

# PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy

## Summer B 2025

Class numbers 11661, 15755, 16456, 17915, 17916, 17917

### 1. General Information

#### *Instructor*

Dr. James Wetzel

Email: james.wetzel@ufl.edu

Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall, room 318

Office Hours: M, W, F 11:00 AM – 11:45 AM

#### *Teaching Assistants*

Steven Clark

Email: clark.steven@ufl.edu

Office: TBA

Office hours: TBA

Luke McGrath

Email: lukemcgrath@ufl.edu

Office: TBA

Office hours: TBA

Matthew Vinton

Email: matthew.vinton@ufl.edu

Office: TBA

Office hours: TBA

#### *Meeting Times and Locations*

Everyone in the class meets together three times a week for a “lecture” session led by the instructor, Dr. Wetzel. Smaller groups meet in “breakout” sessions according to their distinct section twice a week, led by the relevant Teaching Assistant.

Class #	TA	Monday-Wednesday-Friday Lecture	Tuesday-Thursday Breakout
17916	Steven Clark	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Anderson Hall 134
16456	Steven Clark	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	12:30 PM – 1:45 PM Anderson Hall 21
11661	Luke McGrath	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	11:00 AM – 12:15 PM Matherly Hall 15
15755	Luke McGrath	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	2:00 PM – 3:15 PM Anderson Hall 13
17917	Matthew Vinton	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	11:00 AM – 12:15 PM Matherly Hall 14
17916	Matthew Vinton	9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Little Hall 109	2:00 PM – 3:15 PM Turlington Hall 1101

#### *Required Texts*

- Plato. *Five Dialogues*. Trans. Grube & Cooper. Hackett, 2002. ISBN: 9780872206335
- René Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Trans. Cress. Hackett, 1993. ISBN: 9780872201927
- Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Steinberg. Hackett, 1993. ISBN: 9780872202290

### *Catalog Course Description*

In this course, students will be introduced to the nature of philosophy, philosophical thinking, and major intellectual movements in the history of philosophy, including topics from the western philosophical tradition, and various problems in philosophy. Students will strengthen their intellectual skills, become more effective learners, and develop broad foundational knowledge.

### *Customized Course Description*

PHI 2010 is meant to introduce students to the several of the central issues and arguments in the discipline of philosophy, as well as to the art of reasoning well. We will accomplish these goals by a careful reading of some of the most seminal works of philosophy of both the ancient and modern periods. In these works, we will find discussions of ontology, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of religion.

### *General Education Credit: Humanities*

This course is a State Core Humanities course in the UF General Education program. To receive credit towards the General Education requirements, a student must earn at least a C for the course. As spelled out at <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>, every General Education Humanities course includes the following objectives:

Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

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 relevant factors that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

PHI2010 pursues these objectives by familiarizing students with the thought of several of the figures who have significantly shaped philosophy as a discipline and a way of life. Since philosophers continue to address many of the same problems that concerned their predecessors and continue to draw upon the concepts and methods they employed, an understanding of the history of philosophy is essential to being a good philosopher. Students in this class will come to understand how key ancient and modern philosophers both defined and sought to answer problems in central areas of philosophy including epistemology, metaphysics and ontology, ethics, theology, and political philosophy.

General education courses in Humanities must incorporate Student Learning Outcomes as specified at <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-gen-ed-courses/slos-and-performance-indicators/student-learning-outcomes/>. For Humanities, these are:

1. Content. Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.
2. Critical Thinking. Identify and analyze the relevant factors that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.
3. Communication. Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

In this course, students will satisfy these as follows:

1. Content. Demonstrate a mastery of several of the critical arguments and concepts within the discipline of philosophy by writing two papers, completing in-class quizzes, and actively

participating in class discussion, where these are assessed for how well students accurately identify key philosophical claims and arguments.

2. Critical Thinking. Create and assess arguments for philosophical claims in written argumentative essays, anticipating objections and defending a thesis at some length.
3. Communication. Present philosophical claims and arguments in clear and organized written form, avoiding mechanical errors and using the philosophical techniques needed for explicit argumentation on difficult topics, and articulate cogent reading questions which display clear signs of thoughtful engagement with assigned readings.

#### *General education credit: Writing Requirement*

This course provides 4000 words of writing requirement (WR) credit. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures that students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher in the course as a whole *and* must also satisfactorily complete the writing component of the course. Satisfactory completion of the writing component requires the timely submission of both papers and a grade of C+ or better on both of them.

