

**PHI 2010 SYLLABUS, FALL 2018
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

Course Name:
Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor:
Dr. Peter J. Giannopoulos

UCF Catalogue Listing:
PHI 2010-0009 (81522)

Office Location:
240 Psychology Building (PSY)

Schedule:
Tuesday, Thursday 1.30p-2.45

Office hours: Wednesday 10.00a-12.00p
Thursday 3.00p-4.00 & by appt.

Classroom:
0203 Engineering Building II (ENG2)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

UCF Course Catalogue Description: *Inquiry into the meaning justification of fundamental ideas an beliefs concerning reality, knowledge, and values; application to relevant topics in ethics, religion, and politics.*

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY will examine issues in several traditional areas Western philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and social and political philosophy. Students will read a selection of primary sources and a number of more recent commentators in areas such as feminist theory and philosophy of race that introduce new challenges to thinking about the basic questions of human existence and community. In this way, class discussions will interweave, at a minimum, two discourses: one based in close readings of primary texts and the other opening them to a contemporary critique of norms, particularly of gender and sexual identity, race, and culture.

While engaging with the primary sources can prove challenging on account of their density and complexity, the rewards are substantial. By closely examining big ideas like reality, belief, God, the good, identity, and rights—words whose meanings are often taken for granted in daily discussions—in primary texts, students will not merely appreciate philosophy as a theoretical discipline, i.e., as a particular field of investigation whose ideas are meaningful only within that field, but rather as a way to promote understanding of ourselves and of our world. From our opening readings we will take as our touchstone philosophical examinations of *concrete* experiences. This approach welcomes a plurality of lived experiences to the table, inviting diversity into a discipline that has been, practically speaking, rather homogeneous, and encourages students to use this course as a laboratory to test how philosophical ideas may impact their lives.

COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the course is to expose students to a selection of key Western philosophical works in the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, ethics, and social and political philosophy. The selection of texts will provide students with a broad background in the humanistic tradition and a sufficient foundation for upper-level coursework in philosophy as well as a basis for further work at the intersection of philosophy and other disciplines.

Our goal will be met through two principal objectives, which foreshadow the major course requirements. First, students will engage in several writing assignments that focus on knowledge of philosophical concepts, argumentation, and criticism. Your instructor wants to partner with you in the design of some of the assignments. This gives you a meaningful stake in your education, and also additional responsibility for what you'll get out of it. Second, we will have frequent discussions, both in class and via Webcourses, and group activities in which all students will learn to express their views, listen attentively to others, and respond, thereby widening their philosophical imaginations.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993).
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by Maudmarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998).
3. Plato, *Alcibiades I* in *Socrates and Alcibiades: Four Texts*, translated by David M. Johnson (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2003).
4. Additional texts posted on Webcourses. These philosophers and commentators include: G.W.F. Hegel, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Simone de Beauvoir, Elizabeth Spelman, Patricia Hill Collins, Blaise Pascal, William James, John Locke, Karl Marx, Frederick Douglass, Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, Elizabeth Pateman, Charles Mills, et al. Your instructor reserves the right to change this list at any time.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend every class and your instructor will take roll at the beginning of every class, which will factor into your Class Participation grade (see section entitled “MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS” below). Failure to attend class without legitimate excuse will negatively impact your grade.

If you expect to miss class, it is your responsibility to inform your instructor, under normal circumstances, no less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the class you will miss. If you have to miss class unexpectedly (e.g., due to sudden illness), it is your responsibility to inform your instructor no less than twenty-four (24) hours after the class you missed. In extraordinary circumstances, your instructor will grant an excused absence if a legitimate excuse is reported to him in a timely way.

MISSED/LATE WORK POLICY

All assignments are due by the due date specified in the chart below. **Late assignments will not be accepted without a valid excuse.**

A valid excuse requires that the student (i) notify the instructor no later than **twenty-four (24) hours** after the absence/missed assignment and (ii) have a reason for missing the assignment that the instructor finds excusable. Examples of reasons the instructor is likely to find excusable are: a death in the family, illness, or some other sort of emergency. Examples of reasons the instructor would not find excusable are: the student had too much work to do for other courses, forgot the deadline, or overslept.

If you anticipate difficulty in completing an assignment by the due date specified below, explain your circumstances to your instructor as soon as possible. A workable solution may be found.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

The University of Central Florida understands academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. In particular, students should familiarize themselves with the [Rules of Conduct detailed by the UCF Office of Student Conduct](#).

