

PHI 2010: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Summer 2023 SYLLABUS

Instructor Information:

James Simpson, simpson.james@ufl.edu

Office Hours:

Office Hours: Time: M, 9:30am-12:30am, OBA. Location: Griffin-Floyd Hall Rm 331.

Course Time and Location:

Meeting Time: M-F, 2:00pm-3:15pm. (Period 5) Location: MAT 0113.

General Education and Writing Requirement

PHI 2010 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 4000 Course. 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 key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

<http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/program-area-objectives.aspx>

Humanities Gen Ed SLOs:

	Content	Critical Thinking	Communication
Humanities	Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.	Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.	Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

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.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Content. This course introduces students to philosophy by engaging with various readings and arguments, both classical and contemporary, in the history of philosophy. This course will have a four-part structure. The first part of the course will cover arguments for and against the existence of God. The second part of the course will cover various topics in epistemology, with a specific focus on the Regress Problem, Cartesian skepticism, the Gettier Problem, and the Problem of Induction. The third part of the course will be concerned with metaphysics. In this connection, we'll mainly concentrate on personal identity, free will & moral responsibility, what objects, if any, exist (e.g., do numbers exist? do chairs exist? do persons exist?, etc), and, at the end of the third part, a little bit of meta-ethics. The fourth part of the course will primarily focus on discussion of the three standard normative ethical theories, which are utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, and Aristotelian virtue theory.

Method. This course also has significant goals in building skills of philosophical thinking, speaking, and writing.

Note well, this course fulfills the Gordon Rule 4,000 Writing Requirement and the Humanities Requirement for General Education. The Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students

meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, I'll evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Required Materials:

Available in the UF Bookstore: Gideon Rosen et al., *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy* 2nd Edition ISBN: 9780393624427

New: 84.25, Used: 63.25, Rental New: 63.19, Rental Used: 33.70

Note: Some required readings will also be made available on our course Canvas site, under "Files."

Recommended:

On writing well generally: Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. (Pearson, 1999).

On writing a philosophy paper: Pryor, Jim. "A Brief Guide to Writing a Philosophy Paper" (2008).

Assessment:

Requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

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

(1) To do well in this course you must be prepared to engage the assigned material. This includes keeping current on the reading assignments and being aware of the course schedule and activities as discussed in lecture and posted on the course website. You are responsible for regularly checking your UF email and the Canvas site.

(2) Most people who do well on writing assignments for this course begin writing well in advance of deadlines. You should plan to meet with me to discuss your plans for your papers, and you should expect to write and revise drafts of your essays. However, note two things. First, **I do not read drafts**. I am happy to discuss your paper, help you work through your argument, etc, but I will not be reading drafts. Second, let me disabuse you of a common misconception: **visiting me during office hours doesn't result in an automatic A for any assignment or for the course**. That said, please come to see me during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions or to talk with me

about your papers or the course, and feel free to email me with any questions you may have about the content of the course or some administrative aspect of it.

(3) Writing assignments will be on assigned topics.

(4) In grading your work, I will hold you to a standard that assumes you have been doing the readings and coming to class.

(5) In grading your work, I'll be using a grading rubric. The rubric is available on our Canvas site under "Files".

(6) Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher for the course and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. These essays will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the writing assessment rubric posted on Canvas under "Files".

Points:

1. Attendance: 5 points.
2. 2: 15-Q Canvas Multiple Choice and True/False Exams (10 points each): 20 points.
3. 1: 1000-word personal reflection: 10 points.
4. 1: 1000-word exploratory essay: 15 points.
5. 2: 1,000-word take-home argumentative essay exams (worth 25 points each): 50 points.
 - o Total: 100 points.

Points for all written materials will be posted on Canvas as soon as they are graded.

Late work will be accepted but penalized unless legitimate documentation is provided to me within the appropriate amount of time (see below). For more information about late penalties, contact me via email or visit me during office hours.

- Excused absence(s) require documentation be provided to me within a week of the absence(s).

Papers are submitted by uploading a pdf or doc on Canvas.

Critical Due Dates:

Exam 1: 7/19

Exam 2: 8/10

Personal Reflection: 7/14

Exploratory Essay: 8/1

Argumentative Essay 1: 7/22

Argumentative Essay 2: 8/5

Attendance:

You must attend at least 80% of the classes to get full credit for attendance.

