

# Conflict of Ideas: How To Fight Fair

## I Course Information

- Course number: PHI 1001.
- Lecture:
  - Mondays and Wednesdays, Period 6 (12:50PM - 1:40PM).
  - Location: Little Hall, room 113
- Discussion:
  - Class 29173 (section 1000, TA):
    - \* Fridays, Period 3 (9:35 AM - 10:25AM)
    - \* Matherly Hall 114
  - Class 18949 (section 1001, TA):
    - \* Fridays, Period 4 (10:40 AM - 11:30AM)
    - \* Matherly Hall 105
  - Class 18950 (section 1002, TA):
    - \* Fridays, Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40PM)
    - \* Turlington Hall 2305
- Instructor:
  - Rodrigo Borges
  - Office: Griffin–Floyd Hall, room 314.
  - Office Hours: Mondays 4:00pm - 6:00pm (or by appointment).
  - Contact Information: rodrigo.borges@ufl.edu.
- Teaching Assistant:
  - Jacob Calhoun
    - \* Office: Griffin–Floyd Hall, room
    - \* Office hours: Thursdays 11:30am - 2:30pm
    - \* email address: calhounc@ufl.edu.

## **2 Course Description**

It's been suggested that war is the continuation of politics by different means (Klaus von Clausewitz). Some took that suggestion to mean that politics was the continuation of war by other means (Lenin). But, if war and politics are simply different ways in which we handle disagreement between people, within nations, and between nations, the analogy seems reasonable. War and politics sit at different ends of the same spectrum - ways in which we disagree. But, if the choice between the conflict of ideas and real conflict is so obvious (politics harm ideas, while wars harm real people), why do real conflicts keep happening? How can we understand what happens when people disagree-especially when they disagree about important or emotionally powerful issues? How can we resolve our disagreements in a principled fashion? Since the issues are important, we cannot just agree to disagree: we must learn how to have a fair fight. But how do we fight fair on the battleground of ideas?

The focus of the course will be on the conflict of ideas, and on how students can make a positive and lasting impact on the conflicts they will encounter in their own lives. To that end, students will learn about multiple aspects of intellectual conflict: psychological aspects of conflict that stand in the way of conscientious dialogue, questions about rhetoric and its role in manipulation, facing and working with our own cognitive limitations, and structuring debate and dialogue in a way that should help us make progress without simply compromising for the sake of peace. They will also practice and witness intellectual disagreements as they debate their fellow students and observe others engage in intellectual disagreement. In virtue of the complexity of the social phenomenon that is intellectual disagreement, students will be exposed to readings in multiple disciplines. Those include the disciplines of economics, statistics, history, feminist ethics, psychology, linguistics, computer science, philosophy, biology, and theology (see schedule for details). Assignments include short argumentative essays, reports on observed conflicts, and practicing and evaluating in-class debates.

## **3 Course Delivery**

This course is an online class focused on the written and spoken exchange of ideas. Students will be engaged through class discussion with the instructor and TAs with one another, as well as through comments from instructor and TAs on their written work. Weekly office hours offer additional opportunities for personal engagement with the class materials.

## **4 Quest I and Gen Ed Descriptions And Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Quest I Description**

Quest I courses are multidisciplinary explorations of essential questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What

makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students apply approaches from the humanities to mine works for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

### **Quest 1 SLOs**

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).

### **Humanities Description**

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.

### **Humanities SLOs**

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- 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 (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

A link to the General Education Subject Area Objectives can be found here:

<https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>

## Writing Description

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. The writing course grade assigned by the instructor has two components: the writing component and a course grade. **To receive writing credit a student must satisfactorily complete all the assigned written work and receive a minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course.** It is possible to not meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

## Writing Evaluation

- This course carries 2000 words that count towards the UF Writing Requirement. You must turn in all written work counting towards the 2000 words in order to receive credit for those words.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written work with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support (when appropriate), style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics, using a published writing rubric (see syllabus pages 12-14).
- More specific rubrics and guidelines for individual assignments may be provided during the course of the semester.

