

# PHIL2010

# Introduction to Philosophy

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# Course Materials

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

# 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 after each lecture
  - Link to Homework assignments posted day before due date

# What is Philosophy?

- `philosophy' = love of wisdom
  - (Greek origin): Philo = love; Sophia = wisdom
  - Our focus is on Western philosophy
- Some Popular Conceptions of Philosophy
  - pondering the meaning of life
  - concerned with speculation unlike hard-nosed science
  - opposed to religion
  - opposed to common-sense
  - concerned with unanswerable, practically useless questions
- This course is designed to clarify these conceptions
- 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

# Disclaimer

- Philosophy confronts us what we already think we know and exposes us to difficult questions; it has a way of exposing our ignorance
- Challenging
  - it asks us to think about are most dear assumptions about how we should act, and what the world is like; our world views, political inclinations, cultural assumption
  - Not tied to dogmas, preconceptions
  - It is free thinking; asks us to let reason and thinking lead us to where it may.
- It is frightening
  - Easy to fall into dismissals; confusions; disarray
- The challenge is to remain firm and take the questions head on and see if we emerge with a better understanding

# First Reading

- Antigone: Sophocles' play
- A Short overview of knowledge, belief and reasoning (argumentation)
- Euthyphro: philosophical method

# 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