Exploratory Essay:

This will be an opportunity for students to write on some philosophical topic that interests them, but that's not directly discussed in class. This writing assignment has no formatting, style, or structural requirements. The goal will be to explore some area of interest in philosophy and write about it engagingly.

Exams:

There will be two exams in this class, both will be taken on Canvas. The first exam will be on the material covered in the first part of the course. The second will be on material covered in the last three parts of the course. Both exams will be multiple choice, true/false exams. Before each exam a detailed study guide will be provided by me.

Personal Reflection:

The personal reflection will be a 1000-word paper answering one of the following two questions:

Question 1: What is the most serious ethical problem/issue/dilemma that you face or have faced as a college student? How did you resolve or deal with this problem?

Question 2: What do you think is the most serious ethical problem/issue/dilemma that college students face? How do you think students should resolve or deal with this problem?

Some examples of what students wrote about previously:

Not fitting in

Not making friends

Financial stress

Cheating on exams

Lying (friends/family/partner/teachers...)

Racism

Bullying

Sexual misconduct

Homesickness

Drinking & taking drugs

To receive full points for this assignment you must turn it in by the due date, meet the word count requirement, and actually address the question that you choose to write on.

Argumentative Essays:

There will be two 1000-word argumentative essays. These will be on assigned topics. They will test your understanding of the material and your skill at writing philosophical essays in the analytical style. See the following for an example of a nice undergraduate analytic philosophy paper: <http://fresnostate.edu/artshum/philosophy/documents/ClarkCUPR1-2.pdf> (Links to an external site.). Note well that your paper needn't be of the same quality as this paper to receive high marks, but it should imitate its structure and style.

Grading Scale is as follows:

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Classroom Conduct:

Do not be disruptive or disrespectful. All conversations should be civil and on-topic.

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.

Plagiarism will result, at the very least, in failure of the course, if not suspension or expulsion from the University. So, don't do it.

Students with Disabilities, Student Counseling Services:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling services: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 392-1575

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

CANVAS E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the e-Learning in Canvas button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 2010 from the Courses pull-down menu at the top of the page. 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.

Writing Studio:

Students will also find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page: www.writing.ufl.edu

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for

personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct.

Tentative Schedule (could change depending on the pace of the course):

Part 1: Philosophy of Religion

7/3: Review Syllabus. Introduce Anselm's Ontological Argument.

7/5: Reading: Anselm's Ontological Argument (OA), pages (pp) 8-9 of the Norton. Andrew Chapman "The Ontological Argument for God's Existence" and Bailie Peterson "Attributes of God".

7/6: Reading: Excerpts from Alvin Plantinga 1974 on the so-called modal ontological argument.

7/7: Reading: Aquinas' Contingency Argument (CA), pp. 13-15 of the Norton. Excerpt from Samuel Clarke on the CA.

7/10: Reading: Roger White on the Fine-Tuning Argument, pp. 29-36.

7/11: Reading: First Cause Argument. Reading: Aquinas, pp. 13-14. W.L. Craig 1991.

7/12: Problem of Evil. Reading: Thomas Metcalf "The Problem of Evil".

7/13: Reading: Louise Antony and Elenore Stump, pp. 41-57 of the Norton.

7/14: **Personal Reflection due.** No Reading. Brief discussion of some other arguments for and against God's existence.

Part 2: Epistemology

7/17: Epistemic Justification. Then Edmund Gettier, pp. 143-45 of the Norton. Andrew Chapman "The Gettier Problem and the Definition of Knowledge". (Gettier Problem)

7/18: Reading: Michael Clark 1963.

7/19: **Exam 1**. Reading: Timothy Williamson, pp. 149-155 of the Norton. (Knowledge First).

7/20: Reading: Andrew Chapman "External World Skepticism". G.E. Moore, pp. 278-283 of the Norton. (Problem of Skepticism)

7/21: Reading: Jonathan Vogel, pp. 284-291 of the Norton.

7/22: **Argumentative Essay 1 due**.

7/24: Reading: Nick Bostrom, pp. 442-451 of the Norton.