## 5 Course Objectives And Goals

### Student Learning Outcomes

Reflecting the curricular structures of Quest 1 and these Gen Ed designations, after taking War and Peace students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine disagreement and conflict of ideas within and across philosophy, history, science, politics, and religion (Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1).
2. Analyze and evaluate essential questions about intellectual disagreement using logic and its argument-evaluation techniques, conceptual analysis, and the historiography of ideas (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1).
3. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between the philosophical, historical and moral aspects of intellectual disagreement and the student's intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection SLO for Q1).
4. Develop and present clear and effective responses to disagreement and intellectual conflict in oral debates and in written format (Communication SLO for Gen Ed Humanities and Q1).

To see how assigned work advances each SLO, go to section 9 below.

## 6 Required Textbook And Materials

You won't have to buy materials for this course. All readings will be made available on Canvas.

### Recommended Reading

1. A terrific guide to general writing rules is Strunk and White's 'The Elements of Style.' The first edition is available online for free: <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.
2. A more recent style manual is Steven Pinker's 'Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century.' The book can be found anywhere books are sold.
3. The philosopher Jim Pryor (UNC) has his suggestions on how to read philosophy freely available here; he has also published suggestions on how to write philosophy here.

## 7 Grade Distribution And Grading Policies

Five 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.

*A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.*

Assignment	Total Number	% of Course Grade
Attendance	26	10%
Quizzes	?	extra credit
Interview	1	30%
Group Projects	6-7	30%
Papers	2	30%

### 7.1 Attendance

Starting Wednesday 8/28 (after the drop/add period) attendance will taken and expected. During lectures, attendance will taken using the iClicker system. For information on this system, please see:

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

You will use the iClicker Student application, either on a smartphone or a computer. You must register your clicker as soon as possible, but certainly before 7/3.

Everybody has one free, no questions asked absences. After that, every unjustified absence will cost you 10% of your attendance grade. More than three unjustified absences (these include the free) will ear you a zero for your attendance grade.

Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4.

## 7.2 Quizzes

There is an unspecified number of in-class quizzes. Those will take place in the first 10-15 minutes of lectures. Quizzes are designed to check your understanding of the readings assigned to the day in which the quiz takes place.

Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

## 7.3 Interview

Students will conduct 1 interview and write 1 report (700-1000 words), which will count towards the 2000 word General Education requirement. *YOU MUST SUBMIT THE REPORT IN ORDER TO SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT.* Individual project in which you interview someone outside of class and provide a report on the results. Here is a step-by-step description of the assignment:

1. Select someone you know to disagree with you on something you take seriously enough that each of you think the other is missing something important.
2. Get permission from that person to report on their views.
3. Conduct the interview with the goal of learning the reasons they have for their view. Take notes and/or record the interview.
4. Write a report concerning what you found out about the source of your disagreement. The report must specify (i) what it is you disagree about, (ii) what you think leads to that disagreement, (iii) how you think you might proceed if you were trying to resolve the disagreement, and (iv) your reflections on what you've learned about how you've formed your own views on that issue.

Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

## 7.4 Papers

Students will write two (2) papers, which will count towards the 2000 word General Education requirement. *YOU MUST SUBMIT BOTH ASSIGNMENTS IN ORDER TO SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT.* Both assignments are argumentative in nature and require students to make their own case. Grades will be assigned accordingly. Topics will be provided. The lowest grade will be dropped.

*PAPER 1 (400-500 words).* Will be on a provided topic. Will be accompanied by a video that explains the main ideas and arguments in the paper. Students will raise questions about your paper.

Each student must post at least one (1) question in a classmate's video. If your question(s) satisfy the following requirements, you will receive 25% of the group project grade (see below). Here are the requirements:

1. Your question (or questions) must add up to at least 150 words.

2. Your question (or questions) must be appropriately relevant to the material presented in the video.
3. *Specificity*: your question must be reasonably specific. That is, your question must refer to some particular point in video.
4. *Precision*: your question must fit into one of the categories below. When you post your question, you must indicate which category it belongs to. (You can simply put the name of the category at the start of your question.)
  - *Clarification*: questions of clarification ask for help in understanding a specific point or passage in video. For example, you might ask, ‘Why did you bring up X?’
  - *Significance*: questions of significance ask how a particular view or argument in the video might have broader significance – that is, how it might have relevance for other things that aren’t explicitly addressed in the video. For example, you might ask, ‘If you are right about X, does that mean that Y would also be true?’
  - *Criticism*: questions in this category proposes a criticism of some argument or claim made in the video. For example, you might ask, ‘You think that X is true, but this seems to me false. If Y is true, doesn’t that show that X is false?’

