

PHI 2010 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

3.0 credits • State Core Gen Ed Humanities • 4000 words of WR Credit

Spring Semester, 2026 Class # 26097, 26098, 26099

For information on UF-wide academic policies regarding attendance, honesty, and other matters, as well as several academic and health and wellness resources, see <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.

I. Basic Information

Meetings

Lectures: Period 3 T,R (Tuesdays and Thursdays) 9:35am – 10:25am

Building Room # FAB 0105

For Discussion Section Meeting Times and Location, see below.

Instructor

Instructor Name: Bob Beddor

Email: r.beddor@ufl.edu

Office: 308, Philosophy Department, Griffin-Floyd Hall (3rd Floor)

Phone: (352) 392-2084 (Philosophy Department)

Note: The best way to contact me outside of class and office hours is via email

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:45am-12:45am

Teaching Assistants:

Arjun Krishna Kumar

Email: krishnakumar.a@uf.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Everyone in the class meets together for a “lecture” session on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:35am-10:25am, in [FAB 0105](#). Smaller groups meet in breakout/discussion/recitation sessions according to their distinct section on Fridays, which sessions are led by the assigned Teaching Assistant.

Class #	Lecture Days	Breakout Days
26097 Section 2203	Period T,R (Tuesday & Thursday) 9:35am – 10:25am Building Room # FAB 0105	F, Period 3, 9:35am-10:25am Building Room - TUR 2305
26098 Section 2204	Period 3 - T,R (Tuesday & Thursday) 9:35am – 10:25am Building Room # FAB 0105	F, Period 4, 10:40am-11:30am Building Room -TUR 2328
<u>26099</u> Section 2205	Period 3 - T,R (Tuesday & Thursday) 9:35am – 10:25am Building Room # FAB 0105	F, Period 6, 12:50pm-1:40pm Building Room - MAT 0005

Catalog Course Description

In this course, students will be introduced to the nature of philosophy, philosophical thinking, and major intellectual movements in the history of philosophy, including topics from the western philosophical tradition, and various problems in philosophy. Students will strengthen their intellectual skills, become more effective learners, and develop broad foundational knowledge.

Customized Description

This course will introduce students to some of the major questions in philosophy. Topics include:

- Can we use philosophical arguments to prove or disprove the existence of God?
- How can we know anything about the world around us? Can we rule out the possibility that we are currently dreaming, or that we are caught in a computer simulation (as in *The Matrix*)?
- We often take for granted that we have free will. But what is free will, exactly? Is it compatible with the idea that all our actions are determined by physical processes?
- Will you be the same person in twenty years' time? Is it possible for you to survive memory loss or death?
- What are our ethical obligations to other people and the world around us?
- What is the meaning of life? (And what does this question even mean?)

While we will be reading many major philosophers' attempts to tackle these questions, throughout this course the emphasis will be on *you*: the goal is for each of you to wrestle with these questions and develop what you take to be the most cogent, well-supported answers.

Course Materials

The following materials will be used in this class:

The textbook, *Philosophy: Asking Questions – Seeking Answers*, by Stich & Donaldson (abbreviated "Stich & Donaldson" on the syllabus below)

The *Norton Introduction to Philosophy* (eds. Rosen, Byrne, Cohen, Harman, Shiffrin), 2nd edition (abbreviated "Norton" on the syllabus below)

Various other readings listed below on the syllabus (see Schedule)

Note that those who want a physical copy of the textbook or the Norton anthology are free to order one from Amazon or any of the other usual suspects. **However, you are not required to order a copy of either. All of the relevant sections will be posted on Canvas.**

Materials Fee

N/A

II. General Education & Course Objectives

General Education and Writing Requirement credit

This course is a State Core Humanities course in the UF General Education program. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

This course also provides 4000 words of Writing Requirement credit. Course grades have two components: one is the letter grade for the course as a whole, while the other is a grade of satisfactory/unsatisfactory indicating whether the student's relevant written work demonstrates fluency and the use of writing as a tool to facilitate thinking. See elsewhere in the syllabus for the specific rules determining how the latter grade is determined. To receive the WR credit a student must *both* earn at least a C for the first grade *and* a "Satisfactory" for the second grade. In this case, that means earning at least a C on each of the three papers. If you do that and earn a C for the course you get the WR credit.

