

## Philosophy 2010H: Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)

University of Central Florida  
Spring Semester 2018

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*Class #:* 10689

*Meeting Time:* Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 11:30am-12:20pm

*Meeting Location:* Burnett HC O128

*Office Hours:* Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30pm-3:30pm

### *Course 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.

### *Enriched Description*

You might not know what philosophy is, especially since the word “philosophy” is thrown around to mean so many different things. You might just think of it as “a bunch of theory,” or even “one’s own beliefs or opinions about things nobody can prove.” Although it is fine for people to use the word to mean those things, none of those things are what philosophy, the academic discipline, happens to be. But it is easy to see how people could use the word so variously—it is a bit difficult to get a grasp on what philosophy actually *is*. So, what is it?

Immanuel Kant, one of history’s greatest philosophers, came up with compelling answers to a great many questions, including that one. He said that philosophy is itself the attempt to answer three (very fundamental) questions.

- 1) What can we know?
- 2) What ought we do?
- 3) What may we hope for?

Although philosophy asks more questions than just these, all its interests are intimately connected to the things these questions are asking about. Philosophy brings to bear our best judgments and the tools of logic and rigorous argumentation to devise answers. You will read some famous texts from some of the greatest philosophers in history, but you will also get a flavor for what contemporary philosophers are thinking.

The first question points to a number of issues that *theoretical* philosophy asks about. People claim to know things about the world all the time. So they claim to have knowledge, and they claim that what they know is how things are. They also take it for granted that people are the kinds of things that can have this knowledge. People certainly could not know anything if they weren’t able to think about the things they know about. Theoretical philosophy investigates each of these issues that are implicated in the investigation of what knowing is.

The second question is the primary question of *practical* philosophy. We all have opinions about what the right thing to do is. But it’s often controversial *what* the right thing to do is in many controversial cases (abortion, affirmative action, situations where one must decide whether to sacrifice one’s own well-being for that of others, and many others). And it isn’t immediately clear *why* something is the right thing to do. Some things seem right because they lead to the greatest benefit for everyone involved, or wrong because they cause

harm; other things seem right or wrong just because those actions are right or wrong, whatever else the actions lead to. Practical philosophy uses the same tools and tries to turn our opinions into systematic theories about what is right and wrong that we can use to figure out how to lead good, moral lives. Our exploration of the second question will address both (a) what makes actions in general right and wrong and (b) applications of these theories to concrete, controversial cases that will show how this generality can guide our specific choices.

The final question is something many subfields of philosophy try to answer. Virtually everyone thinks just governments are desirable; countless people have even given their lives in the pursuit of justice. The nature of justice is one of the earliest, most profound questions of the philosophical tradition. Religion brings many hope, and makes an eternal reward for good behavior and suffering on Earth more plausible. Since the existence of a divine being or an afterlife is not something anyone can directly observe, it has to be inferred from the way things are in other ways, and very basic, general facts about the universe – such as those philosophy investigates – bear quite a bit on those inferences. Hence the philosophy of religion has much to say on these topics. We will be looking into some of the most famous arguments for and against the existence of a divine being and the immortality of the soul.

As this brief introduction to the course material (hopefully) reveals, you will be in for a very interesting, enlightening initiation.

#### *Course Format*

Lecture, discussion, and writing assessment

#### *Course Policies*

1) *Academic Conduct Policy.* All members of the academic community at UCF are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. “Academic integrity” means representing oneself and one’s work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating, since it involves claiming credit for ideas and work not actually one’s own and thus trying to attain a certain academic evaluation without actually earning it. Here are some examples of academic dishonesty:

a) Plagiarizing the work of others. 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.” Whether students have read or heard the information used, they must document the source of the information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations (which reproduce the information word-for-word within quotation marks) and paraphrases (which digest the source of information and provide it in the students own words). Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if students rephrase, condense, or select from another person’s work, the ideas are still the other person’s, and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student’s actual work and plagiarism of another’s ideas. Buying a paper or taking information from the internet without attribution and handing it in as one’s own work is, in fact, plagiarism.

b) Falsifying records or providing misinformation regarding one’s credentials.

c) Unauthorized collaboration on computer assignments and unauthorized access to and use of computer programs, including modifying computer files created by others and representing that work as one’s own.

