

PHI 138 - Good & Evil - Spring 2022 - F2F

This syllabus comes to you in 3 parts.

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

Tue	Jan 11th	Introductory Meeting
Thr	Jan 13th	Jeremy Bentham, <i>Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</i>, Ch. 1
Tue	Jan 18th	What is Philosophy?
Thr	Jan 20th	Motivation for Doing Well in College: How Student Loans Work & Why You Will Need Study Skills
Tue	Jan 25th	Jeremy Bentham, <i>Offenses Against One's Self</i>, selection
Thr	Jan 27th	Study Skills: Work Efficiently & Make Your Courses Easy
Tue	Feb 1st	J.J.C. Smart, <i>Utilitarianism and Justice</i> (from <i>Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics</i>)
Thr	Feb 3rd	Study Skills: I Know it Sounds Crazy, But Try to Actually Learn
Tue	Feb 8th	Peter Singer, <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i>
Thr	Feb 10th	Study Skills: How to Read a Syllabus & Maintain a Calendar
Tue	Feb 15th	Onora O'Neill, <i>Kant on Treating People as Ends In Themselves</i>
Thr	Feb 17th	Study Skills: How to Defeat Procrastination (Yes, Really, with Motivation Harvesting)
Tue	Feb 22nd	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book I, selections
Thr	Feb 24th	Study Skills: How Much You Have to Read for College Courses & How to *Retain* What You Read
Tue	Mar 1st	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>, First Essay, selections
Thr	Mar 3rd	Study Skills: How to Memorize
	Mar 4th	<u>Midterm Exam Due (online) at 11:59pm</u>
Tue	Mar 8th	Spring Break - No classes at UNCG
Thr	Mar 10th	Spring Break - No classes at UNCG
Tue	Mar 15th	A.J. Ayer, <i>Language, Truth, and Logic</i>, Chapter 6, selection
Thr	Mar 17th	Study Skills: How to Take Notes
Tue	Mar 22nd	David Hume, <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i>, Book III, Part 1, §1, selections.
Thr	Mar 24th	Bernard Williams, <i>Interlude: Relativism</i> (from <i>Morality: An Introduction to Ethics</i>)
Tue	Mar 29th	Additional Miscellaneous Advice: Personal Financial Literacy - Part 1 of 2
Thr	Mar 31st	John Locke, <i>Two Treatises of Government</i>, Book II, Chapter 2, Sections 4 & 6
Tue	Apr 5th	Additional Miscellaneous Advice: Personal Financial Literacy - Part 2 of 2
Thr	Apr 7th	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
Tue	Apr 12th	Russ Shafer-Landau, <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?</i>, Chapters 2 & 11
Thr	Apr 14th	Instructor out of town for Passover - No Class
Tue	Apr 19th	Instructor out of town for Passover - No Class
Thr	Apr 21st	Barbara MacKinnon & Andrew Fiala, <i>Reasons Supporting Ethical Relativism</i>
Tue	Apr 26th	Russ Shafer-Landau, <i>Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?</i>, Chapter 17
	May 3rd	<u>Final Exam Due (online) at 11:59pm</u>

Part II - The second most-frequently consulted parts of a syllabus are any and all course policies that relate to how your grade is determined. So here is that information.

Final grades are determined by 4 things:

1. Reading Quizzes (35% of final grade)
2. Midterm Exam (30% of final grade)
3. Final Exam (35% of final grade)
4. Class participation (constructive, thoughtful, enthusiastic, and polite class participation will be used to 'bump up' borderline grades at the end of the semester).

Reading Quizzes

- When a reading is listed in bold on the course schedule, there will be a quick quiz at the beginning of class that day, to encourage you to read the assign texts thoroughly and to give me, the instructor, a sense of which parts of the reading the students struggled with, so that I can focus more on that part of the reading in class.
- The quizzes can be taken on any internet-connected device.¹
- Your 2 lowest quiz grades are dropped.²

Exams

- The midterm and final exams are administered online, on Canvas.
- They are open-note and open-book, but you may not consult any other people or resources.
- More details about the exams will be presented in class during the semester.

¹ 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 5 minutes. We will do a practice quiz the first day.

² There is no formal attendance taken in this class, but you can only take the reading quizzes if you are in class. So they function as a partial, de-facto means of taking attendance.

PART III - The least-frequently consulted parts of a syllabus are the remaining course details that are not directly related to one's grade. So here is that information, presented last.

COURSE DETAILS:

Course Number: PHI 138
Course Title: Good & Evil
Semester: Spring 2022
Credits: 3 Credits
Prerequisites: None
For whom planned: For first-year college students with minimal philosophical experience

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Jeffrey Kaplan

Office: 232 Curry

Email: jikaplan@uncg.edu

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 is the morally right thing to do? Is there some moral law that applies to everyone, or is morality relative in some way? And what's so good about morality anyway? 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.

GRADING SCALE:

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 tell 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](#).

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will not be taking attendance, but coming to class regularly is essential to success in this course. Moreover, the reading 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.