

PHI2010 Introduction to Philosophy  
Summer A 2024

---

**Instructor: Anastasia Gavrilos, M.A.**

**Contact: [agavrilos@ufl.edu](mailto:agavrilos@ufl.edu) or through canvas (outlook preferred)**

**Telephone *in case of an emergency*: (603) 856-5638**

**Office Hours: 9:30-11am T/R or by appointment, Griffin-Floyd 316**

**Course Location: MAT 0113**

**Course Time: Period 6 (3:30 PM - 4:45 PM)**

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*Content.* This course will introduce students to some of the central topics in Western Philosophy. Students will explore, discuss, and think critically about answers to the following questions: What does it mean to pursue philosophy? What can we know about the world? Are the mind and body the same, or are they two different things? How should we live our lives? What makes an action morally right and what makes a person good?

*Method.* Additionally, this Introduction to Philosophy course aims to provide students with the instruction and resources necessary to develop skills in critical thinking, collaborative discussion, writing, and building strong argument

**COURSE OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND DISTRIBUTION CREDITS:**

General Education Requirement and Objective: 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:

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Communication</b>
--	----------------	--------------------------	----------------------

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
------------	--	---	---

**Writing Requirement and Objective:** This course confers 4000 words towards the Writing Requirement (WR), which 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, the instructor will 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 an overall course grade of C or higher, a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

**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.

**Required Texts:**

*All texts will be provided in PDF form on canvas. Students are expected to bring a printed copy of the readings to class. Failure to do so will result in loss of participation points.*

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

Assignment	% of Course Grade
Attendance and Participation	5%

<b>Reflection Journal Assignments</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>In-Class Quizzes</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Argumentative Essays</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Reflection Essay</b>	<b>10%</b>

### **Attendance and Participation:**

Students are required to attend each lecture, to have done the assigned readings in advance, and to participate in classroom discussion/activities. Students should be prepared to ask questions related to the material and to answer questions asked by the instructor. Poor participation in classroom discussion and activities will result in a 1- 5% deduction in a student's grade. Students will receive **two automatically excused absences**. All additional absences will be considered unexcused unless students provide the instructor with documentation that confirms the student was absent for an acceptable reason. What is considered an acceptable reason is determined by university guidelines which can be found below.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

### **Reflection Journal:**

At the beginning of each unit, students will be shown a media clip or excerpt from the relevant literature. I will then ask you to spend the first five minutes or so of class writing a response to a specific question about what was shown. You will also need to upload your in-class reflections into the journal entry on Canvas by Wednesdays, 11:59pm. You may do so by typing up your response and uploading it in .doc, .docx, or a .pdf format. You may also take a picture of your hand-written reflection journal response, and upload the picture of your work on Canvas. Your responses should be about 100-words or more. It is important that you keep track of your journal responses as these will be the basis for your reflection essays at the conclusion of the semester.

### **In Class Quizzes**

Each Friday, students will work in groups to analyze selected readings to be announced at the beginning of the class period. They will have the duration of the class period to read, analyze and respond to questions in the form of a short response that will test both their comprehension of the reading, as well as their ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of certain philosophical arguments. This will also require that students make good use of their classmates and group work to accomplish assignments. You may *not* use your two allowed absences to excuse a quiz grade. Failure to be present for in-class quizzes without proper documentation will result in a zero for that particular quiz grade. These will be graded as either complete or incomplete.

### **Argumentative Essays:**

Students are required to write 3 out of the 4 possible argumentative essays, each of which will be 20% of the overall grade. **ALL STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO WRITE ON THE FIRST ESSAY TOPIC**, which will be between 1000-1200 words. The following two essay topics will be selected from the three following units at the student's discretion, both of which must be between 1500-1750 words.

These essays are designed to assess students' philosophical writing skills. To that end, the argumentative essays must present and defend an original argument in response to one of the prompts provided. The argumentative essays must include an introduction with a clear and concise thesis statement, exposition, original argument that presents strong reasons in support of the thesis, and finally the essay must present an objection and offer a response to this objection. A detailed rubric for writing assignments can be found at the end of the syllabus. Students will also find a number of resources for improving their writing at the university's Writing Studio page (<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>), including a link to an electronic version of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>), the recommended style manual for this course

### Reflection Essay

At the conclusion of the semester, students will be asked to complete a short essay that acts as reflection of their journal responses, between 500-750 words. Students will reflect on their initial impressions of the material presented and explain how their perspective has changed, if at all, or how it has enhanced their understanding of one of the studied units. This will be graded as either complete or incomplete.