2) *Completion of Required Work.* Completion of all required work is necessary in order to pass the course. (See “Assignments” below.)

3) *Excused Absences.* Attendance and participation directly determine a portion of the grade in this course. Students are obligated to inform their instructors of dates they will miss class due to an excused absence prior to those anticipated dates. For activities such as athletic competitions whose schedules are known prior to the start of a term, students must provide their instructors during the first week of each term a written schedule

showing days they expect to miss class. For other university excused absences, students must provide each instructor at the earliest possible time the dates they will miss.

4) *Deadline Extensions*. Things come up, and none of us are totally rock-solid. I understand this. Thus, I'm happy to consider extensions for family emergencies, medical emergencies, and other serious unanticipated events. (Although certain assignments may come at very busy times in your semester, I am unlikely to grant any extension requested for this reason. In the normal course of events, students are expected to plan ahead and budget for the busiest times of the semester.) Only those extensions requested 36 hours or more before the specified due date can be considered. The length of extensions will be determined by the factors involved in your need for it. To request an extension, please submit the aforementioned Absence Form.

5) *Add/Drops*. UCF's policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of deadline dates for dropping, entering, and remaining in courses. To assist you, however, I've included the following:

Last day to drop a course and request a full refund or swap course enrollment: Thursday, January 11, 11:59pm.

Payment deadline: Friday, January 19

6) *Office Hour Policies*. Most of the time, you'll be able to drop by office hours whenever you want, no appointment required. In the week prior to the due-date of a paper, however, you'll need to notify me of your intention to come and request an appointment. These appointments will be doled out on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you cannot come to a scheduled session of office hours, we can try to devise a time that will work for both of us.

7) *In-Classroom Conduct – General*. Philosophy requires the discussion of controversial ideas. Everyone should feel comfortable voicing their reasoned assessments of these ideas. Therefore, it's essential that we maintain a respectful academic environment in the classroom. No derogatory or discriminatory speech acts will be permitted.

If you have any questions about what this entails, feel free to contact me. (Please also see section 10 below.)

8) *In-Classroom Conduct – Electronic Devices*. Since I want you to engage with the material through discussion and concentration on the lectures, use of laptops and smartphones during class is prohibited. (One exception: you can use your phone to check-in as present. See "Attendance/ Participation" below.) Note-taking is indeed a good idea, but you should use paper and a writing utensil. Notes: 1) It's fine to keep your cellphone on with the ringer silenced. You just can't look at it. I recommend stowing it in your bag. 2) If you have a documented condition that conflicts with this policy, see "Accessibility Accommodation" below.)

9) *Accessibility and Accommodation*. The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect with [Student Accessibility Services](#) (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu), phone (407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable.

10) *Diversity and Inclusion*. The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military

experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [www.shield.ucf.edu](http://www.shield.ucf.edu) and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE - <http://oie.ucf.edu/> & [askanadvocate@ucf.edu](mailto:askanadvocate@ucf.edu)
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services - <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> & [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu)
- Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events – [www.diversity.ucf.edu](http://www.diversity.ucf.edu)
- Student Bias Grievances – Just Knights response team - <http://jkrt.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office - <http://compliance.ucf.edu/> & [complianceandethics@ucf.edu](mailto:complianceandethics@ucf.edu)
- Ombuds Office - <http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu>

11) *Classroom safety*. Instructors and staff at UCF take classroom safety very seriously. In the event of an emergency, please follow all orders from the instructor (if the instructor is available to give orders). For a complete statement of UCF's emergency procedures, please visit our emergency preparedness site at <http://emergency.ucf.edu/>.

### *Grading*

The grade will be determined by the percentage of possible points you earn on the various assignments (see below). The percentages correspond to letter grades as follows:

#### A grades

A: 93.34-100%

A-: 90-93.33

#### B grades

B+: 86.67-89.99

B: 83.34-86.66

B-: 80-83.33

#### C grades

C+: 76.67-79.99

C: 73.34-76.66

C-: 70-73.33

#### D grades

D+: 66.67-69.99

D: 63.34-66.66

D-: 60-63.33

#### F grades

<59.9

Late submissions (without documented excuse) will suffer the following standardized penalties...

