University of Central Florida, Fall 2015
PHI 2010 H: Honors Introduction to Philosophy
Syllabus, v. 20151217

Course Information
- Title: Introduction to Philosophy
- Course number/section: PHI 2010 H/202
- Credit hours: 3.0
- Term: Fall semester 2015, August 24 - December 15
- Days and times: Tuesday and Thursday; 10:30 am - 11:45 am
- Location: Burnett Honors College (BHC) 0127

Instructor Information
- Name: Luis H. Favela, Ph.D. (Please refer to me as “Dr. Favela” or “Professor Favela.”)
- Email: Luis.Favela@ucf.edu
- Website: http://philosophy.cah.ucf.edu/staff.php?id=1017
- Office location: PSY0245
- Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm.

Course Description
- 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 (Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016, p. 519).
- Detailed description: “What is philosophy?” is a difficult question to answer. A helpful place to start is with the meaning of the word. ‘Philosophy’ comes from the ancient Greek word for “love of wisdom.” Many of the disciplines we refer to as “science” began as philosophy. At one time, “natural philosophy” was the title of a group of disciplines that we now know separately as the sciences of physics, astronomy, and cosmology. Many individual areas of study started out as philosophy including, but not limited to, biology and psychology. In fact, all of your professors who have a Ph.D. are doctors of philosophy (“Ph.D.” is the abbreviation for the Latin philosophiae doctor). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, philosophy became an academic discipline in its own right. One way to think of philosophy historically is as the place where investigations of the world begin when we are not sure how to even start thinking about them. When the theories and methods begin to get clear, then that part of human inquiry is carved off and becomes a discipline on its own, such as biology, physics, and psychology. So, in one sense, philosophy is where other disciplines begin, but in another, it is also the most general of disciplines. As the 20th century American philosopher Wilfrid Sellars (1912-1989 CE) said, “The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term.” This way of thinking about philosophy has its origins with the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and continued through the 20th century in the work of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976 CE). In this sense, philosophy is the discipline that tries to understand things in the most general way. Typical topics of study in philosophy include ethics (“What is the right or wrong thing to do?”), ontology (“What is it to be?”), mind (“How do my thoughts relate to my brain?”), and aesthetics (“What is art?”).
Since philosophy has such a deep history (dating at least to around 500 BCE), has been practiced in many forms around the world (e.g., ancient Greek, Buddhist, African, etc.), and covers just about any topic worthy of attention (e.g., god, knowledge, logic, politics, etc.), it is impossible to introduce all of philosophy in a single course. As such, this course will introduce philosophy by means of a sampling of some of the big problems in philosophy. These big problems include such questions as: “Can computers have minds,” “Do non-human animals have rights,” “Does a god exist,” “What is knowledge,” and “What is the meaning of life?” By taking the “big problems” approach to introducing philosophy, we will learn about some of the big names in philosophy (e.g., Descartes, Hume, etc.) along the way, as well as some of the methods that are particular to philosophy (e.g., logic, the Socratic method, thought experiments, etc.).

Student Learning Outcomes
☐ Students will be able to describe a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
  ▪ Students will be able to reconstruct the arguments (premises and conclusion) behind a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
  ▪ Students will be able to articulate their positions concerning whether or not they agree with the conclusions of the arguments behind a number of the “big problems” in the history of philosophy.
☐ Students will be able to distinguish opinions from arguments.
  ▪ Students will be able to categorize statements about various topics as either an opinion or an argument.
  ▪ Students will be able to rewrite opinions as arguments (in premises and conclusion format).

Course Materials

Course Requirements
☐ Required Academic Activity
  ▪ All instructors/faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.
  ▪ Activity: Quiz 1: Access via Webcourses. Available 9:00 am, Tuesday, August 25 until 11:59 pm, Thursday, August 27.
☐ Participation
  ▪ Participation is accounted for by means of various in-class activities.
  ▪ Examples of in-class activities include: think-pair-share, case studies, and one minute papers.
☐ Quizzes
  ▪ There will be 13 quizzes, or about one per week.

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Quiz questions will be based on material from the assigned readings and in-class lectures and discussions.

- Papers
  - Students will have two paper assignments.
  - Guidelines and expectations will be distributed closer to the assignment dates.

- Note:
  - You are responsible for all reading assignments. Unless stated otherwise (e.g., “optional” readings), anything assigned to you is potential quiz or paper material.

Grading

- Participation
  - 10 points each week, 16 weeks, 160 points total
  - Combined ~20% of total grade, each week ~1.25% of total grade

- Quizzes
  - 13 quizzes, 20 points each, 260 points total
  - Combined ~32% of total grade, each quiz ~2.5% of total grade

- Papers
  - Paper 1, 195 points, ~24% of total grade
  - Paper 2, 195 points, ~24% of total grade
  - Combined both papers are ~48% of total grade

- Total
  - 810 points
    - 729-810 = A
    - 648-728 = B
    - 567-647 = C
    - 486-566 = D
    - 000-485 = F
  - The following example demonstrates how +/- are assigned:
    - B- = 80, 81, 82%
    - B = 83, 84, 85, 86%
    - B+ = 87, 88, 89%
  - Percentages are not rounded, for example, an 80.2% is a B-, an 82.6% is a B-, an 89.8% is a B+, etc.

