



University of Central Florida

PHI 2010H

Honors Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Bruce Janz

Term: Fall 2003

Phone: 407-823-2273

Room: BHC 131

Office: Colbourn Hall 411F

Time: Tuesday Thursday 12 noon - 1:15

Course Page & Resource Page:

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Office Hours: Announced early in the course

In this course, we will deal with three perennial and core questions in philosophy: Who are we? What is the world like? and How should we live? Examining these questions will enable the student to master the traditional concepts of philosophy, acquire the skills of the philosopher, and use both the concepts and skills to reflect on contemporary life. The course will be both thematic and historical.

Required Texts:

1. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*. New York: Macmillan, 1974.
2. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy, 3rd Edition*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1993.
3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1992.
4. Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. New York: Bantam Books, 1977.

Requirements:

Writing Assignments: Seven assignments are given below in the course schedule. Each is out of a possible 10%. I will take your **top five grades**. Due dates are included in the schedule below for each assignment. Each assignment has a word limit – please **include the number of words** in your assignment on the paper. Since there is leeway in this assignment (that is, the bottom two grades are dropped), **I will not accept late papers**. You can always use a missed paper as one of the grades that is dropped. Please plan ahead: I cannot accept papers late in the term if you simply didn't do the early ones, and then get into trouble. It is not fair to the class. As well, please read the note below on plagiarism.

Note also the ungraded assignment in the second week of classes.

Midterm Exam: 20%. This will be written on Thursday, Oct. 16 in class time.

Final Exam: 30% of the grade will be based on the final exam. The exam will be written at the time established by the registrar's office. Please note that I will not change the final exam date to accommodate travel schedules or other non-academic things. If you have questions about other exceptions, please see me.

Grade Distribution: I will record the assignment grades based on the percentage of the course grade during the term (that is, the midterm will be recorded as a grade out of 20, although it may be marked out of another number). The letter grade will be calculated only at the end of the course, based on full course grade. The distribution will be as follows:

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: 0-59

Schedule: PHI 2010H

August 26, 28: Course Introduction: Asking Good Questions

September 2, 4: Who are you? I **READING**: Buber, *I and Thou* Part One

Ungraded Assignment: Please produce a study schedule for the term. This schedule should include all your upcoming assignments and exams for all classes, as far as you know them, along with an idea of when they will be started, how long they will take, and when they will be done. Also note anything that would disrupt the schedule (e.g., trips, team commitments, etc.), and work them into your study plan.

September 9, 11: Who Are You? II **READING**: Buber, *I and Thou* Part Two

Writing assignment 1 (due Sept. 11): In a 500 word (+/- 10 words) encyclopaedia-style entry, outline what Buber means when he says (in part two of *I and Thou*) that "the I of the primary word I-Thou is a different I from that of the primary word I-It." Who is this "I"?

September 16, 18: Who Are You? III **READING**: Buber, *I and Thou* Part Three

Writing assignment 2 (Due Sept. 18): Find an example from popular culture (movies, books) which express some version of the self which we have talked about in class. In a 500 word (+/- 10 words) encyclopaedia-style entry express the philosophical aspects of your example. You will be graded on the quality of your example and the argument you give.

September 23, 25: Who Are You? IV

September 30, Oct. 2: What is the world like? I **READING:** Descartes, *Discourse on Method*
Writing assignment 3 (Due Oct. 2): In a 400 word (+/- 10 words) encyclopaedia article, explain why Descartes believes that God exists, in his *Discourse on Method*.

October 7, 9: What is the world like? II **READING:** Descartes, *Meditations*
Writing assignment 4 (Due Oct. 9): In a 400 word (+/- 10 words) encyclopaedia article, explain the significance of Descartes' "wax" example.

October 14, 16: What is the World Like? III. Thursday, Oct. 16: Midterm Exam **READING:** None this week.

October 21, 23: What is the World Like? IV

October 28, 30: How should we live? I: Social & Political Thought **READING:** Rousseau 1-44
Writing assignment 5 (Due Oct. 30): Two options: 1. Obtain literature from a political party or movement (include it when you hand in your paper). In a paper of no more than 1000 words, outline the political philosophy represented, and critique it. What kind of philosophical issues is this movement or party trying to address? Are they successful? 2. Obtain literature about some contemporary social issue that has ethical implications, and that contains a coherent position. Critique the argument presented, that is, identify presuppositions and implications that the argument holds. Important: Do not simply critique the issue in general, but rather the issue as presented in the literature you have before you. You have a maximum of 1000 words for this option as well.

November 4, 6: How should we live? II: Social & Political Thought **READING:** Rousseau 44-71
Writing assignment 6 (Due Nov. 6): In a 500 word (+/- 10 words) encyclopaedia article, outline Rousseau's answer to the question "Why are we not equal?" NOTE: Do not limit yourself only to the first half of the book - use the whole thing.

November 11, 13: How should we live? III: Social & Political Thought. No Class Nov. 11 - Veteran's Day. **READING:** Pirsig, *Zen*, Part One and Two

November 18, 20: How should we live? IV: Ethics **READING:** Pirsig, *Zen*, Part Three and Four
Writing assignment 7 (Due Nov. 20): Pirsig writes a great deal about "quality" in *Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. In 500 (+/- 10 words) words, summarize the significance of this word for him.

November 25, 27: How should we live? V: Ethics

December 2, 4: Wrap up, Review

The Fine Print

STANDARDS FOR PAPERS: I expect papers to be typewritten, in essay form (that is, not point form). I will be taking grammar and spelling into account - good ideas cannot be communicated with poor form. As for citation style, I will be using the MLA format. I am open to other recognized formats (e.g., Chicago, Turabian), but whatever format you use must be used consistently. We will discuss in class the specific format of an encyclopaedia article. For information on documentation styles, see http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/Writing%20Resources/writing_resources_home.htm#documentation

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is expected from members of the class. If you cannot be at a class, let the instructor know before-hand. If attendance is very poor, assignments may not be accepted by the instructor. The same holds true if a paper is seriously late without a legitimate (in the instructor's opinion) reason. This includes any paper or graded activity in the course, including the final paper and the final exam. This measure will only be inflicted after having given a warning; however, if you simply never come to class, do not expect to get much sympathy at the end of the term when you want to hand in assignments.

LATE PAPERS: As mentioned above, late papers are not accepted in this course, due to the fact that there is already some leeway built in, that is, only the top 5 grades of the 7 papers will be used.

EXAM DATE CHANGES: Exam dates cannot be changed simply to accommodate travel schedules. I am especially unsympathetic if someone buys a plane ticket first, and comes later to argue that I must change an exam date to accommodate it. If there are other reasons that you think might be legitimate, please see the instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: We will discuss the nature of academic honesty in class, but a note here is warranted. Basically, your work should be your own, and when you are drawing on the words, images, or ideas of others, this should be properly noted. What should be avoided?

- Handing in an identical (or substantially similar) paper to another person in the class.
- Using a paper from another student (e.g., a former student, or a paper from an internet paper mill).
- Using any information from a book or an internet site without proper referencing.

If you have any question about how to properly complete an assignment, please see me.