

Introduction to Philosophy
PHIL-1010, 3 credits
Fall 2021

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:00–10:50am (Section 1010-01) and 11:00–11:50am (Section 1010-05)
Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, B12

Instructor: Josh Mund (he)

Office: 105E Newcomb Hall

Office Hours: **Via Zoom** (available in Canvas), Wednesdays 1:00–2:00pm; Thursdays 12:00–1:00pm.

Please feel very free to attend office hours, or to email me to set up a different time. You can also email me with questions about the course material; often these kinds of questions are better answered by having a conversation, in which case I will ask you to bring it up in class or to come to office hours. But when feasible I will answer content questions by email.

Contact: jmund@tulane.edu

Course Description

In this course we will examine four philosophical topics:

1. The nature of knowledge and the extent to which we can gain knowledge,
2. Arguments for and against the existence of God,
3. Metaethics (the nature of morality), ethical theory (in particular, whether everyone has a moral obligation to maximize overall happiness), and applied ethics (in particular, our moral obligations to animals),
4. The existence of free will and moral responsibility.

This is a 3-credit course that has no prerequisites.

Course Objectives: At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explain and defend your position on each of the four topics listed in the course description. For example, if at the end of the course you take the cosmological argument to be strong evidence that God exists, you will be able to explain that argument and defend it from various objections.
- Read an argument presented in prose and reconstruct that argument in a logically valid form.
- Construct a written argument that presents a thesis, provides evidence in support of that thesis, and responds to objections.
- Participate constructively in discussion on complicated topics.

Program-Level Outcomes (Major/Minor)

This course counts to the elective course distribution for the philosophy major or minor.

Core Curriculum Outcomes

This course counts for the core curriculum requirements of Global Perspectives, Textual & Historic Perspectives and Writing Tier-1.

Weekly Schedule

This class meets 3 times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), for 50 minutes. On Mondays and Wednesdays, class will be more or less “lecture-based,” meaning that I will clarify and expand on the ideas found in the reading. Although I will be doing a good deal of talking on these days, I hope and expect that you will ask lots of questions and pose objections in response to my comments. Additionally, during these lecture-based class meetings, there will be time for you to review and discuss the material in small groups. These groups will be made up of 3–4 students each and you will work with the same small group throughout the semester (or perhaps until half-way through the semester, if we decide it would be fun or useful to create new groups).

On Fridays you all will take a greater responsibility for leading the direction of the class and for carrying the discussion. This may take a variety of forms, e.g.: everyone brings a written question about the week’s material

to class and we try to answer or refine each other's questions; or, in small groups, each person attempts to defend one of the philosophical claims that we've discussed and then attempts to defend *the opposite position*. I encourage your suggestions about what form of discussion is working well and what other ways of arranging discussion might be useful.

You should expect to spend about 3 hours outside of class working on course material for every hour spent in class (see suggested weekly schedule below).

Classroom Rules

COVID policies

As long as the university mask requirement is in place, everyone is required to wear a properly fitted, university-approved face mask at all times while in the classroom. I recognize that this is onerous, but I will strictly enforce this policy. If you need to have a drink of water or remove your mask for some other reason—even for a moment—please step outside before removing your mask.

If and when the mask requirement ends, you are permitted drink water, coffee, etc., and to bring something to eat in class, if it will not disturb others. Please take advantage of this policy only when you have a good reason to (for example, you have 3 classes in a row on Monday and having a quick snack will help you focus).

Electronics

I recognize how easy it is to be distracted by your phone and other electronics in class; I have that difficulty myself. In light of that, I encourage you to make a commitment to yourself not to use electronics in this class for anything besides taking notes. Focusing on the material in this way will help you get much more out of the class. And, I'm excited to hear what each of you thinks about the material that we'll be studying, so I hope that you'll be fully engaged with me and with your classmates, rather than splitting your attention between your phone and the rest of us. However, recognizing that you are all adults who should be allowed to make your own decisions, at this point I don't plan to prohibit electronics in class. However, please make sure your phone and other electronics are silenced and not disturbing classmates in any other way. If someone else's behavior—their use of electronics or something else—is interfering with your learning, please politely bring it up with them, and then speak to me if that does not resolve the issue.

