

# PHI 2010.AW69: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

## SUMMER 2016



### **Instructor contact information:**

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Office Hours: Virtual: MW 11-noon; F2F by appt.

### **Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine a variety of philosophical concepts and themes, focusing on the nature of the good life (a classical philosophical concern). We will explore several theories of the good life as well as other philosophical issues in light of their interplay with popular culture and everyday life.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To provide students with an introductory survey of various transhistorical and cross-cultural philosophical conceptions of the good life

- To engage students in critical thinking, about diverse beliefs, values, and practices in relation to diverse philosophical values
- To foster students' ability to engage in philosophical discussions about self, community, and culture
- To encourage self-reflection about academic and other life choices

## **Required texts:**

You do not need to purchase any texts for this class. There are, however, a number of required readings (both classical and contemporary philosophical texts and relevant videos) that I will make available online. Please use the links provided on the relevant course pages.

## **Course requirements:**

Philosophy happens through dialogue and critical self-reflection informed by diverse thinkers. Thus your grade in the class will reflect the following components:

### **Quizzes: 25%**

Quizzes are designed to ensure you understand the reading and viewing material assigned. There will be 5 quizzes during the semester worth 5% each. Each will consist of 5-10 objective questions (MC, T/F, fill in the blank, etc.). Quizzes will be timed. They are open-book but you should read and view the material carefully prior to taking the quiz as there will not be time to read as you take a quiz. See deadlines on calendar.

### **Discussions: 30%**

Philosophy requires dialogue about what you are learning. Thus 30% of your course grade will reflect the quantity and quality of your efforts to engage with your peers in philosophical discussions about the good life. Deadlines are on the course schedule. Each discussion forum will be worth 5% and you will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of your participation, as well as your professionalism (i.e., your ability to meet deadlines, proofread your work, etc.).

### **Surveys: 30%**

You will take 6 surveys during the semester. Questions are designed to have you engage in self-reflection regarding your own conceptions of the good life and how these beliefs are (or are not) embodied in your choices and actions. You will not be evaluated on the content of your answers but simply on your efforts to take the time to reflect each week. Surveys are untimed to give you as much

time as you like to think about the questions. However, you must complete the survey by deadline. Deadlines are on the calendar. Each survey is worth 5% and you will receive full marks for each one you complete.

### **Final exam: 15%**

A final exam will consist of both objective and open-ended (e.g. short answer and/or essay) questions. It will be a comprehensive exam designed to assess your ability to understand, compare and contrast, and synthesize course material. See course schedule for date. As with quizzes, your final exam will be timed and open book.

## **Grading Policies:**

I use a plus/minus scale for grading as follows:

A (Exceptional, Outstanding, Wow!)	93% or better	C (Satisfactory, Meets expectations)	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B (Very good, exceeds expectations)	83-86%	D (Below satisfactory, fails to meet basic expectations)	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F (Fail)	Less than 60%

### **Academic Integrity:**

There is a zero tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism. Cheating occurs when someone else does your work for you or gives you test answers, etc. Plagiarism occurs when you quote or paraphrase someone else's words or borrow their ideas and fail to cite your source. It is a form of cheating because this failure (whether intentional or unintentional) represents someone else's work as your own. It is an infraction of the student code of conduct and will result in a

referral to the Office of Student conduct and an automatic "F" on that assignment. If you have questions regarding when or how to cite something, please consult the MLA style guide, the University Writing Center, or your professor.

### **Disability accommodations:**

If you need accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Services who will inform me how to best provide individualized accommodations consistent with your documented disability. To be eligible for disability related accommodations, students must have a disability as defined by applicable federal and state laws and documented by an appropriate health care provider or professional.

### **Late Submissions:**

Late submissions will not be given full credit unless you have an excuse recognized by UCF policy, e.g. hospitalization, death or life-threatening illness of a family member, or other documented medical excuse. Other legitimate reasons for absence (e.g. religious holidays, UCF related travel) are not excuses for late submissions; work should be turned in early when you know you will be unable to submit it on the deadline. Please also note that a broken computer, or the inability to retrieve, produce, or submit assignments from a computer will not be accepted as a valid excuse for submitting an assignment late. Back up your work and avoid procrastination in order to meet deadlines.

### **Extra-credit:**

Do not ask for extra-credit. Do your best throughout the class and you will not need it. If I decide a substantial portion of the class would benefit from an additional opportunity, it will be offered to everyone. I will not select you out for special treatment. Don't ask.

### **Federal Financial Aid Regulation:**

All faculty members are required to document students' engagement in the course based on their academic activity at the beginning of each semester. In order to document that you have begun this course, the introductory discussion forum assignment included in this module must be completed within the first week of classes (or, if adding the course late, as soon as you have access to the course). Failure to complete this assignment prior to the deadline may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

## Course Schedule:

Specific topics and assignments are below: Note that I have set the course up with regular deadlines, as follows:

Mondays: A new module opens

Thursdays: Reading quizzes are due

Fridays: Your first discussion posting is due

Sundays: Deadline for the remainder of your discussion postings. Your self-reflection survey is also due.

**Note:** You can *always* complete required tasks in advance of the deadline and I encourage this. When you wait until the last minute, crises arise and technology may fail you. You cannot and should not count on instructor sympathy for last minute crises that could have been averted by starting your work earlier in the week.