Philosophy writing is somewhat different from writing you may do in other classes. In philosophy papers, you primarily want to be arguing for some claim (your thesis). For this class, a helpful resource is Jim Pryor's philosophy paper style guidelines: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

UF has a dedicated writing program with a "writing studio" that is intended to provide students with several resources for improving their writing, including style guides, access to tutors, and more. See <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Please note that what makes for a good paper in philosophy is not always the same thing as what makes for a good paper in other disciplines. If you get help from a tutor for written work in philosophy, you should be sure to provide the tutor with appropriate information about what is expected in philosophy. This could be a sample of a good philosophy paper, a guide for writing in philosophy, or other resources that might be made available to you in this class.

A note on citation. Any time you quote someone or some text you must provide a reference for that quotation, including page numbers. There are several different, equally acceptable ways of providing reference information. A good general resource is a page on citation made available by the UF libraries: <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/libraryresearch/citingsources>. In this class, I do not have any preference for the reference format. The important thing is that when you are citing a source, you include all the crucial information (author, title, journal or publisher, and page number if applicable) – the exact ordering of this information does not matter to me.

Humanities Objectives

As spelled out at <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>, every General Education Humanities course includes the following objectives:

Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastery of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the relevant factors that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

PHI2010 Objectives

An Introduction to Philosophy course incorporates the following objectives:

- Students will be introduced to a range of philosophical issues drawn from a variety of different areas of philosophy.
- Students will practice reading philosophical works from these multiple areas and identifying key argumentative claims and questions therein.
- Students will gain skills in reconstructing arguments and evaluating them for cogency using a common toolkit of assessment techniques.

Student Learning Outcomes

A "Student Learning Outcome" is something students who successfully complete a course should be able to do as a result. General education courses in Humanities must incorporate Student Learning Outcomes as specified at <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-gen-ed-courses/slos-and-performance-indicators/student-learning-outcomes/>. For Humanities, these are described as follows:

- *Content.* Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.
- *Critical Thinking.* Identify and analyze the relevant factors that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives.
- *Communication.* Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

As PHI2010 is a *State Core* General Education course, there are some specific learning outcomes mandated for all versions of PHI2010 across the state. (See <https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/administration/audit-information/>.) They are officially described as follows:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of classical western philosophical views.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills.

- Students will analyze, explain, and evaluate foundational concepts of epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.

In this class, the outcomes above are assessed by means of the following assignments. (Assignments are described below in section IV.)

- Success with *Content* SLOs is assessed by: The three written papers, the in-class quizzes, and the final exam.
- Success with *Critical Thinking* SLOs is assessed by: The three written papers, the final exam, and in-class participation.
- Success with *Communication* SLOs is assessed by: The three written papers, the final exam, the in-class quizzes, and in-class participation.

III. Grade Determination and Policies

Grade Determination

Your course grade is determined by the following factors:

In-Class Quizzes	15%
Participation	10%
First Paper	10%
Second Paper	20%
Third Paper	25%
Final Exam	20%

Grading Policies

See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> for information on how UF assigns grade points.

In this class, we will use the following grade scale:

Grade Scale
100-93=A
92.9-90=A-
89.9-87=B+
86.9-83=B
82.9-80=B-
79.9-77=C+
76.9-73=C
72.9-70=C-
69.9-67=D+
66.9-63=D
62.8-60=D-
59.9-0=E

(Final grades will be rounded to the nearest tenth – i.e., a 92.98 becomes a 93; an 84.22 becomes an 84.2, etc.)

IV. Assignments and Expectations

General expectations.

As a student in this class, you are expected to

- be familiar with all policies and requirements as set out in the course syllabus;
- attend and participate in all class sessions (unless excused for a legitimate reason);
- be aware of all deadlines throughout the semester;
- stay informed by keeping up with all announcements made in class and via Canvas;
- keep up with reading assignments and hand in work on time;
- maintain academic integrity in all of your work—or risk failing the entire course;
- be respectful of your classmates, even when engaged in lively critical dialogue with them;
- inform the instructor promptly of any emergencies or problems that will affect your ability to do what is needed in the course ask questions and seek help when you need it.