*PAPER 2 (800-1000 words)*. Will expand and improve on paper 1. It will incorporate the comments and feedback from instructor and TA, and it will answer to at least one of the questions raised in reply to the video that accompanied paper 1.

All writing assignments must be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman. You must include a word-count at the top of your first page. Please also include your UF ID number. Do NOT include your name on the assignment.

Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4

## 7.5 Group Projects

This assignment will be lead by your TA during discussion sessions. On average, there will be one group project every other week of class.

Advances SLOs: 1, 2, 3, 4.

## Grading 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	74 - 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

## 8 Course Policies And Student Resources

### 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.



## **Making Up Work**

Work is due as specified on Canvas. Work that is turned in late will incur a penalty unless you have a valid excuse. See the university policies, here, for what counts as a valid excuse.

## **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) 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.

## **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations <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/>.

## **Use of Electronics In The Classroom**

Electronic devices must be turned off and placed in closed bags for the duration of the class.

## **Writing Studio**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online here or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

## **Participation and Attendance**

You must come to class on time and prepared. This means keeping current on the reading assignments and being aware of the course schedule and activities, as presented in this syllabus, discussed in class, and announced on the course website. It also means bringing the day's reading to class with you. Consistent high-quality class participation—in large and small groups—is expected. 'High-quality' in this case means:

1. Informed (i.e., shows evidence of having done assigned work),
2. Thoughtful (i.e., shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised in readings and other discussions), and
3. Considerate (e.g., takes the perspectives of others into account).

If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

Absences will affect any student's ability to perform well in this course. Attendance will be taken (see required work below).

These expectations are consistent with university policies that can be found [here](#).

## **9 Class Schedule (subject to change)**

### **1. Introduction**

- 8/23 – Q&A about the syllabus
- 8/26 – How to read/write for this course (reading: Pryor)
- 8/28 – Logic primer (reading: Perry et. al)
- 8/30 (Discussion)
- 9/4 – Logic primer (reading: Perry et. al)
- 9/6 (Discussion)

### **2. The Problem of Conflict**

- 9/9 – Argument and War (reading: Aikin)
- 9/11 – Argument and War (reading: Aikin)
- 9/13 (Discussion)
- 9/16 – Just War (reading: Lazar)
- 9/18 – Just War (reading: Lazar)
- 9/20 (Discussion)
- 9/22 - Paper 1 is due
- 9/23 – Just argumentation (reading: Mill)
- 9/25 – Just argumentation (reading: Mill)
- 9/27 (Discussion)
- 9/30 – Just argumentation (reading: Mill)
- 10/2- Just argumentation (reading: Mill)
- 10/4 (Discussion)

### 3. Case Studies

- 10/7 – Case 1: Trolley Problems (reading: )
- 10/9 – Case 1: Trolley Problems (reading: )
- 10/11 (Discussion)
- 10/14 – Case 2: Freedom of Speech (reading: Howard)
- 10/16 – Case 2: Freedom of Speech (reading: Howard)
- 10/20 - Paper 2 is due
- 10/18 (Discussion) (Note: Holiday, no class)
- 10/21 – Case 3: Neuroscience and Free Will (reading: Nahmias)
- 10/23 – Case 3: Neuroscience and Free Will (reading: Nahmias)
- 10/25 (Discussion)
- 10/28 – Case 4: Misinformation (reading: Fallis)
- 10/30 – Case 4 Misinformation (reading: Fallis)
- 11/1 (Discussion)

### 4. Making Sense of Conflicts

- 11/4 – The psychology of conflict: the biased self and the lazy self (reading: Kahneman)
- 11/6 - The psychology of conflict: the biased self and the lazy self (reading: Kahneman)
- 11/8 (Discussion)
- 11/13 - The psychology of conflict: the evolution of conflict (reading: Mercier and Sperber)
- 11/15 (Discussion)
- 11/17 Interview report is due
- 11/18 - The psychology of conflict: the evolution of conflict (reading: Mercier and Sperber)
- 11/20 - TBD
- 11/22 (Discussion)
- 12/2 - TBD
- 12/4 - TBD