

**PHIL 1301: Philosophy for Living**  
**Dr. Jesse Butler**  
**Spring 2018**

<b>CRN 30307:</b>	<b>9:00-9:50 am</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>Irby Hall 307</b>
<b>CRN 25126:</b>	<b>11:00-11:50 am</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>Irby Hall 307</b>

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**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00-11:00 am, 12:00–1:00 pm, 2:00-3:30 pm and by appointment  
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**Required Text:** *The Little Philosophy Book* by Robert C. Solomon  
Oxford University Press 2007 ISBN-13: 978-0195311143

\*Additional required readings will be made available online through <https://my.uca.edu/>.\*

### **Course Description and Objectives**

This course uses philosophical analysis to investigate many of the big questions we face in life, such as: What are we? Why are we here? What, if anything, do we really know about ourselves and the world around us? How do we decide what to believe? What values and principles should we live by? What can we do to live happy and meaningful lives? This course will introduce students to some of the most significant and interesting answers philosophers have given to these questions and help facilitate the reasoning skills needed to evaluate their various viewpoints and arguments. Students will be encouraged to openly discuss philosophical issues in class, to engage in independent thinking and critical reflection regarding both their own beliefs and the beliefs of others, and to develop reasonable arguments in support of their own views.

### **UCA Core Critical Inquiry**

This course is part of the Critical Inquiry component of the Lower-Division Core. Critical Inquiry courses promote the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions. For more information, go to <http://uca.edu/core>.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

❖ Attendance & Participation:	10% of total grade
❖ Short Assignments:	25% of total grade
❖ Reading Exam 1:	15% of total grade
❖ Reading Exam 2:	15% of total grade
❖ Essay Exam 1:	15% of total grade
❖ Essay Exam 2:	20% of total grade

**Attendance & Participation:** Philosophy is an activity. Accordingly, class attendance and participation is required and will count as 10% of your total grade. The base attendance and participation grade will be set by the overall participation level of the class throughout the semester. All students will begin with an average mid-C grade of 75, which will be adjusted in accordance with overall class participation as the semester progresses. To raise this grade higher, students will need to engage in regular class discussion together, exchanging relevant thoughts and questions on course topics with each other. A-level grades will be reserved for classes that exhibit exceptional high-quality participation throughout the semester. In addition to monitoring overall class participation levels, individual attendance will be taken periodically throughout the semester. Students who are not present in class at the time attendance is taken will have an absence recorded. I will allow one recorded absence without penalty. This allowable absence is not a “freebee” to miss class, but rather is intended to cover a situation in which you must be absent for an excusable reason (illness, funeral, etc.). Each additional absence will lower your attendance and participation grade by 10 percentage points. Documentation for your one allowable absence is not required, but you should keep any such documentation in case you may later need to request an exception to the one absence policy. Exceptions to the one absence policy will be made only under exceptional circumstances with official documentation that clearly justifies your absences (e.g. hospital records covering your one allowable absence plus others for which you request an exception). In addition, I reserve the right to record absences for students who fail to be properly engaged in class. For example, if I observe you texting during class, having a private conversation unrelated to class discussion, or other such failures of class involvement, I may record an absence for you for that class session. Finally, please note that students will not be dropped from this course for non-attendance. If you feel that you should drop due to missing too much of the course, it is your responsibility to do so.

**Short Assignments:** Throughout the semester I will ask you to complete various short assignments either in-class or at home, and either individually or in groups. For example, I might give a brief reading quiz that asks you to answer a question about the assigned reading for that day, I might ask you to write a one page essay at home on a philosophical issue, or you may be required to participate in a group exercise in class regarding a particular philosophical problem. Reading quizzes and other assignments will often occur in class without advance notice, so it is important that you keep up with the readings and come to class prepared. Short Assignment credits will be recorded on a pass / fail basis. There will be a total of 11 possible credits across the semester. If you earn 10 or more credits by the end of the semester, you will receive 100% credit for this portion of your grade. 9 credits will earn a 90, and so on. Using a 10 credit scale when 11 credits are available enables you to miss one credit without penalty. Like the one allowable absence policy, this missed credit is intended to cover an extenuating circumstance for which you are absent or otherwise unprepared. Given this allowable missed credit, no make-up short assignments will be given.

