

PHI 137 - Minds & Brains - Fall 2021 - F2F

The most-frequently consulted page of a syllabus is the course schedule. So I put that first.

W	Aug 18th	Introductory Meeting
F	Aug 20th	René Descartes, selections from <i>Meditation 2</i> and <i>Meditation 6</i>
M	Aug 23rd	What is Philosophy?
W	Aug 25th	You Have Taken a Financial Risk
F	Aug 27th	Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, <i>Correspondence with Descartes</i> (w/ reading guide) Jennifer McWeeny, <i>Princess Elisabeth and the Mind-Body Problem</i> (optional)
M	Aug 30th	College is Harder, So Learn Study Skills
W	Sep 1st	Gilbert Ryle, <i>Descartes' Myth</i> (w/ reading guide)
F	Sep 3rd	Work Efficiently
M	Sep 6th	No classes at UNCG - Labor Day
W	Sep 8th	Make Your Courses Easy
F	Sep 10th	David Armstrong, <i>The Nature of Mind</i> (w/ reading guide)
M	Sep 13th	Hillary Putnam, <i>Brains and Behavior</i> (w/ reading guide)
W	Sep 15th	more Hillary Putnam, <i>Brains and Behavior</i> (w/ reading guide)
F	Sep 17th	Try to Actually Learn
M	Sep 20th	How to Read a Syllabus
W	Sep 22nd	How to Maintain a Calendar (and Have a Happy Life)
F	Sep 24th	U.T. Place, <i>Is Consciousness a Brain Process?</i> (w/ reading guide)
M	Sep 27th	more U.T. Place, <i>Is Consciousness a Brain Process?</i> (w/ reading guide)
W	Sep 29th	How to Defeat Procrastination (Yes, Really, with Motivation Harvesting)
F	Oct 1st	Adam Bradley, <i>A Primer on Multiple Realizability and Functionalism</i>
M	Oct 4th	more Adam Bradley, <i>A Primer on Multiple Realizability and Functionalism</i>
W	Oct 6th	How Much to Read for College Courses
F	Oct 8th	This class does not meet - <u>Midterm Exam Due (online) at 11:59pm</u>
M	Oct 11th	No classes at UNCG - Fall Break
W	Oct 13th	How to *Retain* What You Read
F	Oct 15th	John Searle, <i>Can Computers Think?</i>
M	Oct 18th	more John Searle, <i>Can Computers Think?</i>
W	Oct 20th	How to Memorize
F	Oct 22nd	more How to Memorize
M	Oct 25th	This class does not meet - Instructor out of town

W	Oct 27th	Austin Andrews, <i>A Primer on Inverted Qualia</i> Martine Nida-Rümelin, <i>Pseudonormal Vision</i> (optional)
F	Oct 29th	more Austin Andrews, <i>A Primer on Inverted Qualia</i>
M	Nov 1st	How to Take Notes
W	Nov 3rd	Thomas Nagel, <i>What Is it Like to Be a Bat?</i>
F	Nov 5th	Beware of Self-Sabotage
M	Nov 8th	Maintain Intellectual Endurance
W	Nov 10th	Frank Jackson, <i>Epiphenomenal Qualia</i> (w/ reading guide)
F	Nov 12th	Interacting with Professors - Office Hours, Email Etiquette, Letters of Recommendation, etc.
M	Nov 15th	Use College Resources - Writing Center, Mental Health Resources, Advising, etc.
W	Nov 17th	David Chalmers, <i>The Puzzle of Consciousness</i>
F	Nov 19th	Knowing When to Quit
M	Nov 22nd	Amy Kind, <i>Chalmers' Zombie Argument</i>
W	Nov 24th	No classes at UNCG - Thanksgiving Break
F	Nov 26th	No classes at UNCG - Thanksgiving Break
M	Nov 29th	Personal Financial Literacy
W	Dec 1st	Review for Final Exam
	Dec 8th	<u>Final Exam Due (online) at 11:59pm</u>

COURSE NUMBER: PHI 137
COURSE TITLE: Minds & Brains
SEMESTER: Fall 2021
CREDITS: 3 Credits
PREREQUISITES: None
FOR WHOM PLANNED: For first-year college students with minimal philosophical experience

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Jeffrey Kaplan

Office: 232 Curry

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Office Hours: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I will be holding office hours on zoom. I am more than happy to meet with you. Please email me for an appointment.

DESCRIPTION:

What exactly are thoughts, desires, emotions, memories, or sensations? How are these mental phenomena related to events in the physical world? Do people have an immortal soul that lives on after their body dies? Or is all conscious mental experience reducible to neurons firing in the brain? We will attempt to answer each of these questions—we will be answering these questions for ourselves—but we will be guided by reading the work of long-dead as well as currently living philosophers. This course also aims to facilitate personal and academic development. You will learn how to write an email to your professors, how to read the material for your other college courses, how to study *efficiently* for exams, and how to take advantage of the services and support provided by UNCG.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

(Students do not have to read this section of the syllabus.)

