PHI2010 syllabus

Introduction to Philosophy (PHI2010, Spring 2013)

Basic information

The main instructor for these sections is Dr. Stewart Duncan.

Email: sdrd@ufl.edu (this is the best way to contact Dr. Duncan outside class)
Phone: 352-273-1808
Office: 330A Griffin-Floyd
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30–5:00pm; Wednesday, 3:30–5:00pm; and by appointment

There are also two teaching assistants, Ms. Cara Cummings (cararc1mmings@ufl.edu) and Mr. Carter Johnson (cjohnson26@ufl.edu). They will lead discussion sections, grade assignments, and hold office hours. Who your TA is depends on which section you are registered for.

Class times

Lectures: TR3 (9:35–10:25am) in TUR L005
Discussion sections: There are six discussion sections, which meet on Fridays. Please use ISIS to check your section number, and its meeting time and place.

Course description

This course is a general introduction to philosophy. The class will be divided into three main sections. The first will look at the philosophy of religion, focusing on arguments for and against the existence of God. The second section will consider epistemology, the theory of knowledge. We’ll look at, among other things, skeptical views, views that allege we know much less than we usually think we do. The third section will be about ethics. We’ll consider whether one might have a moral theory (a very general account of what makes things good and bad, right and wrong, virtuous and vicious) and what that might look like; discuss some skeptical approaches to ethics; and look at philosophical discussion of some concrete ethical problems.

Throughout our discussion of these topics, we will have two main aims. The first is to come to understand some views that philosophers have had on these issues. The second is to develop your own skills in such matters as careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.

Book

There is one book for the course, from which all the assigned readings will be taken.


It may well be possible to use an earlier edition of the book. However, if you choose to do so, you are personally responsible for making sure you have access to all the relevant readings.

Assessment

Papers (60%)

There will be three paper assignments. The papers will each count for 20% of your grade for the course.

Each paper should be between 1350 and 1500 words long. Topics will be made available two weeks before papers are due. All paper submission will be done on e-Learning. Any papers submitted late without a good excuse will be penalized two points (on a hundred-point scale) for every day they’re late.

No papers will be accepted after 5:00pm on Wednesday 4/24. If you fail to submit a paper, you will receive a grade of zero for it.
This class qualifies for 4000 words of credit for the university writing requirement (Gordon Rule). Note that there is a separate grade for the writing requirement. See http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html.

Final exam (25%)

The final exam will be held from 3:00 to 5:00pm on Tuesday 4/30 in our usual classroom. See http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/soc/201301/finalexamsched.html.

The final exam will count for 25% of your grade for the class. Makeup final exams will only be given in those few circumstances that merit the awarding of an incomplete grade for the class.

Quizzes (10%)

There will be twelve quizzes given during the semester. These will typically be given in lectures, though some may be given online. The dates and times of in-class quizzes will not be announced in advance. Your best ten of the ten grades will count. These quizzes will together account for 10% of your grade for the class, each counting equally. Quiz questions will usually be based on the reading for the class, but may also ask about material previously covered in the course.

Make-up quizzes will only be given if you have an appropriate and documented excuse.

Attendance (5%)

Attendance in lectures will not be graded as such, but if you miss a quiz you will receive a grade of zero for it.

Attendance in discussion sections is required. You may miss two sections without penalty during the semester. Attendance at each of the other meetings during the semester will count equally towards your attendance grade, which will be 5% of your overall grade.

Grades for attending individual sections will be determined at that point during the class period when the instructor takes attendance. If attendance is taken at the beginning and you arrive late, or taken at the end and you leave early, you will be counted as absent.

Absence from discussion sections will only be excused if you have an appropriate and documented excuse.

Numerical grades and letter grades

All assignments will be given a numerical grade. At the end of the semester, your overall numerical grade will be calculated, based on your grades for and the relative weights of the assignments. This numerical grade will be converted to a letter grade using the following scale.

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
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Academic honesty

You must abide by the university’s academic honesty policy. See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php.

You should expect the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty to be a grade of E for the class (not just the assignment). All incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Repeat offenders may be penalized by suspension or expulsion from the university.

You should already have a good idea of what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. I will also
review this when handing out paper assignments. If you have any questions about this, ask me or your TA before it's too late.

All papers submitted for the course will be checked using turnitin.com.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

**Schedule**

All readings are taking from the Perry, Bratman, and Fischer anthology. Further details of reading assignments (e.g., page numbers, adjustments to the schedule) will be made available on Sakai.

T 1/8. Introductory class.


T 1/15. Plato (2). Reading: Plato, “Apology”.


F 2/1. Paper 1 due at 5pm.


T 2/12. Knowledge (1). Descartes, First Meditation. Reading: Descartes, First Meditation.


T 2/19. Knowledge (3). Descartes, Third Meditation. Reading: Descartes, Third Meditation.


F 3/1. Paper 2 due at 5pm.


T 3/26. Ethics (3). Plato, Republic: virtue in the state

T 4/2. Ethics (5). Utilitarianism: Bentham
F 4/5. Paper 3 due at 5pm.
T 4/23. Review class for final exam.
T 4/30, 3:00-5:00pm. FINAL EXAM