PHI 2010 Introduction to Philosophy

3 CR, Fall, 2015

i>clicker remote or REEF polling app (you might try beginning with the REEF polling free 14 day trial; see reef-education.com).

Course Evaluation

- In-class i>clicker questions 20%
- Class attendance & participation 5%
- Webcourses discussion participation 10%
- Webcourses Discussion group report 5%
- In-class discussions (best 5) preparation & participation 20%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%

Your week-one to-do list:

- Study this syllabus and bring any questions to class.
- Take the syllabus quiz after you have read this syllabus, by Friday August 28th. (Take it before then for participation credit. You should still take it after then for Student Financial Aid Academic Engagement recording purposes.)
- Buy the textbook and sign up for a REEF polling account. Either get an i>clicker or download the REEF polling app (14 day free trial). You need the i>clicker or REEF polling app for class on Wednesday August 26th.
- Register your i>clicker or Reef polling app on Webcourses (see below)
- Read the readings listed on the course schedule BEFORE the class in which they will be discussed. For Wednesday, read Beardsley and Beardsley: “What is Philosophy?” and Bertrand Russell: “The Value of Philosophy”. The course schedule has links to pdfs for those who don’t have the textbook yet.
- Begin the first on-line discussion on the purpose of education.
- Sign up to lead and report on an on-line discussion session.
- Take the GEP pre-tests A, B, and C on Webcourses, linked from our Webcourses section.

A note about assigned readings

This course, like most philosophy courses, will involve a considerable amount of reading. Many of the assigned readings and exercises based on them ask you to think, write and talk about several authors’ positions on important questions and issues, to encourage you to answer the questions for yourself.

So if you are committed to passing this course, you should be prepared to read and study for about two hours or more for each class session.

Required Texts

The World of Philosophy (WP) Steven M. Cahn (Oxford University Press). You need the textbook by Wednesday September 2. Get it at the UCF bookstore, or rent it or buy it from many other online sellers (if you get it elsewhere, make sure it is delivered before Wednesday Sept 2).
Lectures will introduce and explain some of the basic points of assigned readings. But these will make much more sense if the lecture is explaining and elaborating on material you have already read and tried to make your own sense of, rather than introducing you to it for the first time. Thus by reading the assigned chapters before class, you will get more from the lecture and discussion, ask more penetrating questions, and will have a better chance of earning a higher grade.

While you read, make notes. Highlight — even better, underline — the crucial passages. Make notes in the margin or ideally in a notebook. Try to answer the textbook’s questions (presented before and after readings). If there are any questions you cannot answer, read the relevant sections again. If you still do not understand, or if you do understand and they raise further questions (and I hope they do!), please ask questions about them in class. Try answering the questions again after class and make sure you can answer them all by then.

Use and registration of REEF polling and i>clickers

I will be using REEF Polling by i>clicker in class this term. REEF Polling helps me to understand what you know, gives everyone a chance to participate in class, and allows you to review material after class. I use REEF polling to encourage active participation in the class, to review previous material and assess preparation for class, to help me understand what you know, and to promote critical thinking during class sessions, discussion and collaborative learning.

I will frequently poll the class about various aspects of the class topics, questions and issues, often to initiate small group discussion. Sometimes the questions will be quiz questions that count for credit.

You will need a free REEF polling account for this course. With this, you need to have either an i>clicker, i>clicker2 or i>Clicker+, or the REEF polling app for your phone (iOS or Android; 14 day free trial). You need to register your account (see below) for use in this course.

You will earn one extra participation credit if you register your clicker or Polling app and use it in class on Wednesday August 26th (if you don’t have one yet, you can try the free 14 day trial of the i>clicker GO app for your phone). In order to fully complete the registration properly you must:

- Sign up for a REEF account. This also starts a free 14 day trial of the REEF Polling app.
- Register your REEF account on webcourses by clicking on the “Register your REEF polling account” link, and signing into your account. This enables me to know who owns that account and to synchronize your votes and scores with webcourses.
- Bring your clicker or phone with REEF polling app to class and vote on at least one question.

You can do these in any order. If you vote in class before you register, your responses will be recorded. But they will not be associated with you until you register your account on webcourses.

