

## Introduction to Philosophy

PHI 2010

Fall 2017

MWF 10:30-11:20 am

BA1 147

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Office hours: by appointment



**Course 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.

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to provide an introductory background to philosophy and critical analysis of various philosophical texts, which will strengthen creative thinking, communication skills, and writing skills. In addition to the course objectives, it is expected that upon completing this course, students will have made significant progress toward becoming familiar with various philosophical theories, figures, and texts from both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophy. It is also expected that students will have made significant progress toward becoming familiar with and adept at critical thinking, logical reasoning, and philosophical argumentation.

### **Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Develop a basic vocabulary of philosophy
2. Acquire skills for reading and understanding philosophical texts
3. Acquire an understanding of the development of philosophical theories
4. Develop the ability to understand, explain, and evaluate different points of view on philosophy
5. The ability to reflect critically on their own thoughts and beliefs
6. Develop the ability to explain and support one's own viewpoint on contemporary philosophical issues with accurate, relevant, and sound moral reasoning
7. Understand multicultural philosophical perspectives
8. Improve critical thinking, writing and communication skills, particularly in scholarly writing

### **Required Textbook and Apps:**

**Textbook:** Gary E. Kessler, *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader 9th Edition*, published by Cengage Learning Jan. 2015, ISBN: 1285874331.

**Top Hat:** We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or via text message (SMS).

You can visit <http://tinyurl.com/THStudentRegistration> for the Student Quick Start Guide which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and

running on the system. An email invitation will also be sent to your email account (if you don't receive this email, you can register by visiting our direct Top Hat course URL [tophat.com/e/967247](http://tophat.com/e/967247)).

The 6-digit course code for this class in Top Hat is: 967247

Top Hat will require a subscription. There are three options to choose from:

- \$24 for 4 months of unlimited access
- \$36 for 12 months of unlimited access
- \$72 for lifetime access

**Supplemental Materials:** Other material will be made available to the students via handout or through the Webcourse page.

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is mandatory for success in this class. Absences will be excused for serious illness, accident, or misfortune only if appropriate documentation is provided. If you have such incidence and need assistance from the university, contact the UCF Cares Student Development and Enrollment Services at <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>. I will accept documentation from UCF Cares on your behalf, if necessary. If you plan to miss class in order to observe a religious holiday, your absence will be excused only if you notify the instructor three weeks in advance of the holiday.

**Grade Dissemination:** Graded tests and materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using "myUCF Grades" in the portal. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: <https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/>.

**Classroom Conduct Policy:** UCF's creed includes *integrity*. That means that students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately while in an instructional classroom setting, and to avoid conduct that is disruptive to other students or that interferes with the full participation of other students in the class. Disrespectful, irrelevant, offensive, hostile, and flippant speech and gestures are considered unprofessional, violate the UCF's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and will not be tolerated. In determining whether behavior is appropriate, the instructor shall be the final authority. The instructor may dismiss a student for the duration of the scheduled class period in the event that a student violates the required classroom conduct as set forth in the UCF Golden Rule Handbook. Continuous violations may result in a report to the UCF's Office of Student Conduct.

**Communication:** Use the "3 before me" policy regarding communication. If you have a question regarding the course, seek out three sources before contacting me, such as another student, the Webcourse site, course announcements, and syllabus. Mostly likely, your question is already addressed and answered. When you do contact me, make sure to include which three sources you sought out prior to communicating with me via email.

**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 Etiquette:** The subject line of all emails should include either the course number (PHI 2010) and section number. You cannot expect a timely response (or any response) if you do not have this information in the subject line. All emails should include formal, professional salutations (ex.: “Hello Dr. Liebig”). Please sign your full name at the end of your email. You can expect a response within 24 hours or less. It is highly unlikely that I will respond on the same day to emails received after 9:30 p.m. Like you, I have a full range of responsibilities that keep me away from email for a time. Do not email me before the 24 hour window to demand a response sooner—not only is that rude, it is illogical. All email content should be written in appropriate, professional candor. You cannot expect me to respond to emails that are unprofessional or rude in tone. It is the responsibility of the student to check their email regularly for any course announcements or communication.

**Superfluous Emails:** You cannot expect me to respond to superfluous emails. These include emails informing me of unexcused absences and any emails asking questions that are easily answerable by checking this course syllabus, course policies, the schedule, Webcourse announcements, etc.

**Webcourses:** I utilize the Webcourses site in order to post announcements, schedule changes, etc. **It is the student’s responsibility to frequently access the Webcourse page for this class and check to see if there are any announcements.**

**\*\*\*Students are responsible for frequently checking their UCF email to receive any notifications of announcements, etc. for this course.**

**Emergency Plan:** In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for UCF to suspend normal operations. During this time, UCF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Webcourses, Canvas, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Webcourse site for each class for course specific communication, and the main UCF, College, and department websites, emails, and Alert messages for important general information.