7/25: Pyrrhonian Skepticism. Reading: Diego Machuca 2011. (Regress Problem)

7/26: Pyrrhonian Skepticism cont. Reading: Peter Klein 2014.

7/27: Reading: Kenneth Blake Vernon "The Problem of Induction". David Hume, pp. 166-74 (Problem of Induction)

Part 3: Personal Identity, Free Will & Moral Responsibility, and What Is There

7/28: Reading: Chad Vance, "Personal Identity".

7/31: Reading: Derek Parfit 1971.

8/1: **Exploratory Essay due**. Reading: Jonah Nagashima's "Free Will and Free Choice". Reading: Galen Strawson, pp. 600-09 of the Norton.

8/2: Compatibilism and Libertarianism. Reading: A.J. Ayer, pp. 618-24 of the Norton.

8/3: Reading: Chelsea Haramia "Free Will and Moral Responsibility"; Rebecca Renninger "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility".

8/4: Reading: Stephen Yablo, pp. 461-466 and Peter Unger, pp. 467-73.

8/5: **Argumentative Essay 2 due**.

Part 4: Meta-Ethics and Normative Ethics:

8/7: Reading: Thomas Metcalf "Ethical Realism"; Mackie, pp. 850-57 of the Norton.

8/8: Utilitarianism. Reading: J.S. Mill, pp. 790-798 of the Norton. Shane Gronholz "Consequentialism".

8/9: Reading: Kant, pp. 800-10 of the Norton; Andrew Chapman "Deontology: Kantian Ethics".

8/10: Exam 2. Deontology cont. No Reading.

8/11: Reading: Aristotle, pp. 813-822 of the Norton; Rosalind Hursthouse, pp. 824-30 of the Norton.

ADDENDUM: WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC					
	A	B	C	D	E
RESPONSE TO PAPER TOPIC, FOCUSED USE OF TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIAL	• 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.
INTRO & THESIS	• The introduction & thesis do an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The thesis makes a significant and debatable claim.	• The introduction & thesis do a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The thesis is clear and fairly interesting.	• The introduction & thesis do not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The thesis is somewhat unclear, fairly obvious, or a bit misguided.	• The introduction & thesis do not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The thesis is confused, obvious, or obviously wrong.	• The introduction & thesis do not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The thesis is missing or incoherent.
PARAGRAPH	• Paragraphs are excellently written. Paragraphs make a point, with clear topic sentences to govern them, contain no irrelevant sentences or gaps, and each paragraph advances the thesis one step further.	• Paragraphs do a good enough job of making a point, and have clear enough topic sentences to govern them. They contain no irrelevant sentences or gaps, and each paragraph advances the thesis one step further.	• Only some of the paragraphs do their job well enough. Topic sentences are partly clear or only partially govern; point of the paragraphs is only somewhat intact; the paragraphs don't explicitly relate to the thesis or to nearby paragraphs.	• An unsatisfactory use of paragraphs. Topic sentences are missing or unclear. Paragraphs have multiple or underdeveloped ideas. Paragraphs are islands and have no relation to thesis or nearby paragraphs.	• It is unclear how the paragraphs are individual units of meaning toward an overall end.
STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENT	• The argumentative line of the paper is fully intact—all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material and no gaps in argument. The argument advances in a manner that is	• The argumentative line of the paper is almost intact—almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material and very few gaps in argument. The argument advances	• The argumentative line of the paper is generally intact—content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material and perhaps some gaps in argument. The argument is	• The argumentative line is not intact—the content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material and/or major gaps in the argument. The argument is difficult	• The argumentative line is either missing or incoherent—how the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, there is far too much irrelevant material, and there is a failure to link pieces of the

	easy to follow.	in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow.	difficult to follow in places.	to follow or incomplete.	idea to one another. The argument is very difficult to follow.
STRENGTH OF ARGUMENT	• 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.
USE OF EVIDENCE	• 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 interpretations 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.

NOTE: Criteria are adjusted to the assignment. For example, the thesis of an analytic exposition is a clear statement of the philosopher's main argumentative claim and its stakes, while the thesis of a full argumentative essay is an original claim taking a position on a philosopher's argumentative claim and its stakes; the argumentative line of an analytic exposition does not include objections and replies, while the argumentative line of a full essay does. And so on.