Submission 0-24 hours after due date: 10 percentage points  
...24h1m-48 hours after due date: 20 percentage points.  
...48h1m-72 hours after due date: 30 percentage points  
(and so on)

Even if you've already missed a deadline so much that you will not receive any points on an assignment, you must complete the assignment to pass the course. See section 2 in "Course Policies" above.

### *Assignments*

Attendance/Participation: 10% of the course grade. This portion of the grade will be determined by your course attendance and participation. You can earn all of the points in this portion of the grade by: a) attending all sessions for which your attendance is not excused; b) attending all but one sessions for which your attendance is not excused.

I do want to give each student the opportunity to make up two unexcused absences. Making up such an absence requires some replacement work, including an in-person meeting during scheduled office hours or at another mutually-agreeable time. To indicate that you'd like to make up an unexcused absence and schedule the necessary meeting, please fill out the electronic unexcused absence form. (You can find the link to this form on the course management site.)

Introductory Writing Assignment (3%). This small writing assignment. You will be required to send me one typed, double-spaced page concerning a) what you hope to accomplish in this course, and b) a description of the philosophical issue or question that most interests you. It is due at the end of the first week of classes (Friday, Jan. 12, 5pm). It will be graded for completion, but I also want to use the assignment as an opportunity to gauge your preexisting composition skills, so you should take seriously matters of style, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must complete this quiz before the due date, or receipt of your financial aid may be delayed.

Papers (20% each; 60% in total). Developing your skills in academic argumentative writing is a primary goal of this class. Your performance on these papers determines the lion's share of your grade.

Each paper should be approximately 1500 words long and contain a full bibliography prepared according to a commonly-accepted humanities style guide. You'll be required to submit a copy of each paper through Webcourses; you may also submit a physical copy in class on the due date for added assurance.

Peer commentary sessions are scheduled for the first and third papers. To earn credit for attending class on peer review days, you'll have to come prepared with a rough draft of your paper that is developed enough to merit editorial commentary from a classmate. (You will also be required to read and provide commentary to a classmate's paper on these days.)

Final Examination (27%). The final examination will test both a) basic cultural knowledge you will have been expected to acquire in the course and b) your ability to recall and engage in philosophical argumentation through writing. I'll provide more detail on the final as we approach the end of the course.

### *Readings*

The assigned readings for this course are located in one of two places. The first is the assigned textbook, *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (eds. Perry, Bratman, and Fischer), which you should acquire at least for the duration of the course. The second is the course Webcourses site. The section "Course Schedule" below indicates which sources contain which readings. If the source of a

reading is *not* provided on the schedule, then that source is in our textbook. Otherwise, the source of the reading will be specified as “Webcourses.”

Although I try to keep variation in the per-session workload at a minimum, there is still some unevenness. You should thus plan ahead—see which weeks have the most/least reading, do the same with your other classes, and plan when you’re going to read the assignments accordingly. Also, the readings vary in difficulty/density. Some of the shorter readings will nevertheless take you awhile to complete, and will require you to spend more time thinking about them in order to determine what the author is trying to say. Thus you shouldn’t automatically assume that “fewer pages” equals “easier/shorter assignment.”

*Course Schedule\**

Date	Topic	Reading	Important Notes
Jan 8	Course Introduction	Read syllabus after class	
Jan 10	The Philosophical Method in Action	Socrates, “Euthyphro” [Webcourses]	
	Unit I: What Can We Know?		
	A. Epistemology		
Jan 12	Introducing the Study of Knowledge	“Meno,” excerpts [Webcourses]	Introductory Writing Assignment due
Jan 15	MLK Day – No class		
Jan 17		Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditation One	
Jan 19		Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Two	
Jan 22	Writing Day		Paper 1 topics disseminated
Jan 24		Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” [Webcourses]	
	B. <i>Metaphysics</i>		
Jan 26		“The Racecourse” [back of textbook]	
Jan 29		Eddington, “The Two Tables” [Webcourses]	
	C. <i>Philosophy of Mind</i>		
Jan 31		Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , Four-Six	
Feb 2	Partial Writing Day	No reading	
Feb 5		No reading	Paper 1 due
Feb 7		Ryle, “Descartes’ Myth”	
Feb 9		Armstrong, “The Nature of Mental States”	
Feb 12		Jackson, “What Mary Didn’t Know”	
	D. <i>Personal Identity: What am I?</i>		
Feb 14		Perry, “A Dialogue concerning Personal Identity and Immortality,” Part 1 and 2	