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, self-plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be

dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Office of Student Conduct for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Note on plagiarism. UCF's Golden rule defines plagiarism as the following: "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."

All material turned in under the student's name will be assumed to be the student's original work, unless properly indicated. Material that is not cited, i.e., that is not the student's original work, will be treated as plagiarism.

Any and all violations of the standards of academic integrity will be dealt with severely. These can result in the student receiving an 'F' for the course. Students will be reported to the University's Office of Student Conduct for possible further disciplinary sanction.

For information on plagiarism, consult the [UCF Plagiarism Statement on the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning website](#) and [Grammar and Writing: Avoiding Plagiarism on the UCF Libraries website](#).

STUDENT CONDUCT

Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the [Office of Student Conduct](#). Please review the [Rules of Conduct](#) in their entirety. Your instructor expects students to be aware of these guidelines and to conduct themselves accordingly.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- Please do not use your mobile phone in the classroom.
- Avoid arriving late and leaving early.
- Do not talk during classroom time, unless you are participating in class discussion or debate.
- Listen respectfully to others' comments and questions.
- Always bring appropriate assigned texts and handouts to class.
- Do not read or work on materials not related to the course in class.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

The University of Central Florida welcomes students with disabilities into its educational programs. The UCF Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is located at [Ferrell Commons 7F Room 185](#) (tel. 407.823.2371 and email sas@ucf.edu). For further information, please visit the [SAS website](#).

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may affect your ability to carry out assigned course work, contact SAS. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact SAS, participate in an intake interview, and

complete a [Course Accessibility Letter Request](#). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, SAS will provide your instructor with a copy of your letter. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

All information and documentation of disability is confidential. Also, if these conditions will make it difficult for you to carry out the work assigned in this course or if you will require extra time on exams, please notify your instructor during the first week of the course so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: CAMPUS SAFETY

Please ensure that you have familiarized yourself with the guidelines of the [Office of Emergency Management](#) and University Police Department concerning campus safety, including the [UCF Emergency Guide](#) and how to enable [UCF Alert](#), which may keep you informed in the event of an emergency on campus.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Often, I will send email to the class as a whole in order to provide information on readings, upcoming assignments, etc. I will send these emails to your UCF email account provided through Webcourses. It is your responsibility to check this account regularly in order to receive course information in a timely fashion.

NB: When you wish to communicate with me, use my UCF email account (peter.giannopoulos@ucf.edu) directly or use the Webcourses email platform. **I respond to emails within 48 hours** (and often quicker). If your email is not urgent or if I am travelling and unable to respond within 48 hours, I will let you know when to expect a response.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE	DUE DATE(S)
1. Class Participation	10%	N/A
2. Syllabus Quiz	5%	08/23 by 11.59p EST
3. Short Reflection	5%	08/30 by 11.59p
4. Online Discussions and Replies to Classmates (on Webcourses)	15%	Six (6): 09/06, 09/20, 10/04, 10/25, 11/01, 11/15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original contribution: Thursdays in class • Response to classmate: Thursdays by 11.59p
5. Paper 1 (co-designed with your instructor)	20%	10/11 by 11.59p
6. Off-campus group activity: Philos-mob! and Report	10%	11/07 by 11.59p
7. Paper 2	25%	Option A: 11/29 by 11.59p Option B: 12/02 by 11.59p
8. Closing Reflection (revise and resubmit above Short Reflection)	10%	12/01 by 11.59p

GUIDELINES FOR MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

1. Class Participation: 10% of overall grade

- **Due: N/A (ongoing)**

Student contributions

- This class will be conducted as a mixture of lecture and seminar-style dialogue. Students are *expected to substantially contribute to discussion*. That means that you should prepare the reading adequately and formulate your assessment, questions, and criticisms of the reading *before* the class in which the readings are to be discussed.
- *Note that we will not always be able to cover all the texts assigned, but students are nonetheless responsible for completing all assigned reading.*

Dialogue and critical engagement

- In a seminar-style discussion, we are trying to foster dialogue between the disparate voices in the room. Everyone's experience is valuable, and bringing everyone to the table makes for doing good philosophy.
- Having said that, **stating your view** on an issue or problem that we encounter is a good start, but not quite enough. You may also be asked to back it up with relevant support, which will often take the form of a description of the facts of the matter and reasons or evidence.
- Equally important to stating your view is taking the time to **formulate the right question**. Often, the best questions emerge when we respect and listen to one another carefully and build upon what others have said.
- Moreover, you are expected to **think critically** about the material, about the views that the instructor expounds, and about the views of your fellow classmates. Be respectful and constructive when offering critiques of the arguments and beliefs of others.

