

University of Central Florida
PHI 2010 H: Honors Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2016, Syllabus, v. 08212016



Course Information

- Title: Honors Introduction to Philosophy
- Course number-section: PHI 2010 H-202
- Credit hours: 3.0
- Term: Fall semester 2016
- Days and times: Tuesday and Thursday; 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm
- Location: Burnett Honors College (BHC) 0126

Instructor Information

- Name: Luis 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: PSY 0245
- Office hours: Wednesday, 12:00 – 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.
- Detailed description: The word ‘philosophy’ comes from the ancient Greek word for “love of wisdom.” Many of the sciences of today—e.g., biology, physics, psychology, etc.—began as philosophy, and were called “natural philosophy.” One way to think of philosophy historically is as the place where investigations of the world begin when we are not even sure what are the right questions to ask. When the theories and methods begin to get clear, then that part of human inquiry is sometimes carved off and becomes a discipline on its own. So, in one sense, philosophy is where other disciplines begin, but in another, it is also the most general of disciplines. As one philosopher put it, “The aim of philosophy...is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term” (Wilfrid Sellars, 1912-1989 CE). Typical topics of study in philosophy include ethics (“What is the right or wrong thing to do?”), mind (“How do my thoughts relate to my brain?”), and ontology (“What is it to be?”).

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., African, ancient Greek, Buddhist, 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, for example: “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, along the way we will discuss some of the big names in philosophy (e.g., Descartes, Hume, etc.) and some of the methods that are particular to philosophy (e.g., logic, 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).

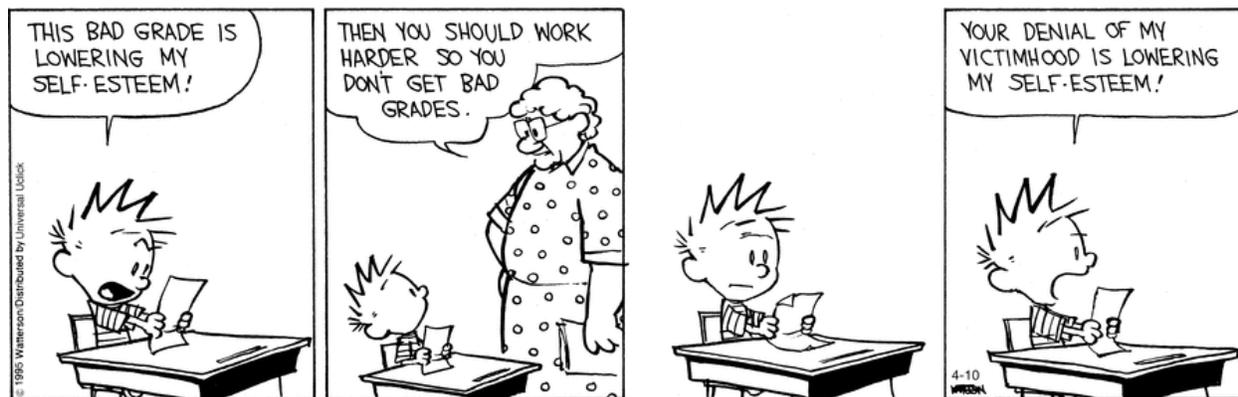
Course Materials

- Required textbook: Cahn, S. M. (2014). *Exploring philosophy: An introductory anthology, fifth edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN # 9780190204419

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: Submit signed last page of syllabus. Due 4:30 pm, Thursday, August 25.
- Participation
 - Participation is accounted for by means of various in-class activities.
 - Examples include: class discussions, quick writes, and think-pair-share.
- Quizzes
 - There will be 13 quizzes, or about one per week.
 - 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.
- Incomplete grades: 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. (Really.)

- 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.).
- If an assignment is accepted late, then it will be deducted 5% of the total possible points for every 12-hour block of time it is submitted late, including weekends.
- 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 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. We can attempt to schedule another time if you are unable to meet during those.
 - 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. Allow 24 hours for a response during the week, and possibly more during the weekend and holidays.
 - Webcourses: Do not contact me via Webcourses. I do not check it and will not reply.
- 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. Contact me if you would like full references for the above citations.



- 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."
 - Plagiarism-detection service: In this course we will utilize [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), an automated system which I use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments to both [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and me. After the assignment is processed, I receive a report from [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.
- 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 of such changes.
- **Copyright:** Unless otherwise stated, I reserve all rights for all course materials I create (e.g., syllabus, lecture materials, quizzes, etc.). Thus, this material may not be displayed, distributed, modified, or reproduced without prior written permission of the copyright holder: Luis H. Favela, Ph.D. Consequently, it would be illegal for you to post course materials on websites such as, but not limited to, Course Hero, Course Notes, etc.

Important Dates <<http://calendar.ucf.edu/2016/fall>>

- Classes begin: August 25
- Last day to drop and request full refund: August 25
- Add deadline: August 26
- Withdrawal deadline: October 31
- **Holiday/no class: November 24-26**
- Classes end: December 3
- Study day: December 5
- Finals: December 6-12
- Grades available: December 17

Schedule

| Week | Dates | Topic | Readings | Assignments |
|-------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Aug 22 - 26 | Introduction | 1-3 | Participation; Quiz 1 |
| 2-3 | Aug 29 - Sept 9 | Knowledge | 4-7 | Participation; Quizzes 2-3 |
| 4-6 | Sep 12 - 30 | Mind | 8-15 | Participation; Quizzes 4-6 |
| 7 | Oct 3 - 7 | Writing Workshop | No new readings. | Participation; Paper 1 assigned TBA |
| 8-9 | Oct 10 - 21 | God | 16-19 | Participation; Quizzes 7-8; Paper 1 due TBA |
| 10-11 | Oct 24 - Nov 4 | Morality | 20-24 | Participation; Quizzes 9-10 |
| 12-14 | Nov 7 - 25 | Life and Death | 25-29 | Participation; Quizzes 11-12 Paper 2 assigned TBA |
| 15 | Nov 28 - Dec 2 | Meaning of Life | 30-32 | Participation; Quiz 13 |
| 16 | TBA | Final | No new readings. | Participation; Paper 2 due TBA |

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
10. "The body problem" Montero
11. "The mind-body problem" Churchland
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
16. "Does God exist?" E. Nagel
17. "Pascal's wager" Blackburn
18. "Why God allows evil" Swinburne
19. "The problem of Hell" Adams
20. "Famine, affluence, and morality" Singer
21. "World hunger and moral obligation: The case against Singer" Arthur
22. "The case for animal rights" Regan
23. "Why animals have no rights" Cohen
24. "Speaking of animal rights" Warren
25. "Death" T. Nagel
26. "The badness of death" Kagan
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

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Please fill out and sign this sheet once you have read the syllabus, detach this page, and turn it in to the professor during the first week of class—or, if you transferred in late, by the end of that week.

I have read the syllabus. I understand and agree to follow all course policies in the syllabus.

Name (print clearly): _____

Student ID #: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____