

**University of Central Florida**  
**PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy**  
**Spring 2018, Syllabus, v. 01082018**



**Course Information**

- Title: Introduction to Philosophy
- Course number-section: PHI 2010-0003
- Credit hours: 3.0
- Term: Spring semester 2018
- Days and times: Tuesday and Thursday; 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm
- Location: Nicholson School of Communication (NSC) 108

**Instructor Information**

- Name: Luis Favela, Ph.D. (Please refer to me as “Dr. Favela” or “Professor Favela.”)
- Email: [luis.favela@ucf.edu](mailto:luis.favela@ucf.edu)
- Website: <http://philosophy.cah.ucf.edu/staff.php?id=1017>
- Office location: PSY 0245
- Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

**Course Description**

- Catalogue description: Inquiry into the meaning and justification of fundamental ideas and beliefs concerning reality, knowledge, and values; application to relevant topics in ethics, religion, and politics.
- Detailed description: The word ‘philosophy’ comes from the ancient Greek word for “love of wisdom.” Many of the sciences of today—e.g., biology, physics, psychology, etc.—began as philosophy, and were called “natural philosophy.” One way to think of philosophy historically is as the place where investigations of the world begin when we are not even sure what are the right questions to ask. When the theories and methods begin to get clear, then that part of human inquiry is sometimes carved off and becomes a discipline on its own. So, in one sense, philosophy is where other disciplines begin, but in another, it is also the most general of disciplines. As one philosopher put it, “The aim of philosophy...is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term” (Wilfrid Sellars, 1912-1989 CE). Typical topics of study in philosophy include ethics (“What is the right or wrong thing to do?”), mind (“How do my thoughts relate to my brain?”), and ontology (“What is it to be?”).

Since philosophy has such a deep history (dating at least to around 500 BCE), has been practiced in many forms around the world (e.g., Buddhist, ancient Greek, African, etc.), and covers just about any topic worthy of attention (e.g., god, knowledge, logic, politics, etc.), it is impossible to introduce all of philosophy in a single course. As such, this course will introduce philosophy by means of a sampling of some of the big problems in philosophy, for example: “Can computers have minds,” “Do non-human animals have rights,” “Does a god exist,” “What is knowledge,” and “What is the meaning of life?” By taking the *big problems* approach, along the way we will discuss some of the big names in philosophy (e.g., Descartes, Nagel, etc.) and some of the methods that are particular to philosophy (e.g., logic, Socratic method, thought experiments, etc.).

### Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to *describe* a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
  - Students will be able to *reconstruct* the arguments (premises and conclusion) behind a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
  - Students will be able to *articulate* their positions concerning whether or not they agree with the conclusions of the arguments behind a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
- Students will be able to *distinguish* opinions from arguments.
  - Students will be able to *categorize* statements about various topics as either an opinion or an argument.
  - Students will be able to rewrite opinions as arguments (in premises and conclusion format).

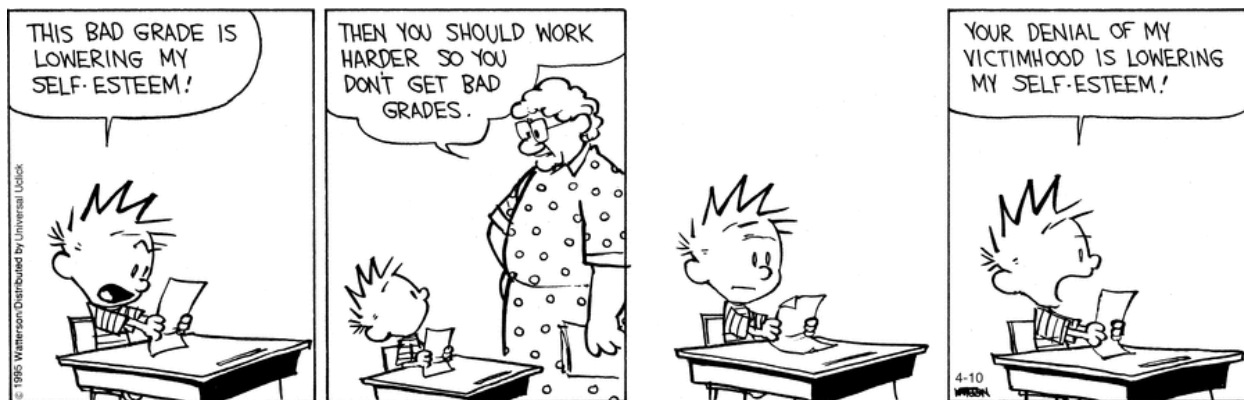
### Course Materials

- Required textbook: Cahn, S. M. (2014). *Exploring philosophy: An introductory anthology, fifth edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN # 9780190204419

