

# PHIL 1010: Fundamentals of Philosophy

Spring 2017 (Class #11668), Tue. and Th. 1:30–2:50pm, Ellis Hall 214

## BASIC INFORMATION

*Instructor* Dr. Yoichi Ishida (pronounced “yo-EE-chee ee-SHEE-da”)  
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 Mailbox: Ellis Hall 202  
 Instructor website: [www.yoichiishida.com](http://www.yoichiishida.com)

*Office & Office Hours* Ellis Hall 220H  
 Tuesdays and Thursdays 3–4pm and by appointment

*Course Website* Blackboard: <https://blackboard.ohio.edu>  
 Facebook group (by invitation only)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Topic of the Course* This is an introduction to philosophical issues and methods. We will read contemporary works on epistemology (theory of knowledge), moral philosophy, moral psychology, and philosophy of life.

*Learning Outcomes* Upon successful completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Describe several important philosophical questions to be presented in the course.
2. Describe several positions one might take in response to each of these questions and arguments in favor of as well as some key objections to those positions.
3. Analyze and evaluate arguments for and against various positions discussed in the course.

In order to help you achieve these outcomes, I will list specific weekly learning objectives on Blackboard. I will design all in-class and out-of-class assignments to assess your performance on these outcomes and weekly learning objectives. In other words, you will be tested on *and only on* the course learning outcomes listed below and weekly learning objectives to be posted on Blackboard.

*Prerequisites* None.

*Workload* This is a three-credit course, and on average, you should expect to study about 6 to 9 hours per week *outside* of class. This includes reading, writing, and all the other work associated with the course.

*Disclaimer* Although the learning outcomes are designed to be suitable for a lower-division undergraduate course and can be achieved by most students, students may still vary in their competency and performance levels on these learning outcomes. They can expect to achieve these objectives *only if* they honor all course policies, attend and participate in classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of them as students.

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## TEXTBOOKS

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You must have your personal copies of the required books listed below as well as other required readings to be posted on Blackboard. You must bring your copies of a week's required readings to class. Note that these books are also available on reserve at the library.

Jennifer Nagel. *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN-10: 019966126X.

Kwame Anthony Appiah. *Experiments in Ethics*. Harvard University Press, 2008. ISBN-10: 0674034570.

Samuel Scheffler. *Death and the Afterlife*. Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN-10: 019046917X.

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## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

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The assignments listed below are required in this course. They count toward your final grade as described in this section.

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## ASSIGNMENTS

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*Facebook Discussion* 20% of your final grade will derive from your participation in online discussion in our Facebook group. For detailed instructions and grading criteria, see a section on "Discussion on Facebook" below.

*Exams* There will be two (2) in-class midterm exams and one (1) *cumulative* final exam. All exams are closed book. Each midterm is worth 25% of your final grade and the final 30%. The questions on each exam may take various forms, including but not limited to true/false, multiple choice, and written answer (definition, explanation, essay, identification and discussion of key quotations, etc). Each question will be designed to assess your level of attainment of the learning outcomes and weekly learning objectives that each exam covers.

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## FINAL GRADE

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In summary, the available points for the assignments are distributed as follows:

Assignments	Weight (%)
Facebook Discussion	20
Midterm 1	25
Midterm 2	25
Final	30
Total	100

You will receive a final letter grade according to the following grading scale. Your percentage points will be rounded to the nearest one (e.g., 92.5 is rounded up to 93; 89.4 is rounded down to 89). Although not formalized in the table above, your improvements over the course of the semester and exceptionally good participation in lecture and discussion will count favorably toward your final grade.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93 or above	C	73–76
A–	90–92	C–	70–72
B+	87–89	D+	67–69
B	83–86	D	63–66
B–	80–82	D–	60–62
C+	77–79	F	59 or below

*You can expect to get an A only if you meet the course requirements and expectations in an exemplary manner and you demonstrate that you have attained the learning outcomes at a sophisticated level.*

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## COURSE POLICIES

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All students in this course are expected to comply with the following policies.