\* The course schedule is subject to change due to professional reasons, rate of progress through the material, prohibitive weather, illness, and personal emergency. I will update all enrolled students as these changes occur.

Feb 16		Perry, "A Dialogue concerning Personal Identity and Immortality," Part 2	
Feb 19		Parfit, "Personal Identity"	
	Unit II: What Ought We Do?		
	A. But First, Do We Even Control What We Do?		
Feb 21		Van Inwagen, "The Powers of Rational Beings: Freedom of the Will"	Paper 2 topics disseminated
Feb 23		Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity"	
	B. Normative Ethics, Part I: Utilitarianism		
Feb 26		Bentham, "The Principle of Utility"	
Feb 28		Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality"	Submit preliminary draft of Paper 2
Mar 2	Writing Day	Paper assigned to you in peer review	Conduct peer review; come prepared with preliminary draft
Mar 5		"The Trolley Problem"	
	C. Normative Ethics, Pt 2: Kantianism		
Mar 7		Velleman, "A Brief Introduction to Kantian Ethics"	
Mar 9	Applying Kantianism	Klepper, "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using a Person" [Webcourses]	Paper 2 due
Mar 12	Enjoy Spring Break!		
Mar 14	Enjoy Spring Break!		
Mar 16	Enjoy Spring Break!		
	D. Normative Ethics, Pt 3: Aristotelianism		
Mar 19		Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , textbook selections	
Mar 21		Wolf, "Moral Saints," [Webcourses]	
	E. But Is All This an Illusion?		
Mar 23		Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I, textbook selections	
Mar 26		Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values"	
Mar 28		Gauthier, "Morality and Advantage"	
	III. What May We Hope For?		
	A. <i>Justice</i>		
Mar 30		Mill (and Wollstonecraft), "The Subjection of Women"	
Apr 2		TBD	

Apr 4		Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," textbook selections	Paper 3 topics disseminated
	<i>B. God</i>		
Apr 6		Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"	
Apr 9		Aquinas, "The Existence of God"	
Apr 11		Pascal, "The Wager"	
Apr 13	Writing Day	Read assigned peer review paper	Conduct Peer Review; come prepared with preliminary draft
Apr 16		1) Paley, "Natural Theology" 2) Hume, <i>Dialogues concerning Natural Religion</i> , textbook selections	
	<i>C. The Afterlife</i>		
Apr 18		Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> , beginning to 76d [Webcourses]	
Apr 20		Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> , 76d-80d, 102a- 107b [Webcourses]	
Apr 23	Course Conclusion	No readings assigned	Paper 3 due
Apr 25, 10am- 12:50pm	Final Examination	Study for exam	Final Examination

### Course Bibliography

Eddington, Arthur. 1994. "Two Tables." *Reality*, 144-149. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Gettier, Edmund. 1963. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (6), 121-123.

Mappes, Thomas A. 1985. "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using another Person." *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, edited by Thomas A. Mappes, Jane S. Zembatty, and David DeGrazia, 164-178. New York: McGraw-Hill

Perry, John, Michael Bratman, and John Martin Fischer. 2016. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. 7th Edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Plato. 1993. *Phaedo*. Edited and translated by David Gallop. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

----. 1994. *Euthyphro*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. URL: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyfro.html>.

----. 2015. *Meno*. *The Norton Introduction to Philosophy*, edited by Gideon Rosen, Alex Byrne, Joshua Cohen, and Seana Shiffrin. New York: Norton.

Wolf, Susan. 1982. "Moral Saints". *Journal of Philosophy* 79 (8), 419-439.