

Date updated: 1/9/2024

Syllabus  
The University of New Orleans  
Dept. of Philosophy

## PHIL 1000: Introduction to Philosophy (3 credit)

SECTION 01: LA 370, Mon/Wed/Fri 10:00AM - 10:50AM

### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Sara Bizarro  
**Office:** LA 107  
**Office Hours:** Tue 5-6pm; Thu: 4-6 pm  
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### Required Texts

Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition or 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press, 2017 (ISBN-13: 978-0190674335 ISBN-10: 0190674334).

**Note:** All required readings will be posted on Perusall. The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition will be posted on Canvas and the 7<sup>th</sup> Edition will be digitally available if you have access to course books included in your tuition.

### Course Description

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** An introductory study of basic philosophical concepts and problems.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** The purpose of this Introduction to Philosophy course is to provide students with an overview of the subject and its methods. Philosophy has a rich history starting with the Greeks, but it is not merely a historical subject; it is also a means by which we can think about ourselves and the world around us. To provide students with a broader view of philosophy, not just as a historical subject, but also as a way of approaching contemporary issues, this course combines historical texts, philosophical methods, and contemporary philosophical thought. We will begin by explaining what philosophy is and what philosophical arguments are, and then explore the history of Philosophy through reading selections from ancient Greek, modern, and contemporary texts. We will discuss philosophical topics such as the Free Will, the Existence of God, Feminism, Personal Identity, the Mind-Body Problem, and the Trolley Problem. We will then move to Asian Philosophy, and to conclude the course we close with a speculative section on Death and the Meaning of Life.

Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Have a grasp of the history of philosophy and be acquainted with essential philosophers and their writings.
- Cultivate reasoning skills, analysis, and evaluation of arguments, while referring to the theories and ideas learned in class.
- Discuss and defend several positions in philosophy, supporting them with complete arguments, as distinct from affirming opinion or tradition.
- Work on a final project that directly uses the topics discussed in class and implements the argumentation skills developed.

Grades

Grades will be based on a 100-point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
<b>Perusall Reading Assignments</b>	20		
<b>Attendance and Participation</b>	30	<b>A</b>	100 – 90 points
<b>Midterm Test</b>	20	<b>B</b>	89 – 80 points
<b>Final Project</b>	20	<b>C</b>	79 – 70 points
<b>Final Presentation</b>	10	<b>D</b>	69 – 60 points
<b>Total</b>	100	<b>F</b>	59 – 0 points

\*Grades over .5 will be rounded up, so 89.5 will be rounded up to 90.

**LATE WORK:** Reading assignments can be submitted up to 10 days. Perusall assignments have a penalty that increases gradually as more days pass, up to a maximum of 10 days. After those 10 days extensions will only be granted in extreme and documented circumstances. In most cases no extensions will be granted. Tests and presentations must be taken or executed on the day scheduled. Missing the tests or a presentation will be penalized. If you have a situation that you believe is an extenuating circumstance, you can only ask for consideration with written documentation and I will try to find an alternative solution. If you encounter any unexpected circumstances make sure to document it, as extensions will not be granted without documentation. Please note that the final presentations are on the last day of classes or the day of the final exam, so no extension can be granted for those. If a student submits slide with an audio without presenting in person there is a 50% penalty on that assignment.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Academic honesty is essential for learning, evaluating academic performance, and to the entire educational function of a University. For this reason, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. The student code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>. Each student is required to pledge that all completed work will be submitted according to the principles of academic integrity as defined in the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the UNO Student Code of Conduct.

**CLASS CONDUCT:** Discussion in class is encouraged, but civility must be maintained at all times. No abusive, uncivil, or inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Devices must be kept away during class, except for notetaking. Phones must be silenced, computers need to be on note-taking programs only, no browsing or other viewing is allowed. No headphones allowed in class. Not following these rules will result in a failing grade in the participation section of this class.

