.

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.

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 via a set of assigned papers and exams, in which they will be assessed for their abilities to: (i) understand and apply basic concepts of good reasoning, including validity and

soundness, (ii) accurately and fairly describe and explain the 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, persuasively, and in an informed and conceptually sophisticated manner the philosophical issues discussed in the course.

After taking this class, you should have a good preliminary understanding of the scope and method of academic analytic philosophy, and you should also have a basic understanding of what makes for a good philosophical argument. This class also fulfills a writing requirement, so you should come out of it having improved your understanding of what makes for clear and convincing writing.

Structure

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, there will be lectures on the required reading material. You will be expected to have read the assigned material before the lecture about it. There is no textbook required for this course. All readings will be provided as PDFs accessible on the course Canvas site.

Some of the assigned readings will be difficult, but I will provide notes concerning terminology and the concepts and arguments that you should pay most attention to. An experience you will share with every professional philosopher is that of reading something and only sort of grasping it. That's OK! We'll discuss it all together, so you'll never have to figure it out alone. You are strongly encouraged to come to office hours as often as you like.

On Fridays, we will discuss all the readings of the week in a seminar format, so most of the talking will be up to you. You should come to each Friday seminar with questions, comments, and tirades prepared beforehand. Demonstration of your familiarity with the readings during our seminars will determine the bulk of your participation grade.

Attendance at all lectures and seminars is mandatory unless you are excused. Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade.

If you have any concerns about the class structure or if you have suggestions about what would help you to learn the material more easily, please let me know!

Honor Code

No breach of the UF academic honesty policy will be tolerated. You are expected to abide by the honor code, as stated here: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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 most common type of academic dishonesty in a class like this is plagiarism. When you are submitting written work, the best way to avoid plagiarism is through an abundance of caution. If you even suspect that an idea you are expressing came from someone other than you – whether an author, an instructor, or a fellow student – take pains to indicate its source. If you have any

doubts about how ideas obtained from others should be cited, do not hesitate to ask! It is always better to take too much care in citations than to risk plagiarizing.

And that risk is very serious. Punishment for egregious plagiarism can range from a failing grade in the class to suspension or other administrative sanctions. If an instance of plagiarism seems to have been done mistakenly, in good faith, it will still result in significant point deductions on an assignment, and the assignment may receive a grade of zero. Be vigilant!

Assignments

There will be a total of five assignments: one quiz, one draft, and three papers.

The quiz will become available on the first Friday of the class, and it will cover some of the information about logic and argumentation that we will go over in the first week. You will be able to take the quiz up to three times, and your final score will be an average of the scores that you get on each attempt. For example, if you get 45 out of 50 points the first time, then you can just keep the 90%. If you take the quiz again and get a 50 out of 50, then you'll have 95% on the assignment. If, however, you take it again and get 40 out of 50, then you'll end up with just 85% as an overall grade.

A draft of your third paper will be due by midnight on July 31, but you are encouraged to turn it in earlier. We will discuss this in class, but “draft” here is not a precise term: you could turn in a proposal or an outline. Either way, the draft will not be graded, ***but you will not be able to turn in the third paper at all unless your draft has been approved.***

Instructions for the three papers will be available on Canvas. The rubric used to grade the three essays will also be viewable there.

Grading

There will be 1000 points available, as shown in the table below, and your course grade will be determined based on those points according to the other table.

Letter	Scale	Points
A	4.00	930-1000
A-	3.67	900-929
B+	3.33	860-899
B	3.00	820-859
B-	2.67	790-819
C+	2.33	750-789
C	2.00	720-749
C-	1.67	690-719
D+	1.33	660-689
D	1.00	620-659
D-	0.67	600-619

E	0.00	0-599
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Assignments	Points available
Quiz	50
First Paper	250
Second Paper	250
Third Paper Draft	---
Third Paper	350
Attendance/participation	100
Total	1000

Schedule

Date	Topic	Primary author	Activity
	Week 1 - logic and argumentaion		
27-Jun	Philosophy as a subject	-	Lecture
28-Jun	Areas within philosophy	TBD	Lecture
29-Jun	Formal arguments	SEP	Lecture
30-Jun	Argumentation	TBD	Lecture
1-Jul	Logic and argumentation review	-	Quiz
	Week 2 - metaphysics		
5-Jul	Psychological and biological accounts of personhood	Amy Kind	Lecture
6-Jul	Dualism	Princess Elizabeth	Lecture
7-Jul	Necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood	Nāgasena	Lecture
8-Jul	Personhood	-	Seminar
	Week 3 - Epistemology		
11-Jul	Global skepticism	Jessica Wilson	Lecture
12-Jul	Factivity	Catherine Elgin	Lecture
13-Jul	Decision-making	Agnes Callard	Lecture
14-Jul	Decision-making	Agnes Callard	Lecture
15-Jul	Knowledge	-	Seminar
	Week 4 - Ethics		
18-Jul	Moral anti-realism	Sharon Street	Lecture
19-Jul	Relativism	Mary Midgley	Lecture
20-Jul	Consequentialism	Philippa Foot	Lecture
21-Jul	Kant and animal rights	Christine Korsgaard	Lecture
22-Jul	Ethical thought	-	Seminar
	Week 5 - Aesthetics		
25-Jul	Aesthetic realism	Louise Hanson	Lecture
26-Jul	Aesthetic realism	Louise Hanson	Lecture
27-Jul	Perception	Giulia Scalas	Lecture
28-Jul	Humor	Sheila Lintott	Lecture
29-Jul	Taste and preference	-	Seminar
	Week 6 - social philosophy		

1-Aug	Social construction	Ásta	Lecture
2-Aug	Social construction	Ásta	Lecture
3-Aug	Testimonial injustice	Miranda Fricker	Lecture
4-Aug	Humans and society	Simone Weil	Lecture
5-Aug	The uses of philosophy	-	Seminar