

Philosophy 5935: Proseminar Syllabus

PHI 5935; Section 4193
Fall 2020
Tuesdays 3:00pm - 6:00pm
Class Meets over Zoom

Instructor Information

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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. Each week, 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. You will be asked to write a short paper every week in which you 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.

Attendance and Zoom Classroom Policies

Students are expected to attend all scheduled Zoom meetings and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. Students are strongly encouraged to have their cameras turned on during Zoom class meetings, and to communicate via microphones rather than text in the meeting chat. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

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/) 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: 10% each (4 total presentations)

Short Papers: 5% each (8 total short papers)

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

Each week, 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. These papers should be roughly two pages long.

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 slightly longer piece of roughly 8-10 pages.

Grading

The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course.

Grade Scale	Grade Value
100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-87=B+	B+=3.33
86-83=B	B=3.00
82-80=B-	B-=2.67
79-77=C+	C+=2.33
76-73=C	C=2.00
72-70=C-	C-=1.67
69-67=D+	D+=1.33
66-63=D	D=1.00
62-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

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: September 1

- No reading

Week 2: September 8

- Causality and Determination - G. E. M. Anscombe

Week 3: September 15

- Actions, Reasons, and Causes - Donald Davidson

Week 4: September 22

- Freedom and Resentment - P. F. Strawson

Week 5: September 29

- Meaning and Reference - Hilary Putnam

Week 6: October 6

- Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language (Chapters 1 and 2) - Saul Kripke

Week 7: October 13

- Elusive Knowledge - David Lewis

Week 8: October 20

- Necessary Connections and the Problem of Induction - Helen Beebe

Week 9: October 27

- The Paradoxes of Time Travel - David Lewis

Week 10: November 3

- Real Patterns - Daniel Dennett

Week 11: November 10

- Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives - Philippa Foot

Week 12: November 17

- Moral Saints - Susan Wolf

Week 13: November 24

- On Fraud - Liam Kofi Bright

Week 14: December 1

- TBD

Week 15: December 8

- TBD