- Grades of “incomplete”
  - 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.

- Extensions and late assignments
  - In general, no extensions will be allowed or late assignments accepted.
  - However, extensions and late assignments will be considered for exceptional circumstances (e.g., family or medical emergencies) if appropriate documentation can be provided (e.g., doctor’s note, funeral program, etc.).

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Extra credit: There is no extra credit.

Grade distributions: The final grades will not be curved.

Grade dissemination: Graded quizzes, papers, and other materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grade Book function of Webcourses. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/.

Course Policies

Contact procedures

- 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.
- Email: Keep emailing to a minimum. It is better to ask me in person. However, if you do email me, then be professional (e.g., start the email with “Hello Dr. Favela” and not “Hey you, can I have...”) and concise.

Professionalism 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. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., will be warned and can suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

In-class technology policy

- “Stay focused” rule (cf. Shirky 2014): Electronic devices such as laptops, iPads, smart phones, etc. are not allowed in class, unless an assignment requires it. Why not? First, numerous studies show that students spend a great deal of their laptop time in class on activities not related to the course (Facebook, games, Reddit, etc.) and—most importantly—that these distractions negatively impact learning and grades (Fried, 2008; Gorlick, 2009; Holstead, 2015; Thagard, 2010). Second, research shows that non-class-related laptop use distracts and impacts the learning of other students (Fried, 2008; Thagard, 2010). Third, other research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective in learning (Berninger et al., 2006; Bounds, 2010; James & Engelhardt, 2010; Konnikova, 2010; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). In summary, electronic devices are not allowed in class, except for those with documented needs, which, if that is the case, you need to see me during the first two weeks of class. See me if you would like the full references for the above-cited research.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

- As reflected in the UCF creed (http://creed.ucf.edu), integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or 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).

- Plagiarism: Many incidents of plagiarism result from students’ lack of understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. However, you are expected 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.”

- 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. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting SAS (Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu) to talk about academic accommodations. 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.

- Syllabus adjustments
  - The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to all parts of the syllabus during the course. If any adjustments are made, the instructor will inform students ahead of time of such changes.

**Important Dates**

- Classes begin: August 25
- Last day to drop and request full refund: August 27
- Add deadline: August 28
- Withdrawal deadline: November 2
- **Holiday/no class: November 26-27**
- Classes end: December 7
- Study day: December 8
- Finals: December 9-15
- Grades available: December 21
## Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 24-28</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Participation; Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Aug 31-Sept 11</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>Participation; Quizzes 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Sep 14-Oct 2</td>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>8-15</td>
<td>Participation; Quizzes 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 5-9</td>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
<td>No new readings.</td>
<td>Participation; Paper 1 assigned Oct 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>Oct 12-23</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>Participation; Quizzes 7-8; Paper 1 due Oct 23 at 11:59 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Oct 26-Nov 6</td>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>Participation; Quizzes 9-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Nov 9-27</td>
<td>Life and Death</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Participation; Quizzes 11-12; Paper 2 assigned Nov 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nov 30-Dec 4</td>
<td>Meaning of Life</td>
<td>30-32</td>
<td>Participation; Quiz 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 15, 10:00 am</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>No new readings.</td>
<td>Participation; Paper 2 due Dec 15 at 10:00 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Readings

1. Syllabus
2. “Talk with me” Warburton
3. “What is philosophy?” Beardsley & Beardsley
4. “What is knowledge” Ayer
5. “First Meditation” Descartes
6. “Appearance and reality” Russell
7. “What can I know?” Phillips
8. “Second Meditation” Descartes
9. “The ghost in the machine” Ryle
12. “What is it like to be a bat?” T. Nagel
13. “The qualia problem” Jackson
14. “Computing machinery and intelligence” Turing
15. “Do computers think?” Searle
17. “Pascal’s wager” Blackburn
18. “Why God allows evil” Swinburne
20. “Famine, affluence, and morality” Singer
22. “The case for animal rights” Regan
23. “Why animals have no rights” Cohen

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24. “Speaking of animal rights” Warren
25. “Death” T. Nagel
27. “The afterlife” Scheffler
28. “How the afterlife matters” Frankfurt
29. “The significance of doomsday” Wolf
30. “The meaning of life” Taylor
31. “Meaning in life” Wolf
32. “Meaningful lives?” Vitrano
University of Central Florida, Fall 2015
PHI 2010 H: Honors Introduction to Philosophy, Syllabus

Please fill out and sign this sheet once you have read the syllabus, detach this page, and turn it in to me during the first week of class (or your first day if you transferred in late).

I have read the syllabus for PHI 2010 H: Honors Introduction to Philosophy, Fall 2015. I understand and agree to follow all course policies in the syllabus.

Name (print clearly): ____________________________________________________________

Student ID #: ________________________________________________________________

Signed: __________________________________________ Date: ______________________