Specific guidelines on class participation

- Class participation includes, but is not limited to:
 - Regular attendance
 - Attention to lecture
 - Respectful listening to classmates
 - Attention when we are reading passages together from assigned texts
 - Active participation or contributions during class time
- You are expected to bring the materials assigned for that day's class with you (e.g., the required course book and hard or digital copies of texts printed from Webcourses). I will monitor whether or not you are regularly bringing the assigned text with you to class. ***This will be factored into your class participation grade.***
 - Just as it is not enough that you are merely present in class in order to receive a favorable participation grade, it is not enough that you come to class empty handed.
- Additionally, you are expected to participate fully in co-designing (with your instructor) certain major assignments and in the various group activities of the course, some of which

take place outside class. Details on major assignment co-design and on group activities are below.

2. Syllabus Quiz: 5%

➤ **Due: 08/23 by 11.59p**

- All instructors are required by UCF to document student activity during the first week of each semester. In order to document your activity in this course, there is a short syllabus quiz that you must complete on Webcourses.
 - NB: ***Failure to complete the syllabus quiz can result in a delay of your financial aid disbursement.***

3. Short Reflection on the Value of Reading the History of Philosophy: 5%

➤ **Due: 08/30 by 11.59p**

- This writing assignment asks you to reflect on the following question: why read a bunch of old, dead philosophers today?
 - Given that you will not have yet read much philosophy in our course, I am asking you to imagine what values one might gain by engaging with part of the Western philosophical tradition.
 - How might it *impact* your choices, your conception of a good life, and how you live with and do well by others?
 - How might it *shed light on* how legal, cultural, and other social structures shape how you think of yourself and how others see you (i.e., your social identity)?
 - How might it *challenge* your existing beliefs on religion, on how you identify yourself culturally, socially, or politically (e.g., as a student, as a member of a certain gender and race, as an immigrant, as a libertarian, etc.), how you recognize of the rights of others, and what you owe them in a civil society?
 - Why would someone *want* to reflect on or challenge her or his existing beliefs, anyway, and how can reading old, dead philosophers facilitate this?
 - Be sure not only to give your view, but also to give reasons for your views.
 - E.g., if you believe that reading old, dead philosophers is an essential part of helping you to formulate what you really believe in, or in shaping a good moral character, or in considering what the nature of happiness and the good life is, or in being a responsible and informed member of a political community, state *why*.

Format

- Reflection 1 should be approximately 500 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font) in length.
- Upload to the appropriate Dropbox on Webcourses.

4. Online Discussions (original post and reply): 15%

- **Due: 09/06, 09/20, 10/04, 10/25, 11/01, 11/15**
 - Original contribution: Thursdays in class

- Response to classmate: Thursdays by 11.59p

Discussion prompts

- Beginning in week 3, you will prepare a written discussion response on our Webcourses course space that addresses a prompt your instructor specifies. There are six (6) discussions in total.
- Your instructor will supply prompts related to our readings that he would like you to address in these discussions. The prompt will be available Thursday at class time.
- You will have class time to address the prompt. **You are encouraged to bring your laptop or tablet to complete the assignment.** There may also be time to present your views in your groups.
 - **Your instructor will regularly call on students in class to present and elaborate on their responses.**
- You should **always address your instructor's prompt** in your discussion. In preparation of the prompt, consider the following while reading:
 - [a] Summarize, in your own words, what the reading is about and why it is relevant to a philosophical idea, issue, or question.
 - [b] Articulate one question about the reading or the material addressed in the reading.

Deadlines

- For weeks in which a discussion is assigned, your original discussion is **due on Thursday during allotted class time.**
- Additionally, for each original discussion contribution you make, you will also reply to at least one classmate's discussion (you may reply to more; only one is required). This is **due on the same Thursday by 11.59p.**

Purpose and instructor review (grading)

- The primary purpose of these responses is twofold: to develop critical thinking and interpretive and argumentation skills through short writing exercises and to prepare you for our class discussions. It helps to write some commentary on or questions about a reading in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the text and before you forget about it (which we all do).
- Your instructor will grade each of your discussions individually and write commentary. **Take these comments into account to improve your writing and interpretive skills.** The quality of your discussions and your replies to classmates determines your overall discussions grade.

