

Phil 1010 Introduction to Philosophical Problems

Syllabus, Fall 2022

Prerequisites: None | Credits: 3 | Gen Ed: Arts and Humanities Non-Literature

Instructor

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Time: T/Th 12:30-1:45
Location: Hardin Hall 233
Course Website: Canvas
Office Hours: W 1:30-2:30

Course Description

Philosophy is, broadly speaking, the study of ideas that are central to the ways we think and live. Often times, however, the value of our concepts, and the relations they have to each other, is hidden from us. We take the way the world is or seems to be for granted and often don't stop to ask why it is that way and whether it should be the way it is. Philosophy aims to uncover these truths by cultivating reasoning skills that are broadly applicable to all disciplines and which will help you become clearer about what you think and what matters most to you. This course is more about thinking than it is about memorizing facts – the questions raised are our primary focus. Questions may include, amongst others: (a) how can we live a meaningful life? (b) can we be sure of the existence of an external world? (c) should everyone have the right to vote? (d) what makes you the same person now as when you were born? (e) how do implicit biases affect our understanding of the world? (f) can we ever act freely or are our actions pre-determined? (g) how should we understand the moral risks of new technologies? (h) are animals deserving of moral consideration? (i) what arguments are there for the existence of god? (j) how should we distribute scarce medical resources? We'll get at these questions through philosophical writing, science fiction, and film, allowing for both rigorous argumentation and visual storytelling to provide the fuel for a discussion-based community learning environment where together we will discover the philosophical foundations for human knowledge, values, society, and ultimately existence. This course isn't intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive, but to provide an introductory survey to key philosophical questions about the nature of human thought, values, and reality. The course is divided by philosophical subdiscipline: epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, metaphysics, social and political philosophy, and art and aesthetics.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

This course is an introduction to philosophy and will cover a wide array of topics from a philosophical perspective. As a result, students will become familiar with many of the core topics of the discipline. Additionally, by the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify, properly interpret, and evaluate the philosophical views and arguments of a variety of philosophers and writers on the topics of the course.
- Engage in reflective and respectful discussion with your peers, especially in situations in which you may disagree.
- Reflect meaningfully on the relevance of what you've read and discussed for living a fruitful and happy life.
- Develop your own answers to the questions we discuss, as well as develop an increased ability to communicate them and argue for them by oral and written means.

Required Materials

There are no required textbooks for this course. All required readings will be posted to the course Canvas page as PDFs and if you have access to a printer you can print them out. Other required course materials, such as videos or podcasts or YouTube clips, will likewise be available on the course Canvas page.

Grading

Letter grades (corresponding to a 4-point scale: A=4, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, etc.) will be based on the following:

SNTs	20%
Journal Entries	20%
Short Paper	20%
Final Project	25%
Attendance and Participation	15%

The following grade conversion chart will be used:

A=93-100%	A-=90-92.99%	B+=87-89.99%
B=83-86.99%	B-=80-82.99%	C+=77-79.99%
C=73-76.99%	C-=70-72.99%	D+=67-69.99%
D=60-66.99%	F=0-59.99%	

Assignments

Detailed instructions, grading rubrics, and due dates for each assignment are available on Canvas.

Socratic Note Taking (SNT)

The purpose of these assignments is to help you read articles more effectively, and to provide accountability for completing the readings. “Socratic Note Taking” is named after the philosopher Socrates, who famously taught by asking questions. In these notes, you will write questions as you read. Think of it as a reading quiz that you create yourself, along with an answer key. A set of notes is due for each reading. Students will be required to produce three questions and answers per reading. Collectively, these are worth 20% of your grade and they will be graded out of 3 points (0.5 for each question and answer). You can miss 3 SNTs without penalty. They are due by the start of the class in which we are discussing the relevant reading. *No late SNTs will be accepted.* Complete and submit your questions/answers on Canvas. I will provide sample questions/answers at the beginning of term.

Journals

Students will also record (roughly) biweekly journal entries (6 in total), to be submitted on Canvas, collectively worth 20% of the final grade. These entries involve three components: first, students will make connections between this week’s course readings/topics and one other thing (another class, a movie, conversation with friends); second, students will discuss one problem they had in college that week and what they did or will do to solve it; third, I’d like to hear how you’re doing in general. The purpose is to accustom you to writing regularly, journaling is cathartic and can help address problems with the transition to college, and you will learn to make connections between what you learn and other aspects of your life. Journal entries will be graded on a 5-point scale.

