

The assessment for this class is determined by performance on in class exams, reading response assignments, and class participation.

Assignment	Due date and time	Contribution to final grade
Midterm exam	March 7 in class	30%
Final exam	May 2 in class	30%
Reading responses	see schedule	30%
Participation	throughout	10%

1 Exams

This class will have two exams. The first will be held at the approximate midpoint of the semester, and the second will be given on the last day of class. There will be no exam during the University's scheduled final exam period. The final exam will cover only the material introduced after the first exam, although some material presented in the second half may presuppose material presented in the first half.

The purpose of the exams is for you to demonstrate your understanding of the philosophical concepts, methods, and arguments introduced in class lectures.

1.1 Format

Each exam will have two parts:

1. Short answer questions (30%)
 - The short answer questions will test your ability to recall the philosophical concepts introduced in class.
 - There will be some fill in the blank questions, as well as questions that ask you to state particular principles or premises of interest.
 - Complete responses to these questions should require no more than one or two sentences.
2. Extended response questions (70%)
 - The extended answer questions will test your comprehension of the philosophical discussions covered in class.
 - You will be expected to explain clearly and succinctly certain philosophical arguments, positions, and principles.
 - You will be expected to answer **five** of the **seven** short answer questions that are provided. Only five responses will be graded, so if you answer more, please indicate which responses you want to be graded.
 - It is difficult to give a definitive length for these responses. The most accurate advice I can give is that you should answer the question completely. A more informative answer is that the response should be at least a paragraph and likely two in most cases.

1.2 Grading

The grade for each of your answers will be determined by the **accuracy, completeness, and clarity** of your responses, with these components roughly equally weighted.

- A response that fails to address material relevant to the question will be docked for its incompleteness.
- A response that misconstrues the material, or includes excessive material not relevant to the question will be docked for its inaccuracy.
- A response that is hard to read or to follow, or a response that appears to be a mere regurgitation of various keywords from the notes will be docked for its unclarity.

2 Reading responses

Critical reading of texts is an invaluable skill in philosophical investigation. The reading response assignments are designed to help you develop this skill.¹

2.1 Format

- Reading responses are short writing assignments. They should be **2-3 pages**² and have two parts:
 1. *Exegesis*: A summary of a portion of the reading under discussion, including argument premises, key theses, and significant implications. This part is intended for you to display your reading comprehension; the summary should be in your own words, and direct quotation should be used only sparingly.
 2. *Critique*: An analysis of the philosophical content of the reading under discussion. The nature of this section is fairly open ended. Some options include: a development of a critique of the author's thesis, an alternative to the author's proposal, an application of the author's proposal to an aspect of daily life, a comparison of the theory to alternative theories.
- You should dedicate approximately equal space to each part.
- The first page of your response should include **your name, the title of the article under discussion, and the assignment due date**.
- Reading responses should be saved in **PDF format**³ and submitted using the "Submit a Reading Response" button on the course website.

2.2 Grading

Each section will be roughly equally weighted. The grading criteria for each section are as follows, with the criteria roughly equally weighted:

- Exegesis
 - *Accuracy*: The exegesis should accurately portray the author's position.
 - *Focus*: One cannot possibly summarize an entire philosophy paper in 1.5 pages. So it is important to focus one's discussion on a specific portion of the reading.
 - *Detail*: In philosophical writing, the method one uses and the arguments one employs are just as important as the conclusion one argues for. So it is important to present the details of the portion of the reading you focus on.
- Critique
 - *Originality*: You are not expected to revolutionize the field of philosophy, but your critique should reflect your own thinking on the issue.
 - *Relevance*: The critique should address the issues presented in the exegesis.
 - *Specificity*: When offering a critique, it is important to be clear on just what issue one is objecting to. Broad generalizations can be provocative, but it is attention to the specific issues that makes a critique compelling.

¹Thus reading responses may be viewed as parallel to lab reports in an introductory science class.

²Double spaced, 11-12pt font, 1in margins.

³Most current word processing programs allow you to export files as PDF. If you are uncertain how to do this, please learn.

2.3 Schedule

You will be expected to submit **four** reading responses throughout the course of the semester. **Two** of your submissions must come before the midterm exam. You have a variety of options for which readings to focus on; you can determine for yourself which of the readings most interests you. However, you may only submit one response per due date. You may submit 5 responses in total. If you do so, the lowest grade you receive will be dropped.

The schedule of due dates is as follows:

Due Date	Relevant readings
January 31	Smith: <i>Beyond the error theory</i> Nussbaum: <i>In defense of universal values (chapters 1 and 2)</i> Dancy: <i>Ethical particularism and morally relevant properties</i>
February 11	Plato: <i>Euthyphro</i> Rawls: <i>A theory of justice (excerpt)</i> Hobbes: <i>Leviathan (chapter 13)</i>
February 21	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean ethics (excerpt)</i> Zagzebski: <i>Exemplarist virtue theory</i>
March 4	Mill: <i>Utilitarianism</i> Brandt: <i>Fairness to indirect optimific theories in ethics</i>
March 7	Midterm exam
March 25	Kant: <i>Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals (excerpt)</i> Huemer: <i>Lexical priority and the problem of risk</i>
April 4	Singer: <i>Famine, affluence, and morality</i> McMahan: <i>Eating animals the nice way</i>
April 15	Foot: <i>The problem of abortion and the trolley problem</i> Thomson: <i>The trolley problem</i>
April 25	Temkin: <i>Egalitarianism defended</i> Kolodny and MacFarlane: <i>Ifs and oughts</i>
May 2	Final exam