Respectful Discussion

Very often we will disagree with each other about the topics covered in this class. This is to be expected and even welcomed (you are especially welcome to disagree with me). Hearing the reasons that other people have for their positions—positions that are different than yours—gives you an opportunity to reflect on what you think is true and either (a) change your position, based on the reasons presented by others, or (b) understand why the other person's reasons are not persuasive. Either way, you can leave the experience with a better understanding of the issue.

While disagreement is welcome, it's very important to discuss these issues in a way that is highly respectful to others in the class. Some specific ways to do this are the following: listen carefully when other people are talking, never interrupt or speak out of turn, refrain from using sarcasm or humor that comes at someone else's expense, or at the expense of their position. Note that it is perfectly possible to explain why you think someone's position is mistaken without showing disrespect in any of the ways just mentioned.

Here is a final point that may help promote respectful discussion. A useful way to think about discussion and debate is that we are all engaged in a group project together, and the goal of that project is to figure out *the truth* regarding a particular topic. If our goal is to figure out what is true about the course topics, then people who disagree with us become valuable allies: hearing and understanding their position may help us understand why we were mistaken (or why they were mistaken). In contrast, it's less productive to approach discussion and debate as an attempt to "win the argument." Please do *argue* for the position that you think is correct, but try to do so with a willingness to hear where your thinking may have gone wrong.

Required Student Resources

There is no required textbook; all readings will be made available on Canvas. Sometimes I may ask you to bring a hardcopy of the reading with you to class.

Assignments and Grading:

Assignments:

- Reading Response (RR) Questions (20% of final grade); due at 11:59pm the night before class
 - In general, there will be reading assigned for each class that falls on a Monday or Wednesday; there will generally not be new reading on Fridays. I will post a reading question for each day that has assigned reading (approximately 20 times throughout the semester). These questions will ask you about the “big picture” of what the author is getting at in the reading. Regarding the length of your response, 150 words is a good ballpark, however there will be questions that can be answered more briefly and some that require more. Please note that the readings are challenging; you should expect to read each one slowly and more than once. However, responses that show a serious effort to understand the subject matter will receive full credit. I hope and expect that everyone will get full credit on nearly every response. You must respond to 17 reading questions across the semester; in other words, you can skip 3 with no penalty.
- 4 Quizzes/Exams, 1 for each topic (35% of final grade)
 - Some combination of short-essay, short-answer, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank questions
- 2 short papers (15% and 20% of final grade)
 - During the semester, you’ll write two essays (the first approximately 1,000 words, the second approximately 1,200 words).
- Interview Assignment (10%)
 - 3 times during the semester I will ask you to have a conversation with someone outside of our course (friend, family member, coworker, random person you meet in the library, etc.) about the things that we are studying. During the interview, you will describe some of the issues we have discussed and then gather the other person’s opinions on those topics. I will provide you with some questions to ask, which you are welcome to modify or supplement. I hope that this will lead to interesting conversations and a better understanding of the material.
- Extra credit: 3 instances of studying with your small group (1% bump to your final grade)
 - I encourage you to study regularly with other students in your small group. Hearing the material presented by someone else, and—even better—trying to explain the material to someone else are excellent ways to improve your own understanding and to retain what you’ve learned. A 1% increase in the final grade will be given to everyone who meets to study the material in this class with members of their small group 3 times during the semester, for at least 1 hour each meeting (though I encourage you to review the material much more often—weekly or every other week is a great idea).

If your overall percentage is at least a(n)...	93	90	87	83	80	77	73	70	67	63	60
Your grade will be at least a(n)...	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-

Attendance

Attendance is strongly encouraged but is not required.

