

**Phil 2010**  
**Fundamentals of Philosophy**

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***Course Description:***

An introduction to the principal problems with which philosophy is concerned: methods of inquiry; principles of critical reasoning; analysis of values and value systems; appraisals and analyses of basic beliefs and attitude. Emphasis is on the contribution of important movements and major philosophers and on the relevance of philosophy to religious, political, social, ethical, and/or scientific issues.

***VSU General Education Outcomes:***

- #2. Students will demonstrate cross-cultural perspectives and knowledge of other societies.
- #4. Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening.
- #7. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written and visual materials.
- #8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems.

***Philosophy Selected Educational Outcomes:***

- 1. To encourage an understanding of central issues, topics and philosophers in the history of philosophy, from the ancient to the modern periods.
- 2. To develop students' abilities to think, write, and speak critically and logically.
- 3. To enable students to challenge their own ideas and to develop self-understanding in the context of a diverse range of ideas which inform contemporary controversies and social conflict.
- 4. To enable students to engage in independent philosophical research, and to be responsible for communicating their understanding of the issues researched and developed, including a working familiarity with current research methods.

***Course Outcomes:***

- 1. You will be able to understand the distinctions among the various sub-fields of philosophy, including epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics as comprising basic branches of the discipline.
- 2. You will be able to recognize how philosophical inquiry applies to 'realworld' circumstances and to individual reflection on the meaning of life.
- 3. You will become conversant with the history of philosophy. The course emphasizes Western philosophy in particular, including such significant development as empiricism, materialism, idealism, rationalism, pragmatism,

and existentialism.

4. You will be able to recognize and define different worldviews, adopting a reasonably viable one and justifying it in a philosophically informed way that emphasizes critical reasoning and argument.

5. You will be familiar with what academic philosophy is, and you will understand how it can be applied to daily life as well as specific careers.

***Special Needs:***

Students requiring classroom accommodations or modification because of a documented disability should discuss this need with me at the beginning of the semester. If you are such a student, but are not registered with the Special Services Program, you should contact the Special Services office in Powell Hall. The phone number there is 245-2498.

***Academic Honesty:***

Students in this course are held to the highest levels of academic honesty. Plagiarism or otherwise unethical behavior will not be tolerated. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult the student handbook, or ask your professor. Violations of policy on academic honesty and integrity will be dealt with as per established University procedure. See for reference,

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

***Attendance:***

Because of the nature of this course, attendance is required. Students missing more than two classes, without an approved excuse, may be subject to a drop in grade. The professor determines excused and unexcused.

***Reading List:***

The pace of this course will be determined by the abilities of the students. Assignments will be given in class. The dates of the exams will also be based on the pace of student understanding. These dates will also be given in class at least one week in advance. An initial schedule outline is given below for student reference.

***Late Work:***

Students must complete all homework on time unless approved by the professor. All quizzes and tests must be taken on time unless approved by the professor. Late assignments, quizzes or tests must be made up within two weeks of original date.

***Cell Phones:***

Because some students have family responsibilities, cell phones will be allowed in class. As the ring of a phone is disruptive, phones should be placed on silent ring. **NO** text messaging will be allowed in class. If you must communicate with someone by phone, you need to leave the classroom.

***Evaluations:***

This course is part of a pilot project this semester, testing a new online Student Opinion

of Instruction (SOI) form. Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. Rather than completing these evaluations during class time, students will need to access evaluation forms via BANNER and complete them.

***Text:***

Fifty Readings Plus: an introduction to philosophy by Donald C. Abel

***Grades:***

Friday group work 100 pts.  
Take-home mid-term and final 100 pts ea.  
Participation/in-class projects 50 pts  
Reading Quizzes as needed  
Total points: 350 plus reading quizzes

***Mid-term and Final:***

The mid-term and final will be take-home tests. The students will be given the questions one week before they are due. Late tests will not be allowed without an approved excuse.

***Reading Assignment***

**Week 1:** Introduction & Meaning of Philosophy  
**Week 2: Philosophy of Religion** readings 3,4,5,6,7  
**Week 3:** readings 8,9,10  
**Week 4: Theories of Knowledge** readings 13,14,15,16  
**Week 5:** readings 17,18,19  
**Week 6: Philosophy of Mind** readings 20,21  
**Week 7:** 24,25,26 *Test 1 due*  
**Week 8: Group Project Week**  
**Week 9: Free Will and Determinism** readings 28,29,30  
**Week 10:** readings 31,32  
**Week 11: Ethics** readings 33,35,36  
**Week 12:** readings 38,39,41  
**Week 13: Group Project Week**  
**Week 14: Political and Social Philosophy** readings 45,46,47  
**Week 15:** readings 48,49,50  
**Week 16:** Alternative Philosophies TBA  
**Week 17:** Finals