**GRADING SCALE:** The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:

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

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-76=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

**Please note:** A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

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

### **WORKING TOGETHER**

You are encouraged to talk to one another outside of class about philosophy and about this course as much as possible. This includes discussion of paper topics, and it includes reading drafts of one another's work. If you do work together, please be mindful of the following:

1. Your final paper must be your original work, and not a repetition of someone else's ideas or essay.
2. Each essay must be a piece of written thinking in itself. Sometimes conversation in advance of writing can make you feel like the conclusions of that conversation are now established, such that you can now talk about them by merely stating or even implying them. But your essays need to "show your work"—if the argument is not explicitly on the page, you haven't made the argument.
3. You must be willing to endorse what ends up in your paper. Beware of letting others persuade you to go in the wrong direction. You are ultimately responsible for both the understandings and misunderstandings in the papers you turn in

### **FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY**

The instructor of this course is committed to supporting all of their students—to making class administration fair for everyone, to ensuring class space is welcoming for all and assignments and discussions productive opportunities for all. We invite conversation with you about how we may better accomplish this at any time.

### **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 6 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/scer/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) 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.

**ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK POLICIES** As previously stated, 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. Requirements for class attendance and make-up

exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **CANVAS E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

This course is supplemented by online content in the eLearning 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.

### **Students Requiring Accommodation**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

### **UF Evaluations Process**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but 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/>

### **Campus Resources**

#### Health and Wellness

**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 the 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.

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

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

**Student Complaints On-Campus:** Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

### **Course Schedule (subject to change)**

*All readings will be provided by the instructor on canvas in .pdf form.*

Unit	Date	Reading/Lecture Topic	Assignments
Week 1: What is Philosophy	May 13th	Introduction lecture/syllabus review	
	May 14th	Cornman, Lehrer, and Pappas, "The Tools of the Trade" Introduction to "Logic" and Argumentation	
	May 15th	Beardsly and Beardsly "What is Philosophy"	
	May 16th	Plato: The Apology	
	May 17th	No New Reading, Workshop for Short	<b>Catch-up day, In-Class Quiz</b>

		Writing Assignment	
Week 2: What can we know?	May 20th	Descartes, Meditations (Selections)	<b>First Short-Essay Due May 20th, 11:59pm</b>
	May 21st	Descartes, Meditations (Selections) Continued	
	May 22nd	John Pollock "A Brain in a Vat"	
	May 23rd	Susan Hack "Epistemology, Who Needs It"	
	May 24th	No new readings	<b>Catch-up day, In-Class Quiz</b>
Week 3: What is the self?	May 27th (Holiday)	NO CLASS	<b>Argumentative Essay 1 of 3 (Optional) Due May 7th, 11:59pm</b>
	May 28th	Thomas Nagel "What is it like to be a Bat"	
	May 29th	Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity"	
	May 30th	John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"	
	May 31st	No New reading	<b>Catch-up day, In-Class Quiz</b>
Week 4: How should we live?	June 3rd	Derek Parfait "What Makes Someone's Life Go Best"	<b>Argumentative Essay 2 of 3 (Optional) Due June 3rd, 11:59pm</b>
	June 4th	Robert Nozik "The Experience Machine"	
	June 5th	Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics Books I and II	
	June 6th	Sophocles, <i>Elektra</i>	
	June 7th	No new readings	<b>Catch-up day, In-Class Quiz</b>



Week 5: Morality and Metaethics	June 10th	John Corvino “The Fact/Opinion Distinction”	<b>Argumentative Essay 3/3 (Optional) Due June 10th, 11:59pm</b>
	June 11th	John Bennet “The Conscious of Huckleberry Finn”	
	June 12th	John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (selections)	
	June 13th	Immanuel Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals	
	June 14th	No new readings	<b>Catch-up day, In-Class Quiz</b>
Week 6: What Should We Do?	June 17th	Phillippa Foot “The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect”	
	June 18th	Elizabeth Anscombe “Mr. Truman’s Degree”	
	June 19th (Holiday)	NO CLASS	
	June 20th	Judith Jarvis Thompson “In Defense of Abortion”	
	June 21st	No new readings	<b>In-Class Quiz, Reflection Essays due, June 21st, 11:59pm</b>

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>
<p><b>Grammar:</b> The document <i>Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments</i> posted under the "Resources" tab discusses some common grammatical errors you must avoid. Grammatical errors will incur deductions as follows:</p> <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</i> §2) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Unclear Pronoun Reference (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §4) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Confusion of <i>it's</i> and <i>its</i> ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Sentence fragment (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §1) ( - 4 points)</li> <li>• Faulty Modification (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §3) ( - 2 points)</li> <li>• Faulty Parallelism (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §5) ( - 2 points)</li> </ul>				