Remote Course Policies

Attending class via Zoom is permitted only in special circumstances such as COVID isolation or other medical events, or important non-academic commitments that prevent you from attending in person. Please let me know several days in advance—if possible—that you would like to attend class via Zoom.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

	Topics	Reading
Week 1		
M 8/23	Introduction	---
W 8/25	Logic	---
F 8/27	Logic	---

<u>MODULE 1: EPISTEMOLOGY</u>		
Week 2 M 8/30	Global Skepticism	Selection from Rene Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> Wireless Philosophy Epistemology videos 2: https://youtu.be/PqjdRAERWLC
W 9/1	Descartes's Solution, JTB Analysis of Knowledge	
F 9/3		
Week 3 M 9/6	Labor Day—No Class	Optional: watch <i>The Matrix</i> , if you haven't seen it; next week there will be spoilers.
W 9/8	Modern Responses to Global Skepticism: Externalism	Wireless Philosophy Epistemology: Analyzing Knowledge #3 (Causal and Reliability Theories): https://youtu.be/3z8sDiaY65Y Selections from Laurence Bonjour, "Externalist Theories of Empirical Knowledge"
F 9/10		
Week 4 M 9/13	Modern Responses to Global Skepticism: Radical Metaphysics	David Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics"
W 9/15		
F 9/17		
Week 5 M 9/20		Epistemology (& Logic) Exam Paper 1 Assignment Posted
<u>MODULE 2: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION</u>		
W 9/22	The Cosmological Argument	William Rowe, "The Cosmological Argument"
F 9/24		Interview 1 Due
Week 6 M 9/27	The Design Argument	William Paley, "The Evidence of Design"
W 9/29		Elliott Sober, "Lecture 6: Evolution and Creationism," in <i>Core Questions in Philosophy</i> TBA on Irreducible Complexity
F 10/1		
Week 7 M 10/4	In-Class Peer Review Activity	Paper 1 Draft Due (Submit on Canvas <i>and</i> bring hardcopy to class)
W 10/6	The Problem of Evil	Section of "The Logical Problem of Evil", <i>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>
F 10/8	Fall Break—No Class	
Week 8 M 10/11		John Hick, "Soul-Making and Suffering." Paper 1 Final Draft Due (on Canvas)

W 10/13		Section of “The Evidential Problem of Evil,” <i>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> Steven Cahn, “Problem of Goodness,” in <i>The Elements of Philosophy</i>
F 10/15		
Week 9 M 10/18		Philosophy of Religion Exam
<u>MODULE 3: ETHICS</u>		
W 10/20	Metaethics: Ethical Relativism	Russ Shafer-Landau, “Ethical Relativism,” 289–99, taken from <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>
F 10/22		Interview 2 Due
Week 10 M 10/25	Ethical Theory: Utilitarianism	Russ Shafer-Landau, “Consequentialism,” 117–28, taken from <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>
W 10/27		Sterling Harwood, “Eleven Objections to Utilitarianism,” taken from <i>Moral Philosophy: A Reader</i> . Philippa Foot, “Some Cases”
F 10/29		
Week 11 M 11/1	Applied Ethics: Against Eating Animal Products	Alistair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People” Selection from <i>The CAFO Reader</i>
W 11/3	Eating Humane Animal Products	R. G. Frey, “Moral standing, the Value of Lives, and Speciesism”
F 11/5		
Week 12 M 11/8		Ethics Exam Paper 2 Assignment Posted
<u>MODULE 4: FREE WILL</u>		
W 11/10	The Threat of Determinism	James Rachels, “The Case Against Free Will”/“The Debate over Free Will,” 94–99 & 109–15, in <i>Problems from Philosophy</i>
F 11/12		
Week 13 M 11/15	Is <i>Indeterminism</i> any better?	Peter van Inwagen, “The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom,” 189–195 in <i>Free Will</i>
W 11/17	Libertarian Free Will	Roderick M. Chisolm, “Human Freedom and the Self,” in <i>On Metaphysics</i>
F 11/19		
11/22–11/28	Thanksgiving Break–No Class	
Week 14 M 11/29	Compatibilism	James Rachels, “The Debate Over Free Will,” 115–18 Meghan Griffith, “Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities,” 30–41 in <i>Free Will: The Basics</i>