Assignments

In-Class Quizzes (15%). During most lecture meetings (Tuesdays and Thursdays), there will be a timed multiple choice question administered through Canvas as a quiz. These questions will be used to check your comprehension of the material assigned as background reading, as well as your comprehension of the material covered during the lecture. (You are expected to bring some device with access to Canvas in order to complete the quiz; if this is a problem, please let me and your TA know and we will make alternative arrangements.)

Quiz Grading: Each student who attempts to answer a question will automatically get half credit, but only a correct answer will receive full credit. Each student will receive 3 automatic free passes (i.e., three times you can fail to complete or attempt a quiz without repercussion).

Participation (10%). Participation – asking questions, raising objections - is an essential part of doing philosophy. Participation can take the form of asking and answering questions in class, and coming to office hours. I realize that some students are shy about speaking up in class, but I hope to create a constructive and supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their questions and comments. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day and demonstrate that you have thought critically about them beforehand. All of this is especially true for discussion sections. A participation rubric is attached at the end of the syllabus.

First Paper (10%). Your first paper is a short, focused reconstruction of one of the arguments in the readings, along with a brief critical evaluation of this argument. More detailed guidelines will be presented closer to the deadline. (500 words)

Second Paper (20%). Your second paper is an opportunity to develop your thoughts in response to one of the arguments in the readings. You should briefly summarize the argument, and then engage with it critically, by either offering an original criticism of it, or extending the argument in some way. More detailed guidelines will be presented closer to the deadline. (1500 words)

Final Paper (25%). Your final paper is an opportunity to develop a more sustained original response to one of the readings. As with the second paper, you should summarize some argument from the readings, then engage with it critically, by either offering an original criticism of it, or extending the argument in some way. More detailed guidelines will be presented closer to the deadline. (2000 words)

Final Exam (20%). The final exam will test your comprehension of the material covered in the class, as well as the philosophical and argumentative skills you have developed. It will primarily consist in short essays on prompts relating to the readings we have covered. The final exam will be in class on the final lecture day (9:35am – 10:25am, Dec 2). This will be a closed book, written exam; you are expected to provide your own pen(s) and bluebook (available at the UF bookstore). More detailed guidelines will be presented closer to the deadline.

Satisfactory grade for WR purposes. To earn WR credit for this class you must not only earn a C for the course overall but also earn a "Satisfactory" grade for the relevant graded writing components. In this case, that means earning at least a C on each of the three papers. If you do that and earn a C for the course you get the WR credit.

V. Class Policies

Attendance and Make-Up Policies

Attendance is expected at every class session, including both lectures and breakout/discussion sessions. Taking an active role in class is crucial to success and you cannot take an active role when you are absent. Of course, it can happen that you become ill or have another good reason to miss class. If you are ill, please stay home and call your primary health care provider or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.

If you do miss a class for a good reason, it is your responsibility to inform the TA as soon as is feasible to make appropriate arrangements. UF policy provides a list of kinds of absences that must be counted as excused. Other kinds of absences may be excused at the instructor's discretion.

With regards to attendance in lecture, my policy is that every student gets three automatically excused absences, where your absence is not counted against your grade, and your failure to complete any in-class quizzes on those days is not counted against your grade. Additional absences will only be excused for a valid reason, supported by the relevant documentation when applicable (for example, a doctor's note for a medical absence). Note that even if your absence is excused, it is still your responsibility to catch up on any material that was covered. To this effect, I encourage students to review the slides

posted on Canvas, and to contact other students in the class to get a sense of any announcements that they missed.

If due to an excused absence you are unable to complete an assignment or exam, you should contact the instructor (both the professor and the TA) as soon as possible (preferably before the absence) in order to make alternative arrangements for completion.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the catalog here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Late Policy on Papers.

If you will not be able to complete a paper by the deadline, you should contact your TA at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline to ask for an extension. If a paper is submitted late without having arranged an extension in advance, one third letter grade will be subtracted for every day it is late (e.g., a paper that was originally a 93 will receive a 90). If a paper is not received within 10 days of the deadline, it will not be accepted for even partial credit unless an extension has been granted in advance or a valid documented reason is provided.

Electronic Devices.