**Academic Integrity:** UCF faculty supports 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. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these core values and will not be tolerated. If a student cheats or plagiarizes the **minimum penalty will be an F for the assignment and an official report to the UCF’s Office of Student Conduct.** The instructor will work in collaboration with the university’s Office of Student Conduct to determine if additional penalties need to be considered, **which can include a failing grade in the course, 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. It is the duty of the student 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.”

Plagiarism-detection service: All written assignments will be submitted via turnitin.com, an automated system which promptly and thoroughly compares each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. After the assignment is processed, I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author’s work

was used in the assignment. After receiving the report, I am able to see exactly what material was used and the source it came from, even if it came from another student's work. I will submit this report to the university's Office of Student Conduct when I make the official report of the academic integrity violation.

**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. A student who is in need of one or more accommodations for a disability must make a request through the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu)). If SAS do not provide any accommodation recommendations but you still feel the need for accommodations, please meet with me to discuss what we can do to work together and ensure your success in the class. 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.

**Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Commitment:** The University of Central Florida subscribes to and endorses equal employment and educational opportunity. Its policies and practices will ensure nondiscriminatory treatment of all persons without regard to race, color, age, religion, marital status, gender, disability, or national origin.

**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.

**Make-Up Exam Policy:** Make-up of a test may be arranged in the case of an absence resulting from documented illness or other emergency. It is the student's responsibility to explain the reason for the absence, present the documentation of the illness or other emergency, and request a make-up test. There are no make-ups for the final exam.

**Cell Phone and other Electronic Devices 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. In general, utilizing a device in class is disruptive to the instructor, fellow students, and most specifically you. At any point I am disrupted and I find that others, including yourself, are disruptive, I will ask you to leave the class and you will be penalized for violating this course's policy. Students are required to turn off all cell phones, pagers, tablets, mp3 players, and other electronic devices before entering class. You may not send text messages, surf the internet, or utilize electronic devices in class. The use of technological devices is only permitted during specific assignments through Webcourses or Top Hat in which the instructor will inform you of the proper use. If your cell phone rings and interrupts class, or you are caught texting or utilizing an electronic device, including a laptop computer, for something other than an assigned in-class assignment, **your final total points will be lowered 5 points each time**. If a student violates this policy **more than 2 times, you will receive a 0 for participation** in addition to the subtraction of 5 points off the entire grade for each violation.

**Method of Instruction:** Instruction is primarily lecture and discussion based. Online discussions, etc. may be held in lieu of on-campus class in emergency cases.

**Right to Change Syllabus:** The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus or assignment schedule (or any other course information) as necessary during the term. The student is responsible for any such changes.

**Method of Assessment/Grading Policy:**

Attendance: 25 points

Top Hat Score (Correctness and Participation): 50 points

Quick Writes, Group Work, and In-class Activities: 100 points

Midterm Exam: 50 points

Final Exam: 75 points

Total points: 300

Final Grade scale:

A = 270-300

B = 240-269

C = 210-239

D = 180-209

F = 179 or less

**Attendance:** (25 pts.) At the beginning of the semester, each student has 50 points for attendance and participation. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. For any class missed after two classes, you will be docked 2.5 points per class. You also lose points for excessive tardiness, violating the electronic use policy (-5 off the total grade), and disruptive behavior (depending on the offense; see course conduct policy). If you miss more than 10 minutes of class by arriving late, leaving early, or stepping out of class, that will count as an absence. Excused absences require documentation and are the usual (documented) kind: University activity, illness, death in family. It is your responsibility to bring documentation to class; I will not request documentation.

**Top Hat Score and Participation** (50 pts.) Students are required to bring an appropriate device in order to participate in Top Hat. Students will be evaluated on participation and correctness of answer on quiz questions. Evaluation of your participation will be based on how well prepared you are to discuss the material and documented through Top Hat and other in-class activities. Students are expected to be attentive and contribute constructive comments to class discussion, complete in-class quick writes, and think-pair-share activities. Further, participation means not only offering your own thoughts to the class, but also respectfully listening and responding to the ideas of others. Pop-quizzes and in-class activities will be assigned daily through Top Hat. The quizzes will consist of questions regarding the readings and any topics discussed in class up to the day the quiz is given. **Students will not be able to make up any quizzes or in-class activities missed due to being absent, whether excused or not—if you are absent, you receive a zero on the quiz or participation activity for that day.**

**In-Class Activities, Quick-writes, and Group Work:** (100 pts.) Students are required to bring an appropriate device in order to participate in Quick Writes, Group Work, and In-class Activities. Students will be assigned Quick Writes throughout the semester. Some of these will be assigned and completed in class while others might be completed as homework. The Quick Writes are designed to foster critical reflection of the course material. The due date and time of the Quick Write will be announced in class or posted on Webcourses. **Quick Writes, Class Activities, and Group Work completed during class cannot be made up.**

**Midterm Exam:** (50 pts.) The midterm will cover any material up to the point it is taken.

**Final Exam:** (75 pts.) The final exam is comprehensive and will take place during the final class meeting time.

**Important Dates:**

September 4<sup>th</sup>—Labor Day, no class

October 30<sup>th</sup>—Withdrawal deadline

November 10<sup>th</sup>—Veterans Day, no class

November 23-24<sup>th</sup>—Thanksgiving, no class

December 4<sup>th</sup>—Final Exam at 10:00 am

**Readings and Course Plan:**

The following is a schedule of the readings and course plan. The specific reading assignments and page numbers will be announced at the end of class for the following week. Actual assignments may deviate from those presented below. The instructor reserves the right to change, modify, add to, or subtract from the schedule listed below. It is the responsibility of the student to stay informed about the reading assignments.