		Interview 3 Due
W 12/1	Compatibilism and Neuroscience	Benjamin Libet, “Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action,” <i>Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i> Eddie Nahmias, “Is Neuroscience the Death of Free Will?” <i>NYTimes</i>
F 12/3		
Week 15 M 12/6	Objections to Compatibilism Life Without Free Will	Galen Strawson, “The Impossibility of Ultimate Moral Responsibility,” in <i>The Philosophy of Free Will</i> TBA
W 12/8		
F 12/10		Free Will Exam
		Paper 2 Final Draft Due Monday 12/13

Time Management: Suggested Course Rhythm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Attend Class		Attend Class		Attend Class
Reading (~1.5 hours) Respond to reading question (~30 minutes)	Review Monday’s material Ask/write down any questions that come up (~30-45 minutes)	Reading and respond to reading question (if there is one); Otherwise, work on papers, interview assignment, study for exams (~2 hours)	Review Wednesday’s material Ask/write down any questions that come up (~30-45 minutes)	Work on papers, interview assignment, study for exams (~2 hours)	Review Friday’s discussion; ask/write down any questions that come up (~30-45 minutes)
			Office Hours 1:00-2:00pm (via Zoom)	Office Hours 12:00-1:00pm (via Zoom)	

This is *one* possible way of planning your work in the course. Treat this as a starting point for you to adjust to fit your circumstances.

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Tulane University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. Instead, to establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **Goldman Center contact information:** goldman@tulane.edu; (504) 862-8433; accessibility.tulane.edu

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

Specific Comments Regarding Phil 1010:

- Regarding responses to reading questions, there is no rule against discussing the reading with other people in the class before responding to the question, if you would like to. However, you should write your response on your own without input from others.
- I encourage you to discuss your papers with other people in the class. But the writing, revising, and editing (apart from proof-reading for typos) should be done entirely by you. You should not discuss your papers with someone who has a lot of experience in philosophy; it wouldn't be fair—and it would not be good for your development as a thinker—for you to get an interesting idea for your paper from someone you know who has taken many philosophy classes, for example. And, regardless of who you discuss your paper with, if one of the ideas that ends up in your paper came from someone else, you must indicate that by citing the person in your paper.
- Studying with others for exams is encouraged. Of course, during the exams themselves, you may not consult anyone else or any materials.
- If you have any questions about this policy in general or about specific cases, I'm always happy to discuss.

Religious Accommodation Policy

Both Tulane's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of religion and our core values of diversity and inclusion require instructors to make reasonable accommodations to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is never acceptable for an instructor to compel a student to choose between religious observance and academic work. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. It is the obligation of the student to provide faculty within the first two weeks of each semester their intent to observe the holiday so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. Exceptions to the requirement of a make-up examination must be approved in advance by the dean of the school in which the course is offered. A [religious calendar](#) is available.

Title IX:

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at [allin.tulane.edu](#). Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either "Confidential" or "Private" as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at [tulane.edu/concerns](#).

Confidential	Private
<p><i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277 ▪ The Line (24/7) (504) 264-6074 ▪ Student Health Center (504) 865-5255 ▪ Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) (504) 654-9543 	<p><i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case Management & Victim Support Services (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu ▪ Tulane University Police (TUPD) Uptown - (504) 865-5911 Downtown – (504) 988-5531 ▪ Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration (504) 865-5611 or msmith76@tulane.edu ▪ Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7) (504) 920-9900

Emergency Preparedness & Response:

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS: TU ALERT	SEVERE WEATHER
<p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and/or phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens ▪ Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given ▪ Do not use elevators ▪ Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe <p>Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event</p>
ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER	EVERBRIDGE APP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>RUN</u> – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible ▪ <u>HIDE</u> – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT ▪ <u>FIGHT</u> – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort ▪ For more information or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Download the Everbridge app from the App Store or Google Play store ▪ The Report feature allows you to silently and discreetly communicate with TUPD dispatchers ▪ The SOS button allows you to notify TUPD if you need help ▪ The Safe Corridor button serves as a virtual escort and allows you to send check-in notifications to TUPD

From: Tulane Office of emergency preparedness and response

Note: There may be changes to the syllabus. I will announce changes on Canvas.