How to write a good discussion contribution

- Think of this as public journaling for an informed audience. That audience is your classmates and instructor.
 - We are all reading the same material: how would you summarize the material for a classmate, what do you find well-argued (or poorly argued) and what do you find questionable, neglected, or worthy of further discussion? Is the author attempting to persuade his or her audience of something? If so, what? Keep such background questions in mind when responding to a prompt.

Format

- You will be posting these responses in the space set up in Webcourses.
- As a rule of thumb, try to make your response around 150-250 words. Hitting within this range, however, is no substitute for quality. You may have a concise response of 110 words that makes an excellent contribution and receives full credit.

5. Paper 1, Exegetical Essay: 20%

- **Due: 10/11 by 11.59p**

- Together, we will devise a series of essay prompts, of which you will choose one to write an exegetical philosophical essay on one or more of our primary source readings.
 - You will take the lead in coming up with appropriate questions and the standards by which you will be assessed (subject to your instructor's approval). Detailed instructions will follow approximately two weeks before the due date.
 - Co-designing the essay prompts gives you a firm stake in your education. Make no mistake, however, the assignment is not any easier for that!

Format

- Paper 1 should be between 1000-1500 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font) in length.
- Upload to the appropriate Dropbox on Webcourses.

6. Off-campus group activity, Philos-mob: 10%

- **Mob report due: 11/07 by 11.59p**

- Together with your fellow group members, you will meet at a time of your choosing and at a **public** place of your choosing (not on campus; e.g., a café, a supermarket, a public park, etc.) and engage in philosophical conversation with two (2) people who you do not know. Two members (2) of each group will strike up a conversation with one stranger each.
- We will devote class time to co-designing sample philosophical questions that you can ask your conversation partner.

Philos-mob Report

- You and your fellow group members will co-author a report of your experience talking with two strangers. This will include a summary of the philosophical conversation, what challenges you faced, and what you learned, and what values you gained from the experience of talking philosophy with a perfect stranger.

Format

- Your group's Philos-mob Report should be between 600-800 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font) in length.
- Upload to the appropriate Dropbox on Webcourses.

7. Paper 2, Exegetical and Interpretive Essay: 25%

- **Option A Due Date: 11/29 by 11.59p**

- **Option B Due Dates: Proposal (250 words) due 11/21 by 11.59p and Paper 2 due 12/02 by 11.59p**

- You may exercise an option for writing Paper 2.
 - Option A. Choose from a set of essay prompts that your instructor distributes.
 - Option B. Determine a topic of your choosing in order to write your essay. This should involve some research into the secondary literature of your topic.
 - At least one of our course readings must anchor your final essay it should stay within the scope of the course's philosophical themes.
 - Note that Option B will be a slightly more involved process: you will have to arrange to meet with your instructor during his office hours to discuss your topic and, additionally, write a short proposal (250 word) proposal.
 - With Option B, there may be an opportunity for you to expand one of your Discussions from the second half of the course into a research paper.

Format

- Your final essay should be between 1500-2000 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font) in length.
- Upload to the appropriate Dropbox on Webcourses.

8. Closing Reflection on the Value of Philosophy: 10%

- **Due: 12/01 by 11.59p**
- This writing assignment asks you to reflect, once again, on the following question: why read a bunch of old, dead philosophers today?
 - You will critically revise, and possibly expand on, the response you submitted for this question on 08/30 with the following in mind:
 - Now that the course is nearing its end, what has changed about your view of the value of reading primary sources in the history of Western philosophy?
 - Has it had a real impact on your life or how you live with and see others, and, if so, *in what way*?

GRADING SCALE

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	Below 60

OVERVIEW OF MODULES

WEEK(S)	MODULE	AUTHORS
1	Introduction to course 1. Philosophy and concrete experience	Hegel, Rilke, and Sartre
2	2. The problem of stupidity and the value of philosophy	Plato's <i>Alcibiades I</i>
3-6	3. Ancient ethics and modern morality	Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Nietzsche
7	4. Feminist critiques	De Beauvoir, Spelman, Hill Collins
8-10	5. Knowledge, reality, and God	Descartes, Pascal, James
11-13	6. Social contract theory and critiques	Locke, Marx, Douglass, Pateman, Mills, et al.
14-15	7. Race	Du Bois, A. Locke, Fanon

SCHEDULE OF READINGS BY TOPIC AND ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

NB 1: The Course Schedule of Readings is *tentative* and subject to alteration at the instructor’s discretion. Further, classes may be *cancelled* due to the instructor’s professional travel commitments. You will be alerted to any changes with ample time to adjust your schedule.