### Course Requirements

- **Required Academic Activity**
  - All instructors/faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.
  - Activity: Submit signed last page of syllabus. Due 2:45 pm, Thursday, January 11.
- Participation
  - Participation is accounted for by means of various in-class activities.
  - Examples include: class discussions, four-sentence papers, and think-pair-share.
- Quizzes
  - There will be 13 quizzes, or about one per week.
  - Quiz questions will be based on material from the assigned readings and in-class lectures and discussions.
- Exams
  - Students will have two exams. The first exam will cover material from about the first half of the course, and the second exam will cover material from about the second half of the course.
  - Guidelines and expectations will be distributed closer to the assignment dates.
- Note:
  - You are responsible for all reading assignments. Unless stated otherwise (e.g., “optional” readings), anything assigned to you is potential quiz or exam material.

## Grading



- Participation
  - 10 points each week, 13 weeks plus RAA, 140 points total
  - Combined 17.5% of total grade, each week 1.25% of total grade
- Quizzes
  - 13 quizzes, 20 points each, 260 points total
  - Combined 32.5% of total grade, each quiz 2.5% of total grade
- Exams
  - Exam 1, 200 points, 25% of total grade
  - Exam 2, 200 points, 25% of total grade
  - Combined both exams are 50% of total grade
- Total
  - 800 points
    - 720-810 = A
    - 640-719 = B
    - 560-639 = C
    - 480-559 = D
    - 000-479 = F
  - The following example demonstrates how +/- are assigned:
    - B- = 80, 81, 82%
    - B = 83, 84, 85, 86%
    - B+ = 87, 88, 89%
  - Percentages are not rounded, for example, an 80.2% is a B-, an 82.6% is a B-, an 89.8% is a B+, etc.
- Incomplete grades: The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. As the instructor for this course, I am the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.
- Extensions and late assignments
  - In general, no extensions will be allowed or late assignments accepted. (Really.)

- However, extensions and late assignments will be considered for exceptional circumstances (e.g., family or medical emergencies) if appropriate documentation can be provided (e.g., doctor’s note, funeral program, etc.).
- If an assignment is accepted late, then it will be deducted 5% of the total possible points for every 12-hour block of time it is submitted late, including weekends.
- Extra credit: There is no extra credit.
- Grade distributions: The final grades will not be curved.
- Grade dissemination: Graded quizzes, exams, and other materials in this course will be returned individually by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grade Book function of Webcourses. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: <https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/>.

### Course Policies

- Contact procedures
  - In-person contact: If you have questions related to the course, then see me before or after our scheduled class meetings, or during my office hours. We can attempt to schedule another time if you are unable to meet during those.
  - Email: Keep emailing to a minimum. It is better to ask me in person. However, if you do email me, then be professional (e.g., start the email with “Hello Dr. Favela” and not “Hey you, can I have...”) and concise. Allow 24 hours for a response during the week, and possibly more during the weekend and holidays.
  - Webcourses: **Do not contact me via Webcourses.** I do not check it and will not reply.
- Professionalism policy: Per university policy and classroom etiquette, mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during the entire class time period. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., will be warned and can suffer a reduction in their final class grade.
- In-class technology policy: “Stay focused” rule (cf. Shirky 2014): *Electronic devices such as laptops, iPads, smart phones, etc. are not allowed in class, unless an assignment requires it.* Why not? First, numerous studies show that students spend a great deal of their laptop time in class on activities not related to the course (Facebook, games, Reddit, etc.) and—most importantly—that these distractions negatively impact learning and grades (Fried, 2008; Gorlick, 2009; Holstead, 2015; Thagard, 2010). Second, research shows that non-class-related laptop use distracts and impacts the learning of other students (Fried, 2008; Thagard, 2010). Third, other research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective in learning (Berninger et al., 2006; Bounds, 2010; James & Engelhardt, 2010; Konnikova, 2010; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). In summary, electronic devices are not allowed in class, except for those with documented needs, which, if that is the case, you need to see me during the first two weeks of class. Contact me if you would like full references for the above citations.