*Academic Integrity* Academic integrity and honesty are basic values of Ohio University. Students are expected to follow standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic misconduct is a violation of the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct subject to a maximum sanction of disciplinary suspension or expulsion as well as a grade penalty in the course.

You are expected to be familiar with the information on academic integrity provided at <http://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>.

*Electronic Devices* During class you may use laptops or tablets only to take notes or to view assigned readings, but you may not use any electronic devices, such as cellphones, tablets, and laptops, while you are taking exams in class.

- Turnitin* Students agree that by taking this course all required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.
- Attendance* Attendance is strongly encouraged, but will not be taken formally. But missing a class will impede your success in many ways. For example, if you miss lectures and in-class discussion, you will not be able to perform well on exams.
- Classroom Incivility* You are expected to behave in a civil manner, carefully listen to whoever is talking at a moment, and respect other people in class. I will not tolerate behaviors that are harmful to the learning of students, such as distracting your classmates' attention (e.g., by chatting with someone next to you), disrupting other people's speech, mocking or insulting other people, and showing general disrespect and poor manners toward other people in class. If you harm your classmates' learning in these ways, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Grade Disputes* If you believe that a grade on any specific assignment was in error, or unfair, you should resubmit that assignment, along with a brief cover note detailing those prima facie errors, or disagreement, together with appropriate evidence. The same procedure should be followed regarding the final grade. A request for re-grading or re-assessment is just that: the revised grade may increase, remain unchanged, or decrease. An explanation will be provided to the student in any case. Note that this policy does not apply to grade *calculation* errors, which should be brought to my attention right away.
- Late or Missed Assignments & Exams* *Facebook Discussion:* Since you can participate in online discussion according to your schedule, there will be no makeup or extension on this.
- Exams:* A makeup exam can be arranged only in exceptional circumstances (see below). If you are scheduled for more than three final exams in one day, you may seek relief from the instructor with the examination scheduled *latest* in the day. For more on this procedure, see <https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/finals.cfm>. Note that the following will *not* be considered exceptional circumstances: a conflict with your personal travel plans or work schedules, your being unprepared for the exams, and your need to work on assignments for other courses.
- Exceptional circumstances:* The following are generally considered exceptional circumstances: a medical emergency, the death of a near relative, and a university-related trip (e.g., athletic team commitments). If you are in these circumstances, (i) obtain written documentation from a relevant authority (e.g., doctor, coach, etc.) verifying that you are/were in one of these circumstances, (ii)

contact me as soon as you can to set up an appointment, and (iii) show me the documentation. I will then decide how to apply the policy on late or missed assignments and exams to your circumstance, and I will make, by mutual agreement, any necessary makeup assignments or other arrangements.

*Extra Credit Assignments* There will be no extra credit assignments in this course.

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## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

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Your success in this course is important to me. I recognize that there are multiple ways to learn and that this multiplicity should be acknowledged in the structure of university courses and the evaluation of their participants. Thus, I encourage you to discuss your learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or at another arranged time, if necessary. It is best to do this as early as possible. Every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating learning experience, and you are strongly encouraged to use the services provided by the Academic Advancement Center and the Student Writing Center. Disabled students are also strongly encouraged to use the services provided by Student Accessibility Services, including the provision of note-takers, transcribers, and sign-language interpreters.

*Student Accessibility Services* Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and provide written documentation from Student Accessibility Services. If you are not yet registered as a student with a disability, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 740-593-2620 or visit the office in 348 Baker University Center.

*Academic Advancement Center* You can discuss any academic matters at the Academic Advancement Center, Alden Library 101, 740-593-2644 (<http://www.ohio.edu/aac/index.cfm>).