REEF Polling will be used every day in class. You are responsible for bringing your clicker or app daily.

Important: it is a serious offense against the university code of student conduct to submit votes for a fellow student. This is equivalent to impersonating another student and helping them cheat on a test. This is also a violation of academic integrity, and will be treated as such. In such cases both the person impersonating another and the person impersonated will be penalized according to the plagiarism and cheating policy described below.

Special instructions for REEF Polling

Go to reef-education.com or download the REEF Polling app for iPhone/iPad to sign up for a REEF Polling account. You must use your university email address and your NID in the Student ID field. If you need to change your email address, password, or student ID, edit your account profile. Do not create and use more than one REEF Polling account as you will only receive credit from a single account.

Unless you will exclusively be using an i>clicker remote, you will need to purchase a subscription to use REEF Polling. You can use a credit card to purchase online, in-app purchase. Creating a REEF Polling account automatically starts a free 14-day trial subscription.

Please use this trial period to make sure REEF polling will work for all of your i>clicker classes before purchasing a subscription, as it is not possible to receive a refund after you purchase a subscription. Important: not all UCF classes that use i>clicker will permit using the REEF polling app (many buildings do not have yet the WiFi bandwidth to support its use). If you must use an i>clicker in another class, then it might be best to just use that here, too.

At the end of your trial, should you decide to purchase REEF polling subscription, you can purchase access to i>clicker GO in a variety of subscription lengths using your credit card online or through in-app purchase with your smartphone, or by buying an activation code from the UCF Bookstore; this subscription includes an unlimited number of courses.

Class attendance and participation

You are expected to attend all classes. Bring your clicker or REEF app to each class. It will be used in every class to record your participation in polls and quizzes. You will be recorded as having attended if you answer any polls or quiz questions while in class.

Your attendance grade will be calculated by totaling the portion of the classes you attended, ignoring up to three absences (to allow for illness and other important absences). Absences of more than three classes will negatively affect your participation grade. Only
documented excuses that explain more than two absences will be accepted. No other explanations are expected.

In-class pop quizzes
Reef Polling will also be used for in-class quiz questions during most class sessions. Quizzes will test class preparation by asking basic questions about the assigned readings, review questions regarding previous classes and comprehension questions about that day’s class.
At the end of the semester, the total for in-class clicker questions will be adjusted to allow for three possible absences from class. For instance, if you scored 84/100, with an average of 4 points possible per class, I will adjust the total to be out of 88 (3x4 points) so your final score will be 85/88 (100% maximum).

In Class Discussion Sessions
A worksheet will be posted on the web-site approximately a week before the discussion session. It may include links to relevant web-site(s) and questions about the issues they raise.
Before class: submit to the WebCourses assignment a copy of the discussion worksheet, completed with your own informed thoughtful answers to the questions.
Bring a copy to class, too. You will use this to help you contribute to your small group discussions.
Up to 2 points per session will be based on preparation (completed worksheets submitted to webcourses before class; graded for evidence that you have read the relevant material and thought about the issues involved.)
In Class: Bring with you to the discussion session a completed worksheet, with your own answers to the questions. (this can be printed or on your laptop, or tablet (the small screen of your phone is not recommended). These answers will be the basis for small group discussions.
Up to 2 points for participation in the discussion (using your clicker to respond to surveys).
The point is that a lot of useful learning can happen during informed participation in discussions. Neither alone is sufficient.
You are expected to participate in all discussions (think of them as small, fun, exams). Absences will be excused only for documented exceptional circumstances (ideally, arranged in advance). In such cases, the worksheet must still be completed carefully. Other absences cannot earn discussion participation credit.
However, we will be doing this at least six times through the semester. Your best five will count towards your final grade. so missing one will not count against your grade.
The worksheet must be completed BEFORE the class session. Not during or after.

WebCourses Discussions
You will be randomly assigned to a discussion group, in which you will participate in weekly discussions on WebCourses with other students. Only members of the group will have access to your postings.
These groups will discuss assigned questions each week. The purpose of these discussions is to explore the questions in the context of assigned readings and lectures.
for each discussion, you will be required to:
• Post 100-300 words on your own considered thoughts on the week’s question (your position and your reasons for holding that position)
• respond (50+ words) to the posting of at least one other group members (add examples, ask questions, raise reasons for disagreement, etc).
• reply thoughtfully to any responses to your postings.
Your collaboration grade for these discussions will be based on your contributions to the group’s process and products.