**READINGS:** Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly readings, reading assignments on Perusall (more information about this on Canvas), you need to have read the material ***before*** the Friday class since that is our discussion class. All required readings will be posted on Canvas. The course book is useful for the final project, but all the material is posted and there is no need to purchase any course books for this class.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** I will be taking attendance in every class. Both your attendance and participation will be graded. Please volunteer to speak in class during the discussion periods so as to enhance your participation grade. Please note that attendance and participation are graded jointly and they are worth 30% of the grade, it is the most important graded element. If by extenuating circumstances you miss classes, make sure that when you do come to class you volunteer extensively to participate. I take attendance every class, but the “attendance grade” is considered together with the participation grade to create a combined grade for both. This class is highly interactive and everyone is expected to participate as much as possible.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**READINGS:** Every week there are readings and a Perusall assignment related to the reading. Those will be posted on Canvas and will be due before our Friday class.

**MID-TERM TEST:** There is a Mid-Term Test that consists of a term definition, a one-paragraph answer, and a short essay question. I will provide the students with a study guide in advance. Students will prepare using the study guide. The test questions may vary slightly so that the student needs to answer on the spot. Tests can be taken by hand or with a computer using a lock-down browser. Those wishing to use a computer will need to do a test-test to see if they can use the lock-down browser on their device. Students can bring printed or hand-written notes to the test as well as books. Students cannot use any other devices. If students are taking the test with a computer the lock down browser will lock the screen and no other tabs can be opened. No cell phones allowed during the test.

**FINAL PROJECT:** The final project can be an essay, a video or a podcast. Students will need to choose a topic that was either discussed in class or if not discussed in class is in the course book. There will be an assignment sheet posted with specific instructions regarding the final project. In order to have a good grade these instructions need to be closely followed. Students are encouraged to set up office hours to discuss their ideas for the final project.

**PRESENTATIONS:** At the end of the school year students will present their final essays in class using a modified *Pecha Kutcha* presentation style that consists of 10 slides for 10 seconds each, a total of 1 minute and 40 seconds per student. I will explain in class how to prepare for these presentations.

**OFFICE HOURS:** My office is in the Liberal Arts Building Room #107. You can schedule office hours here: <https://calendly.com/sbizarro/officehours>

**CONTENT NOTICE/TRIGGER WARNING:** This is a philosophy class, so it is an argument-based, which means there are different opinions expressed in class. There are also topics that may be problematic to some students, for instance, questioning if reality exists, discussing arguments for the existence of God, and questions about life, death, and suicide may be discussed as well.

**INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are only granted in extreme and documented extenuating circumstances and must be discussed and arranged well before the last class meeting. If a student asks for an incomplete at the end of the course, it will be denied, unless there are extreme and documented medical or other severe circumstances. If your situation is not documented, you need to find a way to officially confirm the reason why you are asking for an incomplete.

**WITHDRAWALS:** Check the academic calendar for withdrawal dates. You do not need to tell me anything, you can withdraw within the University rules. I understand that life happens and sometimes it is not the right time to take a class. You can always return to it the following semester.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodation. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:** Please remember that both the Library and Learning Resource Center are available to assist all students regarding writing and research.

**PHIL 1000 SPRING 2024 Timeline**  
(subject to revision)

DAY	TOPIC/READING
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 Jan 8   10   12</p>	<p><b>What is Philosophy?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet and Greet - Syllabus and Course Preview.</li> <li>• Branches of Philosophy.</li> <li>• <b>Required Readings:</b> Syllabus and Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy", p. 13-15</li> <li>• <b>Further readings:</b> "What Is Philosophy?" Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley, p. 3-12</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 2 Jan 17   19</p> <p>Jan 15 – MLK Day No Classes</p>	<p><b>Texas Sharpshooter, Invisible Dragon, and Strawman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arguments and Fallacies</b></li> <li>• <b>Videos:</b> Monty Python Argument Clinic, Texas Sharpshooter, and 31 Logical Fallacies.</li> <li>• <b>Required Participation Activity:</b> Bring a fallacy to Class.</li> <li>• <b>Required Listening:</b> <a href="#">The Texas Sharpshooter Fallacy</a></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3 Jan 22   24   26</p>	<p><b>The Gadfly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-Socratics and Socrates</b></li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Plato, "Defense of Socrates", p. 16-39</li> <li>• <b>Further Reading:</b> Aristophanes, "The Clouds"</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 4 Jan 29   31   Feb 2</p>	<p><b>Ring of Gyges, Allegory of the Cave, and Ship of State</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plato.</b></li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Plato, "Republic - Allegory of the Cave." p. 567-576</li> <li>• <b>Further reading:</b> Plato, 557-567</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 5 Feb 5   7   9</p>	<p><b>Bad Haircuts and Statues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristotle, Science and Virtue Ethics.</li> <li>• Movie: <i>Groundhog Day</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Reading: Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics." p. 374-378</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Feb 12 - 16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MARDIS GRAS – SPRING BREAK</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 6 Feb 19   21</p> <p>Feb 23 – Guaranteed Income Workshop - No Class</p>	<p><b>The Evil Genie, Apples and Billiard Balls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descartes. "I Think Therefore I Am."</li> <li>• How do we know anything really exists?</li> <li>• Descartes and the Matrix.</li> <li>• Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.</li> <li>• Thinking through Descartes' Skepticism.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Descartes, "Meditations.", p. 94-105 &amp; 173-178</li> <li>• <b>Further Reading:</b> Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.</li> </ul>