*Student Writing Center* Clear and well-organized writing is important for getting a good grade on journals and the exams in this course. You should consider visiting the Student Writing Center in Alden Library (2nd floor), 740-593-2646. You can schedule an appointment online at <http://www.ohio.edu/writing/>.

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## DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

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### How to Join our Facebook Group

First, you need a Facebook account. You may use any account you prefer as long as it displays your full name. Our group will be a closed group. To join our group, find our group at this address: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Philosophy1010/>. And then click “Join Group.” I will also email the link to your OU email.

### Terminology

*Original Post (OP)*: The first post of a thread, regardless of whether the post receives comments. You can make it by posting to the group.

*Comment*: A comment on an existing post. You can make it by replying to a post.

*Week*: Each week starts on Monday and ends on Sunday.

### Substance Requirement

Each OP and comment must be substantive to count towards your credit.

1. A substantive OP will be about 100 words long (or more if you need) and clearly describes *your own* thoughts and/or questions on an assigned reading. See the tips below.
2. A substantive comment will be about 50 words long (or more if you like) and constructively responds to *another student's* OP or comment in a thread.

Comments like “Good question,” “I thought the same thing,” etc are fine to make, but they *alone* do not satisfy the substance requirement.

### Grading Criteria

Each week starting January 23, you are to submit (i) an OP on the week’s readings and/or (ii) a comment on your classmate’s post. Your posts must meet the substance requirement above to count towards your credit. Your posts will be visible to everyone in the group. If you want to know whether your particular post meets the substance requirement, please just ask me.

To get a **B** on this assignment (17% toward your final grade), you must make at least six (6) OPs, *each in a different week and on that week's reading*, as well as at least eight (8) comments, each in a different week. You can of course make an OP and a comment in the same week.

To get **full credit** (20% toward your final grade), you must fulfill the criteria for a B listed above and make three (3) additional OPs (in any week on any reading).

A student who satisfies the criteria for a B but not those for full credit will be able to earn more than a B on this assignment. A student who fails to satisfy the criteria for a B will not be able to earn more than a C on this assignment. Such student will be graded according to how frequently he or she participated in online discussion and the quality of his or her posts.

### Record Keeping

Your substantive OPs and comments must remain visible until the end of the term in order for them to count toward your credit. If you delete or hide a post in the middle of the term, I will not be able to count it.

**Tips on OPs**

You will determine the focus of your OP. But in general you should find theories, arguments, or thought-experiments that you think are important or thought provoking, and evaluate or ask questions about them. To help guide your post, you might try to do the following: If your focus is on a theory, you can write about what the theory means and counter-examples to the theory, and why you do or do not find the theory attractive. If your focus is on an argument, you can write about what the premises and conclusion of the argument are, whether the premises are true, and whether the conclusion follows from the premises. If your focus is on a thought-experiment (that tests a theory), you can write about why the thought-experiment is a good or bad test of the theory in question, and propose an alternative thought-experiment.

Note that **an OP must be your reflection on the reading rather than merely a summary of the reading**. In other words, an OP should not be a series of “The author says this, and then she says that.” It should look like (for example): “The author says this, and I think one of the premises of her argument is that. But is this premise true? I think it does not seem to be true because . . .”

**Other Uses of Facebook**

You may use our Facebook group to ask quick questions, organize a study group, etc. But please do not use our group for things not relevant to the course.

**Civility and other policies**

All course policies listed on the syllabus apply to the online discussion. If you fail to behave in a civil manner, you will be asked to leave the online group.

**Privacy**

I will not share your private information with anyone, but it is your responsibility to set the privacy settings on Facebook if you want to hide certain information from the group.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

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The following is a tentative schedule of topics, reading, assignments, and their due dates. Supplementary readings may be assigned.

