

## **Philosophy 5935: Proseminar Syllabus**

PHI 5935; Section 4193

Fall 2021

Mondays 3:00pm - 6:00pm

Griffin-Floyd Hall, Room 0200 (unofficially, we will meet in the Philosophy Department library)

### **Instructor Information**

Chris Dorst

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Office: 312 Griffin-Floyd Hall

Office Hours: T 12:00pm-1:00pm; W 12:00pm-2:00pm, or by in-person/Zoom appointment

Phone (office): (352) 273-1813

### **Course Description**

This course is designed to familiarize incoming graduate students with the expectations and standards of graduate level work in philosophy. In particular, it aims to develop the tools necessary to read, write, and converse about philosophy at the graduate level. We will study and discuss a wide range of papers, drawn from many areas of philosophy and written in a variety of philosophical styles. For six of the twelve meetings, one or two students are assigned to introduce the text assigned and lead the class discussion. When there are two presenters in a single week, it is the responsibility of the two presenters to divide the material to be presented appropriately. Students will be asked to write a short paper every week in which they are not assigned to present the material. The paper should be roughly two pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) and can discuss any aspect of the reading. Papers are due at the start of each class.

### **Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically read philosophy articles and identify the thesis, arguments, and potential weak points
- Contribute effectively to class discussions
- Comfortably give presentations to the rest of the class
- Structure a philosophy paper in a manner that is clear, concise, and rhetorically effective

### **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 Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to

appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor. **Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course.** Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

### **In-Class Expectations**

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment:  
<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
  - Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
  - Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.
  - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
  - If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

- Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](https://coronavirus.UFHealth.org) and [coronavirus.ufl.edu](https://coronavirus.ufl.edu) for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

### **Canvas e-Learning Environment**

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the **e-Learning in Canvas** button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 4542 from the **Courses** pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Please do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

### **Online Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center:**

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

### **University Police Department:**

392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### **Course Texts**

- None. Readings will be provided as PDFs on Canvas.

### **Course Requirements**

Attendance/Participation: 5%

Presentations: 40% total

Short Papers: 40% total

Final Paper: 15%

## **Participation**

Respectful participation in class discussions is expected of everyone. Each class meeting has assigned readings, which will require critical engagement and reflection. You should come to class prepared to discuss these readings and demonstrate that you have thought critically about them beforehand.

## **Presentations**

For six out of the twelve weeks, one or two students will be assigned to present on the reading to the rest of the class. The presentation can be in whatever form you like: it may involve a (virtual) handout, a Powerpoint presentation, or simply some prepared notes. The goal of the presentation is to provide a summary of the reading and introduce some questions for group discussion.

Toward the beginning of the semester, I will assign presentations in pairs, and it is the job of both students to divide the work evenly between them. Later in the semester, we will shift to single-person presentations.

## **Short Papers**

Every week that you are *not* assigned to do a presentation, you will be required to submit a short paper on the assigned reading. The paper should aim to do more than merely summarize the reading: it should present some sort of avenue for further work. For example, it might present an objection to part of the argument in the reading, suggest an alternative approach to the issue, articulate a counterexample, etc. As a guideline, these papers should be roughly two pages long, though they may be longer if necessary.

## **Final Paper**

As a final assignment, you will be asked to return to one of the short papers that you wrote throughout the semester and develop it into a longer piece of roughly 10-12 pages.

## **Grading**

Course grades are assigned on a pass/fail basis. Numerically, the minimum passing grade is 80%.

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

The following is a tentative schedule for the course. Any official changes to the schedule will be announced in class and over email. The syllabus is divided into weeks; the items listed for a given week are to be read before classes that week.

Week 1: August 23

- No reading

Week 2: August 30

- Freedom and Resentment - P. F. Strawson

Week 3: September 6

- **No Class (Labor Day)**

Week 4: September 13

- Moral Saints - Susan Wolf [**Group Presentation**]

Week 5: September 20

- The Paradoxes of Time Travel - David Lewis

Week 6: September 27

- Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language (Chapters 1 and 2) - Saul Kripke [**Group Presentation**]

Week 7: October 4

- Real Patterns - Daniel Dennett

Week 8: October 11

- Fine-Tuning (exchange by Jonathan Weisberg and Roger White)

Week 9: October 18

- **Reading TBD** [**Individual Presentation**]

Week 10: October 25

- **Reading TBD** [**Individual Presentation**]

Week 11: November 1

- Time and Physical Geometry - Hilary Putnam

Week 12: November 8

- On Fraud - Liam Kofi Bright [**Individual Presentation**]

Week 13: November 15

- Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives - Philippa Foot [**Individual Presentation**]

Week 14: November 22

- **No Class Meeting**

Week 15: November 29

- **No Class Meeting**

Week 16: December 6

- **No Class Meeting**

**Final Paper Due Sunday, December 12 at 11:59pm**