Short Paper

Students will write a short paper (2-3 pages), that is worth 20% of the final grade and due around mid-semester. Students will choose one author we've read up to that point and summarize the main argument or one of the main arguments in their article and then offer an objection to that author's argument, while also considering how the author would potentially respond. Students are encouraged to discuss their chosen author and objection/response with me beforehand.

Final Project

Students will write a second paper (approximately 1000-1500 words or 3-4 pages) due at the end of term, which counts for 25% of the final grade. This will be a longer project with multiple components, like a larger and more involved version of the journal entries, whereby students will reflect on the course content and what they've learned, drawing connections between readings and other aspects of their lives, critically engaging with specific authors' arguments, and concluding with what they've taken away from their introduction to philosophical thought. Students are encouraged to discuss their topics with me ahead of time.

Attendance and Participation

There is an attendance and participation component, worth 15% of your final grade. Your showing up and being attentive and engaged in lecture will be reflected in your attendance grade (I will keep track of attendance). Attending class is required to get full marks since this is required to actively participate. You have two 'freebie' absences which don't need to be justified. Regularly participating by asking questions, making comments and otherwise engaging with me and your peers will count towards your participation marks. You may lose marks if you are disruptive in lecture (on your phone, talking out of turn, regularly arriving late, etc.). Students may gain participation marks by coming to office hours.

Class Policies and Expectations

Here are some specific policies and expectations for this class:

- **Course Readings:** Students should do all the assigned readings *before* the class in which they're discussed (since this is required to do the SNTs). All readings are available on Canvas.
- **Electronics Policy:** Use of electronics is not permitted during class. This applies to cellphones, tablets, laptops, smart watches, etc. Numerous studies have shown that use of technology during lecture substantially impedes learning of both the user and those around them. If you require a special accommodation regarding electronics please contact me to request an exemption.
- **Communication:** You can contact me via e-mail. I will endeavour to respond within 24 hours, but usually don't respond after 5pm on weekdays nor on weekends. My principal method of communicating with you will be via your Clemson e-mail, so be sure to check this daily. You can also come see me during office hours or if you're unable to make those we can schedule a time that works for both of us, either in person or on Zoom.
- **Late Work Policy:** Late assignments without an extension will be downgraded by 1/3 of a letter grade per day after the due date (e.g. A to A-), up to a penalty of 2 full letter grades (after

which they won't be accepted). Consult with me to request an extension. Extensions will not be granted for the SNTs; late SNTs will be graded as 0.

- **Grade Disagreement:** I am happy to discuss your graded assignments with you. I ask that you first read through my comments on your assignment, write down any questions you have, and then schedule an appointment with me. Note that I require a 24-hour “cooling off” period before discussing grades. If you think a grade you have received is unfair, please write a paragraph explaining why and send it to me via email. Note that this can result in your initial grade being *either raised or lowered*.
- **Extra Credit:** As a matter of general policy, no extra credit will be offered in this course unless *extremely* unusual circumstances arise which necessitate it.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** Students are expected to respect each other, allow others the chance to speak, and be open-minded to views different from their own. The topics covered may be controversial and evoke strong reactions. Please be aware of, and sensitive to, the feelings and experiences of others. We're here to learn and that's best done through community building, a prerequisite of which is respect and toleration.
- **Syllabus:** Readings and schedule are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and on the course Canvas page.

Provisional Course Schedule

Date	Topic/Unit	Readings	Work Due
<i>Week 1</i> <i>Th 08/25</i>	Course Introduction	Syllabus and Course Overview	
<i>Week 2</i> <i>T 08/30</i> <i>Th 09/01</i>	What is Philosophy?	Arguments – No Readings Antony, ‘Good Minus God’	Last Day to Register 08/30 SNTs x1
<i>Week 3</i> <i>T 09/06</i> <i>Th 09/08</i>	Epistemology	Descartes, ‘Meditations I & II’ Moore, ‘Proof of an External World’	Last Day to Drop 09/06 SNTs x2 First Journal Due 09/09
<i>Week 4</i> <i>T 09/13</i> <i>Th 09/15</i>	Epistemology	Valian, <i>Why So Slow?</i> Nguyen, ‘Escape the Echo Chamber’	SNTs x2

