

PHIL2010
Introduction to
Philosophy

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Course Materials

- Required Reading Materials
 - 1) Course Pack: purchase at UF Bookstore (approx. \$50)
 - 2) online readings on website
- Website: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/belic/>

Course Requirements

- Attendance (5%)
- Participation (5%): 5 (good); 3 (average); 2 (below average); 1 (none)
- Homework (30%): 10 assignments in total
- Essay 1 (15%)
- Essay 2 (15%)
- Final Exam (30%)
- Note
 - Exams cannot be rescheduled to an earlier or later date, except for medical emergencies
 - There are no extensions on homework or late submissions
- Posting online
 - lecture notes posted on website after each lecture
 - link to Homework assignments posted at latest day before due date

What is Philosophy?

- `philosophy' = love of wisdom
 - Greek origin of word: Philo = love; Sophia = wisdom
 - Our focus is on Western philosophy that arose in Classical Greece (5th century B.C.E.)
- Some Popular Conceptions of Philosophy that we will seek to clarify
 - Philosophers ponder the meaning of life
 - They are concerned with speculation, not hard-nosed science
 - They are opposed to religion
 - They are opposed to common-sense
 - They are concerned with unanswerable, practically useless questions
- Roughly speaking,
 - Philosophy is about the most general and fundamental questions we can ask
 - Philosophy is about what the world is like and what it *should* be like
 - Philosophy asks why questions

Descriptive Kinds of Philosophy

- **Metaphysics**

- What makes us free?
- Does God exist?
- What is the mind (soul)?
- What is matter? What is time? What are laws?
- What are the general feature of the world?

Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy of Mind

Philosophy of Science

- **Epistemology**

- What is knowledge?
- What, if anything, can we know?

Normative Kinds of Philosophy

- **Aesthetics**

- What is a good or bad work of art?
- What is beauty?

- **Ethics**

- What is to be a good person?
- What is to be a good friend?
- What is to be love someone?

- **Political Philosophy**

- How should people live with one another in society?
- How should economic resources be distributed?
- What is a just society?

Influence of Philosophy

- French Revolution and the overthrow of Absolute Monarchy
- American Revolution and the forming of the Constitution
- Human Rights
- Feminism and the Emancipation of Women
- Civil Rights Movements

Why Study Philosophy?

- Political and ethical values are the subject of philosophy
- Philosophers statistically do better on GRE, LSAT, etc
- Challenging and difficult subject matter and immersion with great works by great philosophers

A Disclaimer

- Philosophy confronts us what we already think we know and exposes us to difficult questions; it has a way of exposing our ignorance
- This is, for everyone, partly frightening
 - We often do know how to make sense of our own ideas on philosophical topics, so we fear it
 - As a result, it is easy dismiss philosophy, fall back on dogmas and preconceptions
- Challenge: remain firm and take the questions head on and see if philosophy will provide us with illumination even if not concrete answers
 - Philosophy asks us to think about our most dear; abandon dogmas and preconceptions and let reason and thinking lead us to where it may.

First Reading

- Sophocles, *Antigone*: How does Sophocles depict ethical (moral) disagreements? How do the characters in the play work towards convincing one another?

Further Reading

- General History of Western Philosophy
 - Anthony, Kenny: History of Western Philosophy
- General Aids on Philosophical Topics, Figures and Ideas
 - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- Film: Examined Life (2008); dir. Astra Taylor