There will be certain times in class – for example, when you are taking an in-class quiz – when students are welcome to use electronic devices (and, indeed, are expected to do so). However, unless explicitly requested to use an electronic device for some activity, please avoid using cell phones or computers during class. If you are convinced that you learn best while using a computer, please talk to me – I may be willing to make an exception. However, there are a number of studies indicating that people are less productive and retain less information when they are using computers during class.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Students are responsible for knowing that these behaviors are prohibited.

Collaboration. Collaboration with others (including people who are not students in this class) is prohibited unless explicitly allowed in the directions for a particular assignment. You are, of course, allowed to discuss the topics in the course with other students, and talk with them about issues you find confusing, or ideas that you find interesting and worth pursuing. After all, discussion is an integral part of philosophy! But all written work that you should submit should be entirely your own. Similarly, all of the in-class quizzes should be completed on your own (without consultation with other students).

Use of artificial intelligence. Use of AIs such as ChatGPT to compose all or part of the assignments for this course is strictly prohibited. This course is aimed to foster your ability to clearly explain complicated philosophical concepts and to make original philosophical arguments. I am interested in your ability to do these things, not ChatGPT'S ability! So you should not use ChatGPT (or any other AI) to generate either your ideas, or to "rewrite" any parts of your paper.

To this effect, all three of the written paper assignments should be written using Google docs, with the version history shared with your professor and your TA. (More detailed instructions on this front will be provided with the paper prompts.) Please also be aware that Canvas has TurnItIn software that automatically checks for signs that an AI was used to write your submissions. Beyond there, there are certain telltale signs of AI-generated responses for which the instructor and TAs will be on the lookout.

Any assignment found to be generated, in whole or in part, by AI will be treated as a case of academic dishonesty (consequences explained below).

Consequences of academic dishonesty. Any incident of academic dishonesty is reported to the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution committee (see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/>), which may impose sanctions up to and including expulsion from the university. In this course, I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. In my view, any case of academic dishonesty should result in a failing grade for the entire course, and I will advocate for such in communications with SCCR. If you remain enrolled in this class past the end of the drop/add period, this will be understood as agreement with this policy.

Please take the following advice to heart. If you find yourself having trouble with a particular assignment and are tempted to cheat, keep in mind that a poor grade for one assignment without a record of dishonesty kept in the Dean's Office is obviously better than a failing grade for the entire course with a record of dishonesty in that office. You can always seek help to improve in later work. Also, if you are uncertain what qualifies as academic dishonesty, do not be embarrassed to ask your TA and professor! It is better to err on the side of caution here. Merely asking whether something counts as academic dishonesty will in no way be held against you.

VI. Course Schedule

The schedule below provides information on topics, readings, and due dates for assignments. It is possible the schedule may need to be adjusted to accommodate disruptions or student needs; any such changes will be announced both in class and on Canvas.

Note that readings assigned for a given date must be read before the class held on that date. So for example, the readings listed for Thursday, Jan 15 (Stich & Donaldson, p.7-22) should be read before class starts on Thursday, Jan 15. Also note that the paper assignments are always due in to Canvas by 11:59PM on the day specified.

Schedule

PREAMBLE: INTRO TO INTRO TO PHILOSOPHY

Topics and Themes: Overview of philosophy, introduction to logical arguments

1. Tues Jan 13 - What is this course About? What distinguishes good from bad arguments?

No reading for Tuesday Jan 13

2. Thurs Jan 15 - Evaluating arguments

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 7-22

UNIT 1: DOES GOD EXIST?

Topics and Themes: Arguments for and against the existence of God, evaluating philosophical arguments for validity and soundness

3. Tues Jan 20 – The first cause argument

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 29-38

Selection from Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (pp. 13-20 of Norton)

4. Thurs Jan 22 – The design argument

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 38-46

Selections from Paley, *Natural Theology* (pp. 20-28 of Norton)

5. Tues Jan 27 – The ontological argument

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 46-50

Excerpt from Anselm, *Proslogion* (pp. 8-13 of Norton)

6. Thurs Jan 29 – The problem of evil

Required Readings:

Mackie, "Free Will and the Problem of Evil" (*Mind* 64(254), pp. 200-212)

Antony, "No Good Reason" (Norton, pp. 36-47)

Optional additional reading:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 59-75

7. Tues Feb 3 – Belief, Practical Consequences, and Rationality

Required Readings:

Pascal, "The Wager", from *Pensées* (pp. 68-71 of Norton)

Hájek, "Pascal's Ultimate Gamble" (pp. 74-84 of Norton)

UNIT 2: CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL?

