PI 101-01 – INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
Course Syllabus and Calendar

Section Information	**Instructor Information**
PI 101-01	Dr. Jonathan Wurtz
In Person	wurtzj@triton.uog.edu
M/W 9:30 AM- 10:50 AM	HSS 318F
HSS 310	Office Hours: M/W 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM
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COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the student to the nature of philosophy and to philosophical thinking, through a discussion of various important topics in philosophy. Issues can include the philosophy of mind, death and immortality, knowledge, time and time travel, free will, personality identity, the nature of morality, the existence of God and more.

COURSE CONTENT

This class introduces students to philosophical thinking through four topical inquiries: **the simulation hypothesis**, **the politics of knowledge and truth**, **the self and agency**, and **the good and social justice**.

The first topic asks about the nature of reality and our access to it. We will specifically ask questions like: How can I know what is? What is the nature of reality? Can reality be simulated? Can inquirers tell the difference between simulated and non-simulated reality? Is there any element of reality that I can be certain about? And more. The second topic will feed off our answers from the first section and turn to the nature of the self. We will read texts concerned with the metaphysical nature of selfhood, our epistemological access to it, and its relationship to agency, morality, and freedom. The third section of the course will be concern with the politics of truth and knowledge. While many take knowledge and truth to be objective representations of the world, we shall look deeper into the normative background of knowledge and ask questions like: is abstract knowledge, human knowledge? Is knowledge only the rational and universal? What is universal and abstract knowledge based on? Is abstract universal knowledge "good" knowledge? Finally, we will end with a section on the good and social justice. In it, we will cover topics from basic ethical theories to the normalization of evil and racism.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ALIGNMENT MATRIX

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)	Program (PLO)	Institutional (ILO)
Justify philosophical positions with reasoned argument in a rigorous way	(A) Justify positions with reasoned argument in a rigorous way	Mastery of critical thinking and problem solving
Express philosophical positions orally and in writing precisely and clearly	(B) Express themselves orally and in writing precisely and clearly	Effective oral and written communication
Engage in comparative philosophical thinking across multiple traditions	(C) Understand and engage with perspectives different to their own	Understanding and appreciation of culturally diverse people, ideas, and values in a democratic context
Engage in philosophical dialogue about concrete situations and problems with breadth and depth	(D) Analyse real-world problems using philosophical tools	Mastery of quantitative analysis
Reconstruct the philosophical positions of authors through the close reading of texts	E) Reconstruct the positions of authors through the close reading of texts	Responsible use of knowledge, natural resources, and technology
Practice philosophical virtues in their interactions with others	F) Practice philosophical virtues in their interactions with others	An interest in personal development and lifelong learning

WORDS OF WISDOM

As your professor, I am here to help you succeed and I built this syllabus as a means to maximize this effort. However, students must take the initiative to communicate with me their struggles, difficulties, and obstacles with the class. ***IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, I CAN'T HELP YOU.*** Send me an email at wurtzj@triton.uog.edu or come to my office hours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED TEXTS
Required readings are provided on Moodle

GRADING INFORMATION
COURSE FINAL GRADES

A   940-1000 points
A-   900-939 points
B+   870-899 points
B   840-869 points
B-   800-839 points
C+   770-799 points
C   700-769 points
D+   640-699 points
D   600-639 points
F   0-599 points

NC   No Credit. *Note: This Course Grade must be stated in the approve Course Catalog Description.*

UW: Unofficial withdrawal assigned by Registrar. Student stopped attending classes and did not submit required documents to the Admissions & Records office.

W: Withdrawal assigned by Registrar. Student stopped attending classes and submitted required documents to the Admissions & Records office.

ASSIGNMENTS

Quests

This class is not graded like your other classes. While most classes have the teacher decide on your grade, your final grade in this class will be decided by both you and the professor. None of the assignments are graded. Rather you will receive thorough feedback on everything you submit. Both in the middle and at the end of the semester, every student will meet with the professor, and the student will have to make a case for what grade they deserve in the course using their participation, assignments, and learning as evidence.

Throughout the semester, students will have to select, complete, and submit assignments from the following list:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
• Podcast • Art Piece • Video Essay • Reflection	• Close Reading • Applied Philosophy • Argument Map •	• Question • Research • ChatGPT Evaluation	• Meme • Reading Group

Category 1 assignments are the most rigorous and require more research while Category 4 assignments tend to be more creative and reflexive. Successfully completing a Cat1 assignment is stronger evidence for a high grade than completing a Cat4 assignment. Instructions and grading specifications for each assignment can be found on Moodle in the "Assignment Manual" document. Here are the instructions for assignments:

1) Students must turn in assignments on the scheduled due date (for a total of 8 assignments).

2) Students must turn in at least one assignment from each category (the other four assignments are up to students. However, remember that your final grade is based on your effort and Category 1 assignments are worth more than cat4 assignments. As such, if you want a high grade, you'll need to make sure to do make sure you do more than just one cat1 or cat2 assignment). *Don't argue for an A at the end of the semester if you've turned in five cat4 assignments.*

3) Each assignment must be on an assigned text/author we cover during the semester. Students should not submit work on an author not studied in class nor on a text or idea we do not cover. Refer to the schedule below for more information.

4) ***Each assignment will be evaluated based on two criteria***

    a. ***Philosophical Mastery: demonstration of one's ability to think about and with the arguments, concepts, and philosophies discussed in class.***

    b. ***Reading Mastery: demonstration that one has read and can extrapolate relevant and comprehensive knowledge from the text.***

5) Students are welcome to re-do failed assignments. All re-dos must be turned in to the proper Moodle dropbox (which will open after feedback is provided) by their due dates. All re-do's are due a week after you receive feedback on an assignment.

Discussion Days

Every 2-3 weeks we will hold an in-class discussion day meant to tease out the nuances of each theory we discuss this semester (see schedule). For class, students will have to prepare a written answer to the given question and be ready to present and discuss their ideas with the class. Your discussion days paper must:

    a) Answer the entire question.

    b) draw from the pool of philosophers and philosophical arguments we covered so far in the class.

    c) provide an argument for your position (unless the prompt asks otherwise).

    d) be turned in on the appropriate forum on Moodle before the discussion day.

    e) be at