<i>Week 5</i> <i>T 09/20</i> <i>Th 09/22</i>	Philosophy of Science	Saul, 'Feminist Critiques of Science' Little and Backus, 'Confidence Tricks'	SNTs x2 Second Journal Due 09/23
<i>Week 6</i> <i>T 09/27</i> <i>Th 09/29</i>	Ethics	Rachels, 'The Challenge of Cultural Relativism' Normative Ethics, No Readings	SNTs x1
<i>Week 7</i> <i>T 10/04</i> <i>Th 10/06</i>	Ethics	Singer, 'The Case for Animal Rights' Rini, 'Raising Good Robots'	SNTs x2 Third Journal Due 10/07
<i>Week 8</i> <i>T 10/11</i> <i>Th 10/13</i>	Ethics	Perry, 'Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality' Roupenian, 'Cat Person'	SNTs x1 **There is no SNT for the Roupenian short story** Short Paper Due 10/14
<i>Week 9</i> <i>T 10/18</i> <i>Th 10/20</i>	Ethics	Rescher, 'Allocation of Medical Resources' Wolf, 'The Meaning of Lives'	SNTs x2
<i>Week 10</i> <i>T 10/25</i> <i>Th 10/27</i>	Metaphysics	Sider, 'The Problem of Free Will' Lewis, 'The Paradox of Time Travel'	SNTs x2 Fourth Journal Due 10/28
<i>Week 11</i> <i>T 11/01</i> <i>Th 11/03</i>	Metaphysics	Conee, 'Arguments for the Existence of God' Hume, 'The Problem of Evil'	SNTs x2
<i>Week 12</i> <i>T 11/08</i> <i>Th 11/10</i>	Metaphysics	Fall Break – No Class 11/08 Sider, 'Personal Identity'	SNTs x1
<i>Week 13</i> <i>T 11/15</i>	Social and Political Philosophy	Turkle, 'Empathy Machines'	SNTs x2

<i>Th 11/17</i>		Lichtenberg, 'Abolishing Life Sentences'	
<i>Week 14</i> <i>T 11/22</i>	N/A	No Class 11/22 (I'm out of town)	Fifth Journal Due 11/22
<i>Week 15</i> <i>T 11/29</i> <i>Th 12/01</i>	Social and Political Philosophy	Brennan, 'The Right to a Competent Electorate' Morton, 'Engines of Democracy'	SNTs x2
<i>Week 16</i> <i>T 12/06</i> <i>Th 12/08</i>	Social and Political Philosophy	Elkin, 'Her Body is a Problem' Timmerman, 'A Case for Removing Confederate Monuments'	SNTs x2 Sixth Journal Due 12/09

Final Project Due: Monday, December 12th

Final Grades Due: Wednesday, December 21st

University Policies and Regulations

Academic Integrity

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

All infractions of academic dishonesty by undergraduates must be reported to Undergraduate Studies for resolution through that office. In cases of plagiarism instructors may use the Plagiarism Resolution Form.

See the [Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy](#) website for additional information and [the current catalogue](#) for the policy. For graduate students, see the current [Graduate School Handbook](#) for all policies and procedures.

Accessibility

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the instructor know and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu, or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success

Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen, if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who have accommodations are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and send these to their instructors [through the AIM portal](#) as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester.

You can access further information at the [Student Accessibility website](#). Other information is at the university's [Accessibility Portal](#).

The Clemson University Title IX Statement Regarding Non-Discrimination

The Clemson University Title IX statement: Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This [Title IX policy](#) is located on the Campus Life website.

Ms. Alesia Smith is the Clemson University Title IX

Coordinator, and the Executive Director of Equity Compliance. Her office is located at 223 Brackett Hall, 864-656-0620. Remember, email is not a fully secured method of communication and should not be used to discuss Title IX issues.

Clemson University aspires to create a diverse community that welcomes people of different races, cultures, ages, genders, sexual orientation, religions, socioeconomic levels, political perspectives, abilities, opinions, values and experiences.

Emergency Preparation

Emergency procedures have been posted in all buildings and on all elevators. Students should be reminded to review these procedures for their own safety. All students and employees should be familiar with guidelines from the Clemson University Police Department. [Visit here for information about safety.](#)

Clemson University is committed to providing a safe campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. As members of the community, we encourage you to take the following actions to be better prepared in case of an emergency:

1. Ensure you are signed up for [emergency alerts](#)
2. Download the [Rave Guardian app](#) to your phone (<https://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/cupd/rave-guardian/>)
3. Learn what you can do to [prepare yourself](#) in the event of an active threat (<http://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/EmergencyManagement/>)