

UCF Philosophy Department  
Dr. Mark Fagiano  
T/TH 3-4:15 p.m.

## **Introduction to Philosophy**

PHIL 2010-0005

Class location: NSC 0108

Office Hours: Tu/Th: 12—1:30 p.m. or by appointment

Office Location: PSY 244

**Email:** [Mark.Fagiano@ucf.edu](mailto:Mark.Fagiano@ucf.edu)

### **Course Description:**

This course surveys the fundamentals of philosophy through a detailed study of this discipline from the Axial Age to contemporary times. Our explorations will revolve around questions regarding the nature of philosophy itself as well as the practical significance of thinking and acting philosophically. Specifically, we will examine the differences between various “schools” of philosophy, and different sub-disciplines of philosophy (e.g., ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, etc.) for the purpose of discerning the value of philosophy for our lives. As an honors course, we will spend a large portion of the semester carefully analyzing the readings and having philosophical discussions in class.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To give you an overview of the basic problems of philosophy and their relationship to your life.
- To teach you the critical thinking, writing, and reading skills that will contribute to your success in other courses.
- To learn the differences between good and bad arguments.
- To convince you that majoring or minoring in philosophy can help you score highly on post-graduate exams for law school, medical school, and graduate school.
- To provide an advanced understanding of philosophy and its relationship with other disciplines

### **Required Texts:**

Cottingham, John G. *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

Donald Palmer. *Looking at Philosophy*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Recommended secondary source:** Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

## **Grading Details (Assignments and/or Tests/Exams):**

**Participation**—10%

**Two Quizzes**—15%

**Midterm**—25%

**Final**—30%

**Online Discussion Posts**—20%

**10% Participation**—Your presence is expected at every class and your participation is both invited and necessary. Although the participation part of your grade is the easiest part to earn, you will lose percentage points if you miss more than **two classes**. Excused absences (see the full list below) must be supported with a note from your doctor, coach, family, etc. All other absences count against your final grade. **It will be impossible to pass this class if you miss class excessively.** More than just being present for each and every class, participation includes actively engaging with the material by asking question or making comments during class time, especially during small group discussions. *Note also: if you do not have your book or other materials on a given class day, it is nearly the same as not being there and you will lose participation points.*

**15% Quizzes**—Two quizzes will be given on **January 25<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup>**. Your performance on these short, quizzes will contribute to fifteen percent of your final grade. Students must bring a pink scantron for each of these quizzes.

**25% Midterm**—The midterm on **March 8<sup>th</sup>** will consist of short answer questions and essays prompts based on lectures, in-class discussions, and the assigned readings. The class day before the midterm will be entirely devoted to reviewing the material for the exam, and I post a list of testable concepts/ideas online before the review session. **Students MUST BRING A GREENBOOK for the MIDTERM.**

**30%--Final**—The final (**T.B.A**) will take place during our scheduled time. It will follow the same plan, structure, and format as the midterm. **Students MUST ALSO BRING A GREENBOOK for the FINAL.**

**20% Online Discussion Posts and In-Class Participation**—Twenty percent of your final grade will be determined by the quality of your contributions to 4 online discussion prompts on **January 16<sup>th</sup>, January 30<sup>th</sup>, March 27<sup>th</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup>.**

### ***Rubric for Discussion Posts:***

I cannot express enough how important it is to write thoughtful, clear, and *well-informed* posts in order to do well in this course. Your discussion posts ought to be considered as a representation of your best comments and thoughts on the material.

Take your time on them.

**For each discussion post you must write your own post and comment on at least two other posts.**

The discussion postings are to be treated--and will be graded--as formal, academic written assignments. For this reason, it is advisable to compose each discussion post in Word (or a similar program) and then copy and paste it into the text box.

When you are composing your posts, you should keep in mind the important difference between expository and critical posts. An expository post merely explains something. And although some of the prompts will call for some explanation, make sure you are also writing something critical. Critical writing involves the construction of an argument--a position or thesis that you defend. This means you need to support the claims you make.

**An argument is not an opinion, an assertion or a belief**, though you should feel free to construct your argument in the first person. **Your posts and replies on the discussion group must original.** What makes a post or reply original?

Answers:

1. One that does not repeat what others have said
2. One that does not cut and paste or copy what is on the internet
3. One that is articulate and answers the prompt

**Late Work, Absences:** Late work will be penalized by one-half of a letter grade for each day they are late. Students with excused absences may be excused from penalty if the excuse is received promptly. Excuses received at the end of the semester may not remove late penalties for work assigned in advance of the excused period.

***There are NO MAKE UPS for any parts of this course without an excused absence:***

**Legitimate Excuses:** college-sponsored activities closely linked to academics or to other official college functions (administrative, athletic, etc.); student illness or injury—with a note from health services—as well as critical illness/death in one's immediate family; jury duty (or subpoena for court appearance); religious holidays.

### **Laptops and Phones**

Laptops and phone are allowed in class if and only if they are being used for taking notes or, in certain circumstances, for research. If you use your either your laptop or phone for other purposes in class (or your phone makes noise), it will be confiscated, then returned at the end of class. Repeated offense will result in a lowering of your grade.

**Incompletes:** The grade of incomplete will be given only in special circumstances such as an illness, an accident, or a death in the family.