Topics and Themes: The nature and possibility of knowledge; how is knowledge possible?; what makes knowledge worthwhile?

8. Thurs Feb 5 – the skeptical argument introduced

Required Reading:

Descartes, "Meditation 1" in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (pp. 264-268 of Norton)

First paper (short response) due (Boooo!) by 11:59pm Thurs Feb 5

9. Tues Feb 10 – Can we refute the skeptic? Inference to the best explanation

Required Readings:

Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford University Press (2nd edition), Chp. 2 (pp. 26-41)

Vogel, "Skepticism and Inference to the Best Explanation" (pp. 284 – 291 of Norton)

10. Thurs Feb 12 - Are skeptical scenarios really skeptical?

Required Readings:

Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics"

(<https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/ChalmersMatrixMetaphysics2001.pdf>) in Grau, *Philosophers Explore the Matrix*, Oxford University Press, 2005 (pp. 1-28)

11. Tues Feb 17 – What is knowledge, anyway?

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, Chp.8, pp. 141-159

12. Thurs Feb 19 – The Gettier Problem Continued

No New Reading

UNIT 3: FREE WILL AND RESPONSIBILITY

Topics and Themes: What is free will? Do we have it? How is free will connected to moral responsibility?

13. Tues Feb 24 - Do We Have Free Will?

Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, chp. 9, "Do We Have Free Will?", pp. 161-170
Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity" (selection from Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, section 8, *Oxford Philosophical Texts* (other editions are also fine), 12 pages)

14. Thurs Feb 26 - Free will and the ability to do otherwise

Required Readings:

Frankfurt, "Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility", *Journal of Philosophy* 66(23), pp. 829-839

15. Tues Mar 3 - free will, conclusion

Required Readings:

Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" in Norton, pp. 634-644

Wolf, "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" in Norton, pp. 645-656

Optional Further Reading:

Sripada, "Frankfurt's Unwilling Addicts", *Mind* 126(503), pp. 781-815

UNIT 4: MIND AND SELF

Topics and Themes: How is the mind related to the body? Can artificial intelligence think? What makes you the same person over time?

16. Thurs Mar 5 – Is the mind distinct from the body?

Readings:

Descartes, selections from *Meditations* II and VI, pp. 312-319 of Norton

Elisabeth of Bohemia, Correspondence with Descartes, p. 320 of Norton

Stich & Donaldson, chp. 10, pp. 179-187

17. Tues Mar 10 – Is artificial intelligence capable of thought?

Readings:

Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", *Mind*, 49, pp. 433-460

Searle, "Can Computers Think?", pp. 341-347 of Norton.

Second Paper Due by 11:59pm, Tues Mar 10

18. Thurs Mar 12 - Personal Identity

Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 213-221

Selection from Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (first night, 10 pages), Hackett Publishing Company, 1978

SPRING BREAK

19. Tues Mar 24 - Personal Identity Continued

Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 221-242

Optional Further Reading:

Selection from Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (second & third night, 18 pages), Hackett Publishing Company, 1978

20. Thurs Mar 26 - Personal Identity Conclusion

Readings:

Parfit, "Personal Identity", in Norton, pp. 520-532.

UNIT 5: ETHICS AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

Topics and Themes: What are our moral obligations to other people? What are our moral obligations to other animals? What makes life meaningful?

21. Tues Mar 31 – Where do ethical facts come from?

Required Readings:

Shafer-Landau, "Ethics as Philosophy", chp. 8 (26 pages)

Stich and Donaldson, pp. 243-253

22. Thurs April 2 – Our ethical duties to other people

Required Readings:

Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(3), 1972, pp. 229-243

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 309-332

23. Tues April 7 – Our ethical duties to other creatures

Required Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 309-332

Optional Additional Reading:

Vox article: "Is There a Moral Case for Eating Meat?" (<https://www.vox.com/2015/8/9/9122907/meat-ethics>)

24. Thurs April 9 – The meaning of life

Third paper due by 11:59pm on Thurs April 9 (sigh...)