- Academic integrity and plagiarism
  - As reflected in the UCF creed (<http://creed.ucf.edu>), integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see [www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu](http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu)).
  - Plagiarism: Many incidents of plagiarism result from students' lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected to familiarize yourself with UCF's policy on plagiarism. All work you submit must be your own scholarly and creative 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."
- Course accessibility: It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu)) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications.
- Syllabus adjustments: The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to all parts of the syllabus during the course. If any adjustments are made, the instructor will inform students of such changes.
- **Copyright:** Unless otherwise stated, I reserve all rights for all course materials I create (e.g., syllabus, lecture materials, quizzes, etc.). Thus, this material may not be displayed, distributed, modified, or reproduced without prior written permission of the copyright holder: Luis H. Favela, Ph.D. Consequently, it would be illegal for you to post course materials on websites such as, but not limited to, Course Hero, Course Notes, etc.

**Important Dates** < <http://calendar.ucf.edu/2018/spring> >

- Classes begin: January 8
- Last day to drop and request full refund: January 11
- Add deadline: January 12
- Withdrawal deadline: March 21
- No class: March 12-17 (spring break)
- Classes end: April 23
- Finals: April 25-May 1
- Grades available: 9:00 am, May 7

## Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	Jan 7 - 13	Introduction	1-3	Required academic activity; Participation; Quiz 1
2-3	Jan 14 - 27	Knowledge	4-7	Participation; Quizzes 2-3
4-6	Jan 28 - Feb 17	Mind	8-18	Participation; Quizzes 4-6
7-8	Feb 18 - Mar 3	God	19-22	Participation; Quizzes 7-8
9	Mar 4 - 10	Exam 1	2-22	Exam 1
10	Mar 11 - 17	Spring Break	x	x
11-12	Mar 18 - 31	Morality	23-27	Participation; Quizzes 9-10
13-14	Apr 1 - 14	Life and Death	28-32	Participation; Quizzes 11-12
15	Apr 15 - 21	Meaning of Life	33-35	Participation; Quiz 13
16	TBA	Exam 2	23-35	Exam 2

## Readings

1. Syllabus
2. Edmonds & Warburton (2010) What Is Philosophy (\*Not in book. PDF in Webcourses\*)
3. "What is philosophy?" Beardsley & Beardsley
4. "What is knowledge" Ayer
5. "First Meditation" Descartes
6. "Appearance and reality" Russell
7. "What can I know?" Phillips
8. "Second Meditation" Descartes
9. "The ghost in the machine" Ryle
10. "The body problem" Montero
11. "The mind-body problem" Churchland
12. "What is it like to be a bat?" T. Nagel
13. "The qualia problem" Jackson
14. "Computing machinery and intelligence" Turing
15. "Do computers think?" Searle
16. Korn (2016) Robotic Teaching Assistant (\*Not in book. PDF in Webcourses\*)
17. Wile (2017) Mark Cuban Job Skill 10 years (\*Not in book. PDF in Webcourses\*)
18. Zumbrun (2016) Knowledge Workers Threat Automation (\*Not in book. PDF in Webcourses\*)
19. "Does God exist?" E. Nagel
20. "Pascal's wager" Blackburn
21. "Why God allows evil" Swinburne

22. "The problem of Hell" Adams
23. "Famine, affluence, and morality" Singer
24. "World hunger and moral obligation: The case against Singer" Arthur
25. "The case for animal rights" Regan
26. "Why animals have no rights" Cohen
27. "Speaking of animal rights" Warren
28. "Death" T. Nagel
29. "The badness of death" Kagan
30. "The afterlife" Scheffler
31. "How the afterlife matters" Frankfurt
32. "The significance of doomsday" Wolf
33. "The meaning of life" Taylor
34. "Meaning in life" Wolf
35. "Meaningful lives?" Vitrano

### Films

- A. Garland, A. (Director). (2015). *Ex machine* [Motion picture]. United States: Universal Pictures. <<http://exmachina-movie.com>>
- B. Cuarón, A. (Director). (2006). *Children of men* [Motion picture]. United Kingdom and United States: Universal Pictures. <<https://www.uphe.com/movies/children-of-men>>

**University of Central Florida**  
**PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2018**

Please fill out and sign this sheet once you have read the syllabus, detach this page, and turn it in to the professor during the first week of class—or, if you transferred in late, by the end of that week.

I have read the syllabus. I understand and agree to follow all course policies in the syllabus.

Name (print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_