1. Develop academic skills in order to demonstrate the ability to identify and use campus services and resources (e.g. Library, Writing Center, Speaking Center).
2. Develop goals and plans related to personal purpose, interests, or values between self and community.
3. Build connections between self and community relationships with peers, faculty, and staff. (e.g., UNCG, college/student/department, special interest group, social/leadership/service initiative).
4. Critically evaluate information and media sources in a variety of formats.
5. Incorporate and cite sources accurately and correctly.
6. Develop the ability to distinguish the argument given for philosophical position from the position itself.
7. Compare the principles at the center of first-order philosophical theories.

8. Apply first-order philosophical theories to individual cases.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

Final Grades in this course are determined according to the following breakdown:

1. Beginning-of-Lecture Quizzes (35%)
2. Midterm Exam (30%)
3. Final Exam (35%)

Constructive, thoughtful, enthusiastic, and polite class participation will be used to ‘bump up’ borderline grades.

Beginning-of-Lecture Quizzes:

Whenever there is a new reading for a day of class (indicated in **bold** on the course schedule at the beginning of this syllabus), class will begin that day with an electronic reading quiz.

Why?

These quizzes ensure that everyone does the reading, and is therefore prepared to have a productive discussion.

What does “electronic quiz” mean?

The students go to b.socrative.com on any internet browser. Questions are displayed in the front of the class, and students input their answers on their devices. The responses are recorded and displayed—anonously—in front of the room. We then discuss the answers. Altogether, the quiz takes 10 minutes. We will do a practice quiz the first day.

What will the questions be like?

The questions are multiple choice. Most of them are designed to be very easy if you have done the reading and impossible if you have not. A small percentage of the questions require you to not only have done the reading, but to have understood it.

Are there other details that you could not naturally fit into this question-and-answer format?

The quizzes serve as a de-facto way of taking attendance. When calculating your final grade, your lowest 2 quiz grades will be dropped.

Exams:

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. These will be conducted through Canvas. More details about the exams will be distributed in class during the semester.

Final letter grades will be calculated using the following grading scale:

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%

C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 % to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 % to 0.0%

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All of the readings for the course will be printed in a ‘course packet’ that can be purchased from the UNCG bookstore, in the Elliott University Center, for *less than \$15*. You must have a physical, printed copy of the course packet, and you must bring it to class.

Why?

Because we will be referring to the readings in class, and you cannot use electronic devices during class. In particular, you need a printed copy of the first reading by the time we discuss it in class. If you are reading this on the first day of class, then that is soon!

Is there a lot of reading for this course?

No. But also, yes. This is an introductory course, and the readings are appropriate for first-time philosophy students. Some of the readings are short (in some cases, only a few paragraphs). But they are dense and may be more difficult than what you are accustomed to reading. It is not unreasonable to read a text three or four times, put it aside, and later read it several more times.

There are things in this course packet called “reading guides.” What are they?

The reading guides are documents that I have written to help make the readings easier to understand. They include definitions of obscure terms, and tells you which sections of the reading are most important. They will also tell you that you should skip certain portions of the reading altogether. So the reading guide comes before the actual reading, and you should read the reading guide first!

Oh, I get it. So the reading guides are like summaries of the readings.

No. When writing the reading guides, my aim is to *guide* you through the reading, not explain it to you. The reading guides make it easier to understand the reading, but they won’t tell you what happens in the reading itself. If you try to take the quiz at the beginning of class having only read the reading guide, you will probably fail.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Students are expected to abide by the UNCG Honor Code. For all major assignments, students will be required to sign the university’s academic integrity policy.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will not be taking attendance, but coming to class regularly is essential to success in this course. Moreover, the beginning-of-lecture quizzes function to impose an attendance policy of sorts.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY:

Students are not permitted to use any electronic devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) during class.

- *Why?*

Here is a list of *real things that I actually witnessed* students do on the internet during lecture:

- Browsed Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Shopped for boots (did not make a purchase)
- Googled “how to focus in class”
- Booked round-trip ticket to Paris
- Read half of the Wikipedia entry on Plato
- Played first-person shooter game

No one comes to lecture planning to play a video game. But listening to a lengthy philosophical lecture is difficult and requires a good deal of focus. Inevitably, students zone out. This is the crucial moment: will they listen with even greater focus and figure out what they missed while continuing to take in the new information, or will they give up? Access to the internet makes giving up almost irresistible.

- *Are there any exceptions to this policy?*

Yes, the only exceptions are (a) if you have a relevant disability with official documentation by the UNCG Office of Accessibility and Services and (b) for the beginning-of-lecture quizzes, explained above.

OFFICIAL COVID POLICY STATEMENT FROM UNCG:

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG’s culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Following face-covering guidelines
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.