**Exams:** There will be four exams throughout this course, consisting of two reading exams and two essay exams. The reading exams will assess your knowledge of the assigned readings for the course, requiring you to identify the authors of selected quotes from the readings. The essay exams will require you to explain, critically analyze, and argumentatively defend viewpoints on major philosophical issues covered in the class. The first reading exam will occur mid-semester (specific date to be determined) and will be followed by the first essay exam. The second reading exam will occur during the last week of class, followed by the second essay exam during finals week. Further details about exams will be provided in class, with sufficient advance notice for you to be well-prepared in all cases. You will not be allowed to use notes or the textbook during exams. If you miss an exam for a justifiable reason that you

can document (with a doctor's note, for instance), it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to discuss alternative arrangements. Make-up exams will only be allowed under exceptional, justified, and documented circumstances at my discretion.

### **Reading Assignments**

Required reading assignments will be announced regularly in class as we progress through the semester, with many of the readings being provided online through Blackboard. Completing these assignments on time is an essential component of the class, so be sure to keep up with the readings as we go along. Reading philosophy can be difficult, but here are some suggestions to help you with it:

- 1) **Read the material multiple times.** Do not expect yourself to fully grasp all of the ideas in a piece of philosophy the first time you read it. It can be helpful to first do a quick read of a philosophical work without getting bogged down in the details, just to get a "big picture" grasp of the ideas it presents. Then you can go back through the material to get a more in-depth understanding. In addition, I encourage you to read the material again after we have discussed it in class, to achieve a more developed understanding of the material.
- 2) **Actively engage with the material.** As you read, try to grasp, analyze, and assess the ideas and reasoning being presented. Actively think about what you are reading and don't be afraid to pause and ask questions. Take notes on the thoughts and questions that you have as you read, and bring them to class for discussion and clarification.
- 3) **Read supplemental material.** Do not limit yourself to just the required readings. Explore additional material regarding the philosophers, concepts, and theories we discuss, which will give you a more developed and complete engagement with philosophy. Here are a few general online resources you might find helpful:

The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>  
Garth Kemerling's Philosophy Pages: <http://www.philosophypages.com/>  
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

### **Class Conduct and University Policies**

**Punctuality:** You should be in your seat and ready for class at the beginning of class time. Repeated tardiness is a distraction to other students and will not be tolerated. Again, students who are not present in class at the time attendance is taken will have an absence recorded.

**Attention:** While in this class, your attention should be directed towards the class. Activities unrelated to the class (texting, doing work for another class, reading a newspaper, playing a game, surfing the Internet, talking to your neighbor about things unrelated to class, etc.) are strictly prohibited during class time. Students who violate these policies may receive recorded absences for failed engagement. Disruptive students may be asked to leave the classroom, and repeated violations may result in being asked to drop the class.

**Respect:** Be respectful of other students. It is acceptable to question or criticize another person's viewpoint on a class topic, but you should not criticize or attack your fellow students themselves. There

is a big difference between offering a criticism of a belief or viewpoint and attacking a person with the belief or viewpoint. The former is a legitimate and important component of philosophy, while the latter is impolite and inappropriate (as well as a fallacy, the “ad hominem” fallacy). Also, I expect students to respectfully listen and attend to fellow students engaged in class discussion, whether you agree, disagree, or are indifferent to their thoughts. We can all learn from the thoughts and viewpoints of others, and one goal of this class is to foster an environment where such learning can take place.

**Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of this university policy.

**Harassment:** No harassment of any kind will be tolerated in this class. Please familiarize yourself with all information contained in the *Student Handbook*, including the Sexual Harassment Policy and the various other policies concerning academics and the university. If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Disabilities:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 450-3613.

**Emergencies:** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Evaluations:** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button in the top right.