

Reason & Truth

Professor: Andrew Y. Lee
Course: PHLA10 \ University of Toronto, Scarborough \ Winter 2025
Time: TUESDAYS + THURSDAYS \ 11am–12pm
Location: Arrow Group Innovation Hall (IA B1050)
Email: phla10.utsc@course.utoronto.ca

DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to analytic philosophy. We will examine a variety of philosophical questions concerning knowledge, rationality, reality, consciousness, the self, and free will.

Learning Outcomes

You'll have a basic introduction to analytic philosophy. You'll also have practice mapping arguments, writing a philosophy paper, and grappling with various philosophical terms, concepts, arguments, and ideas.

MATERIALS

Norton Introduction to Philosophy (2nd edition)

What Does It All Mean? (Nagel 1987)

iClicker device (purchasable through the UTSC Bookstore)

GRADING

Attendance (Lecture)	5%
Participation (Tutorial)	10%
Argument Maps	25%
Outline	5%
Paper	20%
Exam	35%

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance—5%

You're required to attend lecture. To record your attendance, you'll sign in each class with iClicker. This will require you to enable Location Services on your phone or computer, which means you'll need to physically attend lecture (hence, you cannot simply record your attendance virtually from a remote location). Attendance will start from the second class of the semester.

You may miss up to three lectures throughout the semester with no grade penalty (though you should aim to come to every lecture). After four absences, you'll lose .25% of your grade for each missed class. In exceptional circumstances, if you have a justified excuse for missing more than four lectures (such as illness or a family emergency), then you may email your TA with evidence and an explanation for why you had to miss the additional lectures. They'll decide whether or not to take points off for participation.

Participation—10%

You're expected to show up to both lecture and tutorial. In tutorial, you're expected to actively listen, and on occasion ask a question or make a comment. Your TA will determine your participation grade at the end of the semester.

Argument Maps—25%

You'll make three argument maps for the course. The information and the software can be found at <https://maps.simoncullen.org/home>. You should read both "[Getting Started](#)" and "[Handy Hints for Making Arguments](#)" before you make your first argument map.

Each map should be on a philosophical argument drawn from the course readings. You may choose any reading (so long as it's been covered up to that point in class) for any map. Each map must contain a *minimum* of 5 nodes and a *maximum* of 10 nodes. The maps will be graded on both **structure** and **content**. Each map will receive a score from 0–10.

Remember that each **node** expresses a claim, and that each edge expresses a relation (either justification or objection) between claims. To ensure that your argument map makes sense, you should read aloud the **green edges** as saying, "We should accept this claim because..." and the **red edges** as saying "We should reject this claim because..."

Each Argument Map is worth 10 points. Each point contributes to 1% of your grade. If you score 25 points or above, then you'll receive full credit for this assignment (but no extra credit). If you score below 25 points, then your score will be your percentage for this assignment. For example, if you score 21 points, then you'll receive 21% (out of a maximum of 25%) for the Argument Maps assignment.

Outline—5%

You'll make an outline for your final paper. Your outline should state: (1) what your thesis will be (1 sentence), (2) your argument for the thesis (1-3 sentences), and (3) the objection you'll consider (1 sentence). It's okay if your actual paper deviates from your outline; the outline assignment is designed to help you start thinking about the structure of your paper, and to give you a bit of feedback in advance.

Paper—20%

You'll write a paper. The paper may be on any topic covered by the class. Your paper must do the following: (1) argue for a thesis, (2) present an argument in premise-conclusion form (this may be either an argument for your thesis, or an argument that you'll criticize), and (3) present an objection to the argument. The paper should be approximately 1000 words. You aren't permitted to use any form of AI assistance. Before you write your paper, make sure you first read "Some Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers" from the *Norton Introduction*.

Exam—35%

There will be a final exam during the exam period. The exam will consist of vocabulary, fill in the blanks, multiple choice, short responses, and a mini-essay (a few paragraphs, from a choice of prompts).

Due Dates

Each assignment is due by 11:59pm. The due dates are as follows:

<i>1st Argument Map:</i>	January 30
<i>2nd Argument Map:</i>	February 13
<i>3rd Argument Map:</i>	March 6
<i>Outline:</i>	March 20
<i>Paper:</i>	April 3

CLASS POLICIES

Content

The course readings are mixture of primary analytic philosophy articles, editorial introductions in the *Norton Introduction*, and introductory chapters from *What Does It All Mean?* The readings have been carefully chosen, and aim to collectively strike a balance between relevance, accessibility, influence, and interest. The order in which the readings are listed is the order in which I recommend reading them.

For articles in the *Norton Introduction to Philosophy*, there are sometimes sections titled 'Test Your Understanding', 'Reader's Guide', and 'Analyzing the Arguments'. These are **mandatory** readings. Some of the final exam questions may come from the content in these sections. Other sections, such as 'Notes and Arguments', are optional.

Contact

Nearly all questions (about the course content, assignments, grading, course policies, etc.) should first be directed to your TA. Please direct your questions to them first (either through email or office hours). If you have an administrative question about the course, then it should be directed to the course email.

Late Penalty

You have seven days of extensions to be used throughout the course (on any assignment). If you use up your entire seven days of extensions, then you'll incur a penalty of 1% of your course grade for each day that each of your assignments is late (with a maximum penalty of a 0% on the assignment). In special circumstances, you may be able to appeal to your TA for a longer extension (without penalty) on an assignment.

Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a health consideration that requires accommodations, check out relevant information [here](#). You can also arrange for support at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or 416-978-8060.

Academic Integrity

I expect all the work you submit in this course will be your original work. If you have any questions or concerns in connection with academic integrity, please reach out to me. Key university resources on academic integrity are available [here](#).

AI Policy

You aren't permitted to use any form of AI assistance for any of your assignments. While AI can be a useful tool for academic work, it's important to first learn the basics of philosophical writing and analysis. And if you do use AI assistance, then you will be penalized, possibly even with death.

Plagiarism

You'll be required to submit your papers to the university's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, you'll allow your paper to be included as a source document in the tool's reference database, where it will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the university's use of this tool are described on the [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website](#).

Resources

[Here's](#) a guide on advice for contacting and talking to your professors.

Association for Philosophy Students

The Association of Philosophy Students (APS) is a student-organized association partnered with the Department of Philosophy at the University of Toronto Scarborough. The purpose is to advocate on behalf of philosophy students on matters pertaining to the quality of their academic experience. The APS has curated a workshop specifically targeted for PHLA10—"Reason and Truth" in order to facilitate your success on course assessments. To create a sense of community among philosophy students, the APS has planned events for students to meet, network, and gain insight into the opportunities available to those with a passion for philosophy.

The APS will be hosting one event specifically for PHLA10—"Reason and Truth," where APS members will work with you to give you a better understanding of the assignment and of how to avoid common mistakes. They will also host a general workshop where we will be going over how to read and write philosophy at a university level. For more information, you can reach out to the APS team (aps.utoronto@hotmail.com) or visit their website at <https://utscaps.wordpress.com/>.

READINGS

- * Note that there are only 22 sessions listed, even though there are 24 teaching days over the semester. This is to add flexibility to the course schedule. If we cover all the material before the last day of class, then the last day will be spent on review.
- * Readings marked '**optional**' are optional
- * Readings in **red** are accessible through Quercus
- * Readings in **black** are in either the *Norton Introduction to Philosophy* or *What Does It All Mean?*

SESSION 1 Introduction

Syllabus

Lee

SESSION 2 Philosophical Tools

Introduction

What Does It All Mean?

A Brief Guide to Logic and Argumentation

Norton Introduction

Philosophy Toolkit

Hajek

SESSION 3 Skepticism

How Do We Know Anything?

What Does It All Mean?

How Can We Know About the External World?

Norton Introduction

SESSION 4 Knowledge

What is Knowledge?

Norton Introduction

Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?

Gettier

SESSION 5 Rationality

Is it Reasonable to Believe without Evidence?

Norton Introduction

When is Faith Rational?

Buchak

SESSION 6 Pascal's Wager

Pascal's Ultimate Gamble

Hajek

Pascal's Mugging (*optional*)

Bostrom

SESSION 7 Other Minds

Other Minds

What Does It All Mean?

How Can You Know Your Own Mind or the Mind of Another?

Norton Introduction

SESSION 8 Introspection

The Unreliability of Naïve Introspection

Schwitzgebel

SESSION 9 The Chinese Room

Can Computers Think?

They're Made of Meat! (*optional*)

Searle

Bisson

SESSION 10 The Simulation Argument

Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?

Bostrom

SESSION 11 Phenomenal Consciousness

The Mind-Body Problem

What is it like to be a bat?

What Does It All Mean?

Nagel

SESSION 12 The Hard Problem

What is Consciousness?

The Hard Problem of Consciousness

Norton Introduction

Chalmers

SESSION 13 The Knowledge Argument

Is Mind Material?

Epiphenomenal Qualia (you can skip §4)

Norton Introduction

Jackson

SESSION 14 Materialism

Are Mental States Irreducible to Brain States?

Churchland

SESSION 15 Dual-Aspect Monism

Is Matter Conscious?

Mørch

SESSION 16 Subjectivity vs. Phenomenal Character

The Light & the Room

How to Think about Consciousness (*optional*)

Lee

Kind

SESSION 17 Hard Determinism

Free Will

Free Will

What Does It All Mean?

Strawson

SESSION 18 Compatibilism

Do We Possess Free Will?

Freedom and Necessity

Norton Introduction

Ayer

SESSION 19 Free Will *vs.* Free Action

Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person

Frankfurt

SESSION 20 Time Travel

The Paradoxes of Time Travel

The Merchant at the Alchemist's Gate (*optional*)

Lewis

Chiang

SESSION 21 Personal Identity

What is Personal Identity?

Personal Identity

Norton Introduction

Parfit

SESSION 22 Personal Identity

The Self and the Future

Williams

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have a general question about the course (either administrative or academic), then it should be directed to the PHLA10 course email. If you have a question about specific assignments or your tutorial, then it should be directed to your TA.

Course Email

Reason & Truth	phla10.uts@course.utoronto.ca
----------------	--

Teaching Assistants

Syed Faateh Ali	Head TA Tutorials 5, 7	syedfaatehali@gmail.com
Musab Aras	Tutorials 3, 8	musab.aras@mail.utoronto.ca
Andrew Lavigne	Tutorials 9, 12, 13	andrew.lavigne@mail.utoronto.ca
Esther Levine	Tutorials 1, 6	esther.levine@mail.utoronto.ca
Finn Loewen	Tutorials 2, 4	finn.loewen@mail.utoronto.ca
Fei Zhou	Tutorials 10, 14	feilong.zhou@mail.utoronto.ca
Munema Moiz	Grader	munema.moiz@mail.utoronto.ca