Evaluation of the two 2,000 word papers in this course will include feedback on grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. These essays will be evaluated according to the criteria set out in the writing assessment rubric at the end of this syllabus. Students will 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.

## **II. Course Goals**

*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 student's 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 competence 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 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 material in the course.

#### *Statewide Student Learning Outcomes*

All versions of PHI2010 aim to achieve the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop critical thinking skills.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of classical western philosophical views.
- Students will analyze, explain, and evaluate foundational concepts of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

Student papers and participation in class discussions are designed to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills, as well as to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their

understanding of the foundational views presented in the course. Finally, the analysis, explanation, and evaluation of concepts forms the core of each of the assigned papers in the course.

### III. Assignments and Grade Determination

Your course grade is determined by the following factors:

Participation	10%
Reading Questions	10%
In-Class Quizzes	20%
Paper I	30%
Paper II	30%

*Participation.* Respectful participation is expected of everyone. This can take a variety of forms: participating in class discussions, asking questions in person or by email, attending office hours, etc. Each "lecture" course meeting has assigned readings, which will require critical engagement and reflection. You should come to class prepared to discuss these readings and demonstrate that you have thought about them carefully and critically prior to the class meeting. Attendance will be taken at the start of each "breakout" session meeting and will count towards your participation grade.

*Reading Questions.* For each week of the course beginning with the second, you will need to submit a question regarding the reading for Monday's or Wednesday's lecture. These questions are to be turned in via Canvas no later than 11:59 PM Tuesday. The questions will be graded for effort and commonly asked questions will be addressed either in the next lecture session or in the next breakout session, if they were not already addressed during the lecture for the day they are due.

*In-Class Quizzes.* Periodically throughout the semester there will be 15-minute in-class quizzes in which you will be required to write out an answer to a question or questions regarding important concepts or information which we finished discussing the previous lecture section. The 15-minute quiz period will begin at the start of class. The TAs will collect your response at the end of that period. If you are less than 15 minutes late to class, you may still attempt the quiz, but you will not be allowed to make up any time which you missed by being tardy. You must bring writing materials (i.e. pen and paper) for these quizzes as such materials will not be provided. The quizzes will **not** be announced prior to the start of the session in which they will be held.

*Papers.* You will write two papers for this course, due on 07/21 and 08/04. For each paper, you will be given the choice between several prompts, of which you must choose one and write a paper of roughly 2,000 words in response. Each paper is due at 11:59 PM on the date indicated for that assignment. Late work will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor (**not** the TA) arranged a minimum of 24 hours in advance. Failure to submit an assignment in Canvas by its due date will result in a grade of '0' (zero) for that assignment. Papers will be evaluated in accordance with the rubric below:

#### *Writing Assessment Rubric*

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> </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</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</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</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</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>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>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>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>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>
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**Grade Scale.** The following grade scale will be used to determine 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

#### IV. Policies

**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 (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

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.

*Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a failing grade for the entire 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 Classroom Policies.* Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned readings in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of smart phones during class is not permitted. 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.

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

*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.

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

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.* Students with disabilities who would like to request academic accommodations should contact the disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) to receive an accommodation letter. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their needs as early as possible in the semester.

## V. Course Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule for the course. Any official changes to the schedule will be announced on Canvas, and the Canvas version of the syllabus will be modified accordingly. The texts listed for a given course meeting are to be read before the class meets for that day.

Week	Date	Readings & activities
1	Monday 6/30	Course Introduction
	Wednesday 7/2	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
	Friday 7/4	Holiday (no class)
2	Monday 7/7	Plato, <i>Apology</i>
	Wednesday 7/9	Plato, <i>Crito</i>
	Friday 7/11	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (57a to 84b)
3	Monday 7/14	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (84c to 118a); <u>Paper I assigned</u>
	Wednesday 7/16	Descartes, <i>First Meditation</i>
	Friday 7/18	Descartes, <i>Second Meditation</i>
4	Monday 7/21	Descartes, <i>Third Meditation</i> ; <b>Paper I Due</b>

	Wednesday 7/23	Descartes, <i>Fourth Meditation</i>
	Friday 7/25	Descartes, <i>Fifth Meditation</i>
5	Monday 7/28	Descartes, <i>Sixth Meditation</i> ; <u>Paper II assigned</u>
	Wednesday 7/30	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> I-III
	Friday 8/1	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> IV & V
6	Monday 8/4	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VI & VII; <b>Paper II Due</b>
	Wednesday 8/6	Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> VIII
	Friday 8/8	Make-up Day

## VI. 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 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.

### Academic Resources

*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).

*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.