Required Readings:

Excerpt from Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (translation from French), Yale University Press (12 pages)

Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives" in Wolf, *The Varieties of Values* Oxford University Press 2014 (16 pages)

Optional additional Readings:

Stich & Donaldson, pp. 267-280

26. Tues April 14 – The meaning of life, continued

Readings:

Ismael, "The Ethical Importance of Death" (pp. 1-10), *Introduction to Philosophy: Contemporary Readings*, edited by John Perry, Michael Bratman, John Martin Fischer, Oxford University Press (2012, 2018).

27. Thursday, April 16 – Catch-Up/Review

28. Tues April 21 – Final Exam (in class)

Have a Wonderful Vacation!!!!

Appendix: Writing Assessment Rubric

A grading rubric for papers can be found below.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS				
A	B	C	D	E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the paper does an excellent job of responding to the topic question and reflects a more than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. The introduction does an excellent job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The main ideas of the paper are clear and convincing All the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material. The paper's claims are all well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. The argument advances in a manner that is easy to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the paper responds well to the topic question and reflects a competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. The introduction does a good enough job of identifying the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The main ideas of the paper are for the most part clear and convincing. Almost all the content of the paper supports its main ideas with no irrelevant material. The paper's claims are generally well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. The argument advances in a manner that is for the most part easy to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the paper provides a merely sufficient response to the topic question and reflects a less than competent command of the relevant texts and material discussed in class. The introduction does not adequately identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The main ideas of the paper are only partially clear and convincing. The content of the paper generally supports its main ideas, though there is some irrelevant material. Only some of the paper's claims are well-grounded in cogent interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. The argument is difficult to follow in places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the paper only partially responds to the topic and reflects an incompetent command of the relevant texts and materials discussed in class. The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. The main ideas of the paper are only marginally clear and convincing. The content of the paper tends not to support its main ideas, and there is a good deal of irrelevant material. None of the interpretations on which the paper's claims are based are cogent. The argument is difficult to follow or incomplete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the paper does not respond to the topic and fails to draw upon relevant texts and materials discussed in class. The introduction does not identify the issues raised by the topic to be discussed in the rest of the paper. It is unclear what the paper's main ideas are supposed to be. How the content of the paper is supposed to support its main ideas is unclear, and there is far too much irrelevant material. None of the paper's claims are based on interpretations of the relevant textual evidence. The argument is very difficult to follow.
<p>Grammar: The document <i>Basic Grammar for Writing Assignments</i> posted under the "Resources" tab discusses some common grammatical errors you must avoid. Grammatical errors will incur deductions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improper formation of plurals and possessives (- 2 points) Failure of agreement between subject and verb (- 2 points) Run-on sentence (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §2) (- 4 points) Unclear Pronoun Reference (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §4) (- 2 points) Confusion of <i>it's</i> and <i>its</i> (- 2 points) Sentence fragment (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §1) (- 4 points) Faulty Modification (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §3) (- 2 points) Faulty Parallelism (<i>Basic Grammar</i> §5) (- 2 points) 				

Appendix: Participation Rubric

You will receive a letter grade for participation. Below is a summary of course standards for different letter grades (borderline cases will receive "+" or "-" grades as appropriate):

- A: Outstanding participation. Highly engaged during lecture, with active participation in small group discussions and frequent constructive contributions to full-class discussions. In-class contributions reflect excellent understanding of and critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- B: Good participation. Moderately engaged during lecture, with active participation in small group discussions and occasional constructive contributions to full-class discussions. In-class

contributions reflect substantial understanding of and critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.

- C: Inconsistent attendance and minimally adequate participation. Minimally engaged during lecture. In-class contributions reflect limited understanding of/critical engagement with the content of lectures and assigned readings.
- D or F: Inadequate participation/attendance.

Participation grades will be determined at the end of the semester. However, please feel free to check in with your TA at any time about how you are doing. If you are unsure how to participate actively or find it difficult to do so, please schedule a meeting with the professor or your TA so that we can discuss strategies. I'm here to help! Poor conduct in class will result in a 10% deduction from your participation grade. Examples of poor conduct include arriving late, disruptive behavior, failing to participate in small group activities, unapproved laptop/smartphone/tablet use, sending text messages, checking email, etc.