## Academic Honesty

The integrity of students and their written and oral work is a critical component of the academic process. The submission of another's work as one's own is plagiarism and will be dealt with using the procedures outlined in the University of Central Florida catalog. Remember that allowing another student to copy one's own work violates standards of academic integrity.

### **Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:**

1. **The unauthorized possession or use of notes, texts, electronic devices (e.g., computers, mobile phones), online materials or other such unauthorized materials/devices in fulfillment of course requirements.**
2. **Copying another's person work or participation in such an effort.**
3. **An attempt or participation in an attempt to fulfill the requirements of the course with work other than one's own.**
4. **Forging or deliberately misrepresenting data or results.**
5. **Obtaining or offering either for profit or free of charge materials one might submit or has submitted for academic credit. This includes uploading course materials to online sites devoted in whole or in part, to aiding and abetting cheating under the guise of providing "study aids." There is no prohibition concerning uploading exemplars one's work to one's personal website or to departmental, divisional, University or professional society websites for the purposes of publicity, praise, examination or review by potential employers, graduate school admissions committees, etc.**
6. **Violating the specific directions concerning the operation of the honor code in relation to a particular assignment.**
7. **Making unauthorized copies of graded work for future distribution.**
8. **Claiming credit for a group project to which one did not contribute.**

**Late Work, Absences:** All out-of-class work is due AT THE BEGINNING of the class. Papers handed in after class but on the due date may be penalized one-third of a letter grade, and will be penalized by an additional one-half of a letter grade for each day they are late. Papers more than three days late will not be accepted. Students with excused absences may be excused from penalty if the excuse is received promptly. Excuses received at the end of the semester may not remove late penalties for work assigned in advance of the excused period.

There are NO MAKE UPS for any parts of this course without an excused absence:

**Legitimate Excuses:** college-sponsored activities closely linked to academics or to other official college functions (administrative, athletic, etc.); student illness or injury—with a note from health services—as well as critical illness/death in one's immediate family; jury duty (or subpoena for court appearance); religious holidays (for students who actively practice the religion).

### **Laptops and Phones**

Laptops are allowed in class if and only if the laptop is being used for taking notes or, in certain circumstances, for looking up something (I will explain this in detail when appropriate). Phones are not allowed during any time during class. If you use your phone in class or it makes noise, it

will be confiscated, then returned at the end of class. Repeated offense will result in a lowering of your participation grade.

**Incompletes:** The grade of incomplete will be given only in special circumstances such as an illness, an accident, or a death in the family.

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

		Session content	Material to be read prior to session <b>Reading for 1/11:</b> Washington Post Article: <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/12/24/a-harvard-medical-school-professor-makes-the-case-for-the-liberal-arts-and-philosophy/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/12/24/a-harvard-medical-school-professor-makes-the-case-for-the-liberal-arts-and-philosophy/</a>
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Week Eight 2/27	<b>Class Fifteen:</b> Discussion: Free Will	<b>Reading for 3/6:</b> NONE	
3/1	<b>Class Sixteen:</b> <i>Descartes, Skepticism, and the Foundations for Certainty</i> <i>Cogito Ergo Sum</i>	<b>Reading for 3/8:</b> NONE	
Week Nine 3/6	<b>Class Seventeen:</b> Discussion Groups: Topic: What is the Self? & MIDTERM REVIEW	<b>Reading for 3/20:</b> <b>READINGS FOR CLASSES AFTER SPRING BREAK</b> <i>In Cottingham:</i> 631—641 <i>In Palmer:</i> 189-200	
3/8	<b>Class Eighteen:</b>  MIDTERM	<b>Reading for 3/22:</b> --Kant: What is Enlightenment? <a href="http://www.allmendeberlin.de/What-is-Enlightenment.pdf">http://www.allmendeberlin.de/What-is-Enlightenment.pdf</a>  <i>In Cottingham:</i> 500-512	
Week Ten 3/13 NO CLASS 3/15	<b>SPRING</b>		



	4/5	<p><b><i>Class Twenty-four:</i></b>  Schopenhauer: The Will  Nietzsche: The Will to Power  Transformations of the Soul</p>	<p>Online: Sartre.  <a href="https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm">https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm</a></p> <p><b>Reading for 4/12</b>  <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/</a></p>
	<p>Week Fourteen  4/10    4/12</p>	<p><b><i>Class Twenty-five:</i></b>  Existentialism  <b>Discussion Post #4 Prompt Online</b></p> <p><b><i>Class Twenty-six:</i></b>  Logical Positivism: The Vienna Circle  Ludwig Wittgenstein and Language</p>	<p><b>Reading for 4/17:</b>  James: What Pragmatism Means:  <a href="https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/james.htm">https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/james.htm</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>Reading for 4/19:</b>  In <i>Palmer</i>: 404-412</p>
	<p>Week Fifteen    4/17    4/19</p>	<p><b><i>Class Twenty-seven:</i></b>  Pragmatism  <i>Feminism &amp; 20<sup>th</sup> Century Trends</i>  Philosophy &amp; Your Life</p> <p><b><i>Class Twenty-eight</i></b>  <b><i>REVIEW FOR FINAL</i></b></p>	
	<b>T.B.A.</b>	<b>FINAL</b>	