PHI 100 Syllabus

Dan Sheffler

2017-01-10

# Introduction to Philosophy

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| Sections | 004 at 2:00 and 007 at 12:00 MWF |
| Locations | Section 004 in CB 209 and Section 007 in CB 341 |
| Instructor | Dan Sheffler |
| E-mail | dansheffler@uky.edu |
| Office Hours | MWF 1:00–2:00 PM POT 1406 |
| Required Text | Nils Ch. Rauhut, *Ultimate Questions*, third edition (Prentice Hall, 2011), ISBN 02573197X. |

## Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course aims to provide you with a foundation in the basic questions, techniques, and concepts of philosophy. We will take our point of departure from Nils Rauhut’s survey, focusing each unit of the class on one of philosophy’s classic “Ultimate Questions.” Everyone will go through this book to get the fundamentals, but you must also engage primary sources that you will select from the “For Further Reading” section of each chapter. Reading comprehension and engagement will therefore be central to this class. After you have learned to read and think about what important philosophers have to say on these big questions you must also learn to think about your own conclusions and articulate those conclusions in clear, persuasive writing. Be prepared to *read*, to *think* about what you read, and to *write* about what you think.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcome | Evaluation | Weight |
| Reading Comprehension | Reading Quizzes | 40% |
| Mastery of Basic Concepts | Midterm and Final | 30% |
| Ability to Articulate Position | Short Essays | 30% |

## Grading

The first portion of your grade will come from regular (short) reading quizzes. These will be completed on Canvas and will typically consist of a few multiple-choice questions on the reading for the day. These quizzes are due at midnight on the night before we have class. There is a time limit on these quizzes and they can only be taken once, so it is advisable that you complete them just as soon as you complete your reading. You will not have enough time to search the reading for the answers, but you may keep the reading assignment open to aid in the completion of the quiz. I do not accept “my internet broke” excuses for resetting these quizzes. In compensation, I drop the lowest quiz grade. I recommend that you do not take these quizzes on your phone or at coffee shops with sketchy connections. This solves most problems.

Three times during the semester, you will submit a short (500–1000 words) paper on Canvas reflecting on two of the readings in the sections labeled “For Further Reading” at the end of the chapters. You will select two readings from the lists in Chapters One and Three, two from the lists in Chapters Four and Five, and two from the lists in Chapters Six and Seven. You must select your readings in such a way that you can identify a definite divergence in the views of the authors and the respective reasons that these authors have for their positions. These papers consist of two sections, one analysis and one argumentative reflection, each consisting of at least 250 words. In the first section you will analyze the disagreement and in the second section you will articulate your own position. Each of these papers is worth 10% of your final grade. I do not accept papers that are short of the word count (even by a few words). Late submissions will have points deducted for every day that the paper is late. See the seperate handout “How to Write Your Analysis Paper” for more detailed instructions.

The midterm and the final will each comprise 15% of your grade (for a total of 30%) and will mainly consist of factually oriented multiple choice questions concerning the reading (hint: it is a good idea to review past reading quizzes), but there will also be a handful of reflective short-answer questions. You will take both midterm and final on line (do not come to class that day; you will be sad).

**Grading Scale:**

(I round all values to the nearest whole percent.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A | 100–90% |
| B | 89–80% |
| C | 79–70% |
| D | 69–60% |
| E | 59–0% |

## Attendance

Although attendance does not compose its own segment of the grade, it is mandatory and failure to attend class will adversely impact your grade. Roll will be taken at the beginning of every class period. Perfect attendance will result in an extra credit of +2 percentage points. The first 2 unexcused absences will not count against you, but beginning with the 3rd absence, each absence will subtract 2 percentage points from your final grade. This goes to a **limit of 7 unexcused absences** at which point you can no longer pass the class. For your reference:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Absences | Percentage Change to Final Grade |
| 0 |  |
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |

I keep track of absences by calling roll at the beginning of each class. If you do not respond when I call your name (perhaps because you are not there) you will be marked as absent. This means that if you walk in late it is your responsibility to check in with me each and every time. Lateness, especially if egregious or repeated, may be counted as an absence for the day. You are always welcome to look at your record and I encourage you to do so because it is your responsibility to keep track of how many absences I have recorded. This is especially important for students who are in danger of failing the class because of absences. I probably will not notice when you have six absences, so I am unlikely to notify you when you are in danger of failing.

Whenever a student knows in advance that s/he will miss class (as for a scheduled college-sponsored activity), the student should discuss the absence with me prior to the event, and the student’s participation in the event should be confirmed by a communication from the event sponsor. When a student’s participation in college-sponsored activities or other scheduled events will require multiple absences, the student should discuss the potential for those absences with me prior to the end of the first week of classes.

Students missing class or an exam due to an excused absence (e.g. for sickness) bear the responsibility of informing me about their absence within one week following the period of the absence and of providing appropriate documentation for the absence. Excused absences are not taken into account in the above adjustment to the final grade. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to make up missed work. Make up work (including exams) must be submitted within one week of return to class. In general, I do not excuse on-line assignments.

## E-mail and Internet

You are expected to have an active e-mail account that you check regularly. Section related announcements will be made via e-mail (e.g. if I am sick, pointers for home work, change in due dates). Also, e-mail is the best way for contacting me outside of class.

You are expected to have access to a stable internet connection as reading quizzes are carried out on Canvas. I will not reset quizzes because of internet trouble (doing so is simply too easy to abuse and has been in the past). Instead, I will be dropping the lowest reading quiz score for everyone.

## Respectful Behavior

Mature, respectful behavior is expected in class. The primary concern is that all students are able to enjoy a focused, helpful classroom. This means that I expect you will among other things: arrive to class on time, stay awake, refrain from taking cell phone calls, playing games, or doing work for other classes. I will warn you once during a semester if a particular behavior is disruptive. If this behavior happens again, I may ask you to leave resulting in an absence for the day.

## Disability Accommodation

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257‐2754, email address: jkarnes@email.uky.edu) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively, so please provide me with a letter as early in the semester as possible.

## Academic Integrity

Cheating robs other students of a fair grade. If it is determined that a student has cheated, all students involved will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. If the case is egregious, I will direct the case to the appropriate University Dean for official sanction.

## Schedule

(See separate document for our projected schedule of topics and readings.)