Date	Topic Discussed	Assigned Reading (must be completed by the start of class on this day)	Assignment Due
8/21	Course Policies and Assessment	Syllabus [Available on Webcourses/Canvas]	
8/23	What is philosophy?		
8/25	The Examined Life	Plato: <i>The Apology</i> pp. 62-76	Quick Write; <b>Top Hat Registration Due on 8/28 before the start of class</b>
8/28	The Examined Life	Plato: <i>The Apology</i> pp. 62-76	
8/30	The Middle Way	Siddhattha Gotama Buddha: <i>The Four Noble Truths</i> pp. 54-56	In-class Activity; Quick Write
9/1	The Middle Way	Siddhattha Gotama Buddha: <i>The Four Noble Truths</i> pp. 54-56	
9/4	Labor Day, no class		
9/6			
9/8	The Meaning of Life	Fyodor Dostoyevsky: <i>Notes from the Underground</i> pp. 102-112	
9/11	The Absurdity of Life	Albert Camus: Selections from <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i> [Handout]	
9/13	The Active Life	Friedrich Nietzsche: Selections from <i>The Gay Science</i> [Handout]	Quick Write
9/15	The Active Life	Friedrich Nietzsche: Selections from <i>The Gay Science</i> [Handout]	
9/18	Introduction to Metaphysics; The Dao (Process Ontology)	Laozi: <i>Dao De Jing</i> pp. 427-433	

9/20	Platonic Dualism	Plato: <i>Republic</i> pp. 436-443	Quick Write
9/22	Platonic Dualism	Plato: <i>Republic</i> pp. 436-443	
9/25	TBA		
9/27	TBA		
9/29	Introduction to Epistemology; Sufi Mysticism	Al-Ghazali: <i>Deliverance from Error</i> pp. 315-322	
10/2	Is Certainty Possible? (Cartesian Dualism)	Descartes: <i>Meditation I</i> pp. 325-332	
10/4	Is Certainty Possible? (Cartesian Dualism)	Descartes: <i>Meditation I</i> pp. 325-332	
10/6	Feminist Standpoint Epistemology	Alessandra Tanesini: <i>The Importance of Standpoint in Feminism</i> [handout]	
10/9	Feminist Standpoint Epistemology	Alessandra Tanesini: <i>The Importance of Standpoint in Feminism</i> [handout]	
10/11	Truth and Power	Foucault: <i>Power/Knowledge and The Discourse on Language</i> [Handout]	
10/13	Truth and Power	Foucault: <i>Power/Knowledge and The Discourse on Language</i> [Handout]	
10/16	Catch-up		
10/18	Review		
10/20	Midterm		
10/23	Deontological Ethics	Immanuel Kant: <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> pp. 116-120	Quick Write
10/25	Deontological Ethics	Immanuel Kant: <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> pp. 116-120	
10/27	Consequentialism (Utilitarianism)	John Stuart Mill: <i>What Utilitarianism Is</i> pp. 122-129	Quick Write
10/30	Consequentialism (Utilitarianism)	John Stuart Mill: <i>What Utilitarianism Is</i> pp. 122-129	
11/1	Problems with Morality	Friedrich Nietzsche: <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> [handout]	
11/3	Problems with Morality	Friedrich Nietzsche: <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> [handout]	
11/6	Care Ethics	Nel Noddings: <i>Caring</i> pp. 147-158	
11/8	Catch up		
11/10	Veterans Day, no class		
11/13	Case Study: Animal Rights	Tom Regan: <i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> pp. 303-310; in-class viewing of <i>Meet Your Meat</i>	Quick Write
11/15	TBA		
11/17	Institutionalized Racism	Cornel West: <i>Race Matters</i> pp. 239-243	In-class Activity
11/20	Societal norms and Identity	Susan Bordo <i>Material Girl</i> [Handout]; In-class Movie: <i>Good Hair</i>	Quick Write
11/22	Societal norms and Identity	Susan Bordo <i>Material Girl</i> [Handout]; In-class Movie: <i>Good Hair</i>	

11/24	Thanksgiving holiday, no class		
11/27	Gender and Identity	Judith Butler: <i>Gender Trouble</i> [Handout]	Quick Write
11/29	Gender and Identity	Judith Butler: <i>Gender Trouble</i> [Handout]	
12/1	Review		
12/4	Final Exam		