Discussion group report
Each week one (or two) group member(s) will take a turn as leader for the week’s discussion and will write a brief report on the discussion for the rest of the class.
By the end of week one, each member will have signed up to lead the discussion and report on the results for a particular week. Each member will take a turn leading the discussion. (You can lead for more than one week if you wish —your best report score will count— as long as everyone gets a turn once.)
Sometimes there may need to be TWO discussion leaders. How often this happens will depend on the size of the group; everyone should get a turn at least once. In such cases, the two group members can either work independently or coordinate to summarize different aspects of the discussion (e.g. A will summarize the reasons for a position most of the group aggess on and B will summarize the case against that position). It is the leaders’ responsibility to ask questions, make suggestions, identify problems and so on, so that they are able to fully articulate the positions people express as well as the reasons people have expressed for holding them. (E.g. if you cannot identify the reasons someone has for holding the position they do, then ask them about those reasons.)
Each leader’s report to the rest of the class will be about 500 words (being excessively longer or shorter than this may incur penalties). This will be posted to a separate discussion topic for Group leaders only.
Your grade (5% of course grade) will be based on clearly reporting the most important aspects of your group’s discussion, the
conclusions many of you agree about and the reasons for concluding that, the parts some may disagree about and the reasons for that dissent. A draft of your report(s) should be first posted for the rest of the group by 5:00 pm on the day before the final version is due (allowing time for corrections and suggestions from the rest of the group).

The final version should be posted to the SUMMARIES discussion forum by 5:00 pm on due date (usually the Tuesday following the week’s discussions). Late penalties of 1 point deduction will apply at 5:00 pm. Reports posted after midnight will incur a 2 point deduction. Reports posted after 8:30 am the next day will incur a 3 point deduction.

### Midterm and Final Examinations

Exam questions will be based on lectures, discussions and on readings. Anything that I or anybody else says in class is potentially examinable.

### Grading & Evaluation

Your work for the course will total a score out of 100. I use this to determine a letter grade. I think a rigid set of cutoff points for grades is unfair because this would mean that people with very similar score get different grades (it would be unfair for a student who earns with 79.75 should not necessarily get a C+, while another student with 80.0 earns a B-).

I think it is better for you to earn a fair grade, even if this means that your final grade is not completely predictable grade. You should have a sense of the approximate grade your performance so far would earn, and should just do you best to improve our grade in whatever assignments or exams remain.

So I try to make principled distinctions between groups of students, rather than using arbitrary cutoffs. Borderline cases are decided using (in order): exam scores, quiz scores, discussion participation, class participation.

**VERY ROUGHLY**, the following are the approximate bounds on the ranges at which I often award grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>0-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80-89</th>
<th>90+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPORTANT**: Final grades may not necessarily precisely follow the above approximate boundaries; they may vary by +/- 3 points or so. If, for example, you end up with 78.5, this does not necessarily mean that you were 0.5 points from earning a B-. The cutoff for B- might be as high as 83 or so in some semesters.

You should be able to earn a B (+/-) grade for this course. You can do this by:

- doing most of the assigned readings, and often taking notes about the authors’ arguments while you read
- occasionally thinking about the textbook’s reading questions and critical questions; sometimes writing down your answers
- using the textbook site’s resources to review each chapter at the end of the course
- putting some thought into your preparation for the in-class discussions, and occasionally contributing to your group’s discussions of the topic at hand.
- coming to office hours to discuss with the professor any small problems you have about the course, before they turn into big problems

**You can increase your chance of earning an A in this course by:**

- actively participating in all classes, with your clicker/REEF polling app
- always taking notes to help you remember and think about the class content
- doing all of the assigned readings, and taking detailed notes about the positions argued for and each author’s reasons for holding that position
- regularly writing out your answers to the textbook’s reading questions and critical questions
- using the textbook site’s resources to review each chapter, as well as for reviewing at the end of the course
- always contributing to your group’s in-class discussions of the topic at hand, asking questions of others, engaging with others in a deep examination of the topic or question at hand.
- thinking about the issues we discuss, relating them to examples from your own life, and talking about them with friends and relations
- coming to office hours to discuss with the professor any small problems you have about the course, before they turn into big problems