<p>Week 7 Feb 26   28</p> <p>Mar 1 Test</p>	<p><b>The Axe Murderer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge and perception.</li> <li>• Kantian Ethics.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals." p. 378-383</li> </ul> <p><b>March 1 – Mid-Term Test – In Class Test</b></p>
<p>Week 8 Mar 4   6   8</p>	<p><b>The Ship of Theseus, Cobblers, and Locke's Parrot.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes an object the same over time, even when it physically changes?</li> <li>• What makes a person the same person over their entire life?</li> <li>• <b>Required Readings:</b> Smart, "A case of Identity", Perry, "The Problem of Personal Identity", p. 229-233</li> </ul>
<p>Week 9 Mar 11   13   15</p>	<p><b>Mary's Room, The Chinese Room, Vegemite and Bats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we ever know what it is like to be an animal? Can we know what it is like to be a bat?</li> <li>• Can machines think? Can a computer be conscious?</li> <li>• <b>Required Readings:</b> Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?" p. 153-156, Alan Turing, "Computer Machinery and Intelligence" p. 161-165; Searle "Do computers think?" 165-167</li> </ul>
<p>Week 10 Mar 18   20   22</p>	<p><b>The Watchmaker, Pascal's Wager, and the Problem of Evil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does God exist? Are there good arguments for or against the existence of God?</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Pascal, "The Wager", p. 309-311.</li> <li>• <b>Further readings:</b> Part 7, God, p. 253-330</li> </ul>
<p>Week 11 Mar 25</p> <p>March 27 No in person class, Asynchronous Work.</p> <p>March 29 Easter Break</p>	<p><b>Coquettes, Officers and Ain't I a Woman?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Women"</li> <li>• <b>Further Readings:</b> Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks.</li> </ul> <p>Note: I will be away at a conference on March 27, so the Mary Wollstonecraft Discussion will be on Perusall, instead of 1 reply 4 replies to other students will be required.</p>
<p>Week 12 April 1   3   5</p>	<p><b>Cake or Peach and Voting Booths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Will: Metaphysics, Psychology and Moral Responsibility.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> Thomas Nagel, "Free Will", p. 181-186.</li> <li>• <b>Further Reading:</b> Part 5, Free Will, p. 181-228</li> </ul>
<p>Week 13 Apr 8   10   12</p>	<p><b>The Trolley Problem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trolley Problem.</li> <li>• <b>Required Readings:</b> Judith Jarvis Thompson, "The Trolley Problem," p. 629-630, &amp; "Turning the Trolley" p. 630-633</li> </ul>

<p>Week 14 Apr 15   17   19</p>	<p><b>A Cup of Tea, the Moon, and Every Minute Zen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buddhism, Confucianism, Tao and Zen.</li> <li>• <b>Required Reading:</b> "Twelve Zen Stories," p. 713-719</li> <li>• <b>Further Readings:</b> Part 15, Asian Outlooks, p. 697-713</li> </ul>
<p>Week 15 Apr 22   24   26</p>	<p><b>Death and the Meaning of Life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a reason to fear death? What is bad about dying?</li> <li>• What is the meaning of life?</li> <li>• <b>Required Readings (choose one):</b> Richard Taylor, "The Meaning of Life", p. 679-687; Susan Wolf, "Meaning in Life", p. 687-690; Christine Vitrano, "Meaningful Lives", 691-693</li> </ul>
<p>Presentations: Apr 29 &amp; Exam Date TBA</p>	<p><b>Final Presentations – Date to Be Announced</b></p>