NB 2: On some class days, we will not be able to cover every aspect of the assigned readings. The instructor will often give background lectures to contextualize the reading historically. Further, we may spend most of our time working together to closely interpret select passages. Nonetheless, students are responsible for completing the all the readings.

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
1	Introduction to course	T 08/21	N/A	
	Philosophy and concrete experience	R 08/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hegel’s “Who thinks abstractly?” Rilke’s “Archaic torso of Apollo” Sartre’s “Existentialism: A Clarification” 	Syllabus quiz by 11.59p
2	Care of the self: Can philosophy trump stupidity?	T 08/28	Plato’s <i>Alcibiades I</i> , 1-30 (103a-120c)	
		R 08/30	Plato’s <i>Alcibiades I</i> , 30-58 (120c-135e)	Short reflection by 11.59p
3	Virtue Ethics: happiness and the role of friends	T 09/04	Aristotle’s <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (EN) I. 1-12 1094a1-1102a4	
		R 09/06	Aristotle’s EN VIII. 1-8 1155a3-1159b25	Discussion 1 in class with reply to classmate by 11.59

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
4	Deontological morality	T 09/11	Kant's <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> Preface and First Section, 1-17	
		R 09/13	Kant's <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i> Second Section, 19-48	
5	Utilitarian morality	T 09/18	Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i> Chapters 1-2, 1-26	
		R 09/20	Mill's <i>Utilitarianism</i> Chapters 3-4, 37-41	Discussion 2 in class with reply to classmate by 11.59
6	A challenge to modern moral theories	T 09/25	Nietzsche's <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> First Treatise, 9-33	
		R 09/27	Nietzsche's <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> Second Treatise, 35-66	
7	Feminist critiques	T 10/02	De Beauvoir's introduction to <i>The Second Sex</i>	
		R 10/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelman's "Simone de Beauvoir: Just Who Does She Think <i>We</i> Is?" Selection from Hill Collins' <i>Black Feminist Thought</i> 	Discussion 3 in class with reply to classmate by 11.59p Co-design Paper 1 prompts in class
8	Knowledge, reality, and God	T 10/09	Descartes' First and Second <i>Meditations</i>	
		R 10/11	Descartes' Third and Fourth <i>Meditations</i>	

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
9		T 10/16	Descartes' Fifth and Sixth <i>Meditations</i>	
		R 10/18	No class	
10		T 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection from Pascal's <i>Pensées</i>, The Wager • James' "The Will to Believe" 	
		R 10/25	No new readings	Discussion 4 in class with reply to classmate by 11.59p Group consult in class: organizing and strategizing for philos-mob activity off campus
11	Social contract and government	T 10/30	Selections from Locke's <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>	
	Marxism	R 11/01	Marx's "On the Jewish Question"	Discussion 5 in class with reply to classmate by 11.59p
12	On constitutions, democracy, and republic	T 11/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of the United States • Publius' (James Madison) Federalist No. 10 	Mob report (Philos-mob activity): 11/07 by 11.59p
	Citizenship in United States	R 11/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott v. Sanford and Lincoln's Speech on the Dred Scott Decision • Douglass' "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" 	
13	Liberalism and	R 11/13	Selection from Pateman's <i>The Sexual Contract</i>	Discussion 6 in class with

WEEK	TOPIC	DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
	feminism			reply to classmate by 11.59p
	Liberalism and race	T 11/15	Selection from Mill's <i>The Racial Contract</i>	
14	The phenomenology of race	T 11/20	Fanon's "The lived experience of the black"	Paper 2 option B proposal (250 words) due 11/21 by 11.59p
		R 11/22	Thanksgiving holiday—no class	
15	Race: history, nature, and culture	T 11/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Du Bois' "The Conservation of the Races" • Locke, A., "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture" • Fanon, "Racism and Culture" 	
		R 11/29	No new readings	Paper 2 Option A: 11/29 by 11.59p Option B: 12/02 by 11.59p Closing reflection (revise and resubmit Short Reflection): 12/01 by 11.59p