*You are expected to have done the assigned reading before each class.*

Wk	Date	Topics	Readings
<b>Unit 1. What is philosophy? How to do philosophy</b>			
1	Tue, Jan 10	Introduction What is philosophy? Value of philosophy	–
	Thu, Jan 12	Arguments and logic; how to read philosophy	<b>Jim Pryor</b> , “What is an argument?” and “Guidelines on reading philosophy” [Blackboard]
2	Tue, Jan 17	Arguments and logic (con’t) Methods of philosophy	<b>Pryor</b> , “Analyzing concepts” [Blackboard] <b>Philippa Foot</b> , “The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect” [Blackboard].
	Thu, Jan 19	Methods of philosophy	<b>Foot</b> (con’t)
<b>Unit 2. What is Knowledge?</b>			
3	Tue, Jan 24	What is knowledge?	<b>Jennifer Nagel</b> , <i>Knowledge</i> , Ch. 1.
	Thu, Jan 26	Con’t	Con’t
4	Tue, Jan 31	Analysis of knowledge Gettier problems	<b>Nagel</b> , <i>Knowledge</i> , Ch. 4. <b>Linda Zagzebski</b> , “The inescapability of Gettier problems” [Blackboard].
	Thu, Feb 2	Con’t	Con’t
5	Tue, Feb 7	Testimonial knowledge	<b>Nagel</b> , <i>Knowledge</i> , Ch. 6.
	Thu, Feb 9	Con’t	Con’t
6	Tue, Feb 14	Testimonial injustice	<b>Miranda Fricker</b> , <i>Epistemic Injustice</i> , Ch. 1 [Blackboard].
	Thu, Feb 16	Con’t	Con’t
7	Tue Feb 21	Intuitions about knowledge	<b>Nagel</b> , <i>Knowledge</i> , Ch. 8.
	Thu, Feb 23	<b>Exam 1</b>	–
<b>Unit 3. Moral philosophy and moral psychology</b>			
8	Tue Feb 28	Moral philosophy and moral psychology	<b>Elizabeth Anscombe</b> , “Modern Moral Philosophy” [Blackboard]. <b>Kwame Anthony Appiah</b> , <i>Experiments in Ethics</i> , pp. 1–32.
	Thu Mar 2	Con’t	<b>Rosalind Hursthouse</b> , “Virtue Ethics” [Blackboard]
<b>Spring Break: Mar 6-10</b>			

9	Tue Mar 14	Virtue ethics and moral psychology: The case against character	<b>Appiah</b> , <i>Experiments in Ethics</i> , pp. 33–72.
	Thu Mar 16	Con't	Con't
10	Tue Mar 21	The trolley problem and the use of intuitions in moral philosophy; The case against intuition	<b>Judith Jarvis Thomson</b> , “Killing, Letting Die, and the Trolley Problem” [Blackboard]. <b>Appiah</b> , <i>Experiments in Ethics</i> , pp. 73–120.
	Thu Mar 23	<b>Exam 2</b>	–
<b>Unit 4. Why do you invest in your life? Why do your life projects matter to you?</b>			
11	Tue Mar 28	What if you know that humans will go extinct shortly after your death? Would that change what you value in your life?	<b>Samuel Scheffler</b> , <i>Death and the Afterlife</i> , pp. 15–49.
	Thu Mar 30	Con't	Con't
12	Tue Apr 4	Con't	Con't
	Thu Apr 6	How we relate to the future humanity	<b>Scheffler</b> , <i>Death and the Afterlife</i> , pp. 51–81.
13	Tue Apr 11	Con't	Con't
	Thu Apr 13	Con't	Con't
14	Tue Apr 18	What we <i>ought</i> to do in the doomsday scenario	<b>Susan Wolf</b> , “The Significance of Doomsday,” pp. 113–129 of the Scheffler book.
	Thu Apr 20	Con't	Con't

**Final Exam: Tuesday, April 25, 12:20–2:20pm, in Ellis 214 (usual classroom)**

*Disclaimer* The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

*Copyright* The lectures, classroom activities, and all materials associated with this class and developed by the instructor are copyrighted in the name of Yoichi Ishida on this date January 10, 2017.