**You can increase your chance of earning a C (+/-) grade for this course by:**

- avoiding coming to class on days when you don’t feel like coming and sometimes forgetting your clicker/REEF polling app when you do come to class
- resisting the urge to take notes to help you remember the lectures
- resisting the inclination to read the assigned readings (in spite of your curiosity about them), and not taking notes to help you remember the main points when you do read them
• avoiding reading or thinking about the textbook’s reading questions and critical questions
• not coming to office hours to discuss with the professor any small problems you have about the course; wait until they turn into big problems.

To Earn a D (+/-), do some or all of the following:
• Do even more of the things described above for earning a C.

To earn an F, do some or all of the following:
• Never come to class.
• Never do the readings
• Never complete any assignments
• Never contribute to group discussions
• Never discussing with the professor any small problems you have about the course. Let them turn into big problems, but still don’t discuss them with the professor. Wait until they become complete fiascos. Be at the stage of wishing you had a time machine before you decide to talk to the professor.

Course Policies:

Class attendance
You are expected to attend all classes. Absence of more than three classes can adversely affect your grade. Class attendance will be recorded by clicker question participation.

Absences for more than three classes will be accommodated only for documentable exceptional circumstances (medical or family emergencies, representing UCF on a sports team, religious holy day, etc.). You only need to contact me for such documentable absences. If you anticipate an absence, let me know beforehand.

Extensions and Late Penalties
No late assignments will be accepted. The principal assignments are preparations for in-class discussions. Preparing for discussions after they have happened is preparing too late.

Plagiarism & Cheating
UCF faculty support the UCF Creed. Integrity - practicing and defending academic and personal honesty. is the first tenet of the UCF Creed. This is in part a reflection of the second tenet, Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of membership in the UCF community.

Course assignments and tests are designed to have educational value; the process of preparing for and completing these exercises will help improve your skills and knowledge. Material presented to satisfy course requirements is therefore expected to be the result of your own original scholarly efforts.

UCF’s Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: “whereby another’s work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student’s own.” Cheating is using unauthorized material, or giving or accepting unauthorized help on assignments or tests. These contradict the educational value of course assignments and quizzes. Students who attempt to obtain unearned academic credentials that do not reflect their skills and knowledge can also undermine the value of the UCF degrees earned by their more honest peers.

I have a responsibility for your education and the value of a UCF degree, and so have a responsibility to discourage and prevent unethical behavior, and to respond to infringements of academic integrity when necessary. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense.

The typical penalty for plagiarism or cheating in this course will be a loss of credit for the assignment AND a deduction of one grade for the course (e.g. a B+ becomes a B), which may result in a failing grade in the course. (So you would do better to do a bad job honestly than to cheat and get caught.)

Grades changed for reasons of academic dishonesty and/or a “Z Designation” on a student’s official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://z.ucf.edu/.

Serious cases can lead to academic probation, suspension, expulsion from the University, or the revocation of a degree. http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/ has more about UCF’s Rules of Conduct.

I use www.TurnItIn.com and other methods to make it difficult to plagiarize or cheat and relatively easy to detect attempts to do so. I hope you will consider it not worth the risk, and can appreciate that doing the assignments honestly is part of the educational experience that you came to university to have. Copies of papers may be retained by Turnitin.

NOTE: use of another person’s clicker or REEF polling account in an attempt to help them earn credit in classes they miss, is considered impersonating another student, and helping them cheat on a test. This is also a violation of academic integrity, and will be treated as such. In such cases both the person impersonating another and the person impersonated will be penalized according to the above policy.

Classroom Behavior
Accessibility and Classroom Accommodations

Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must be registered with Student Accessibility Services [sas.sdes.ucf.edu](http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu) and must file an Accommodations Letter Request with SAS. SAS will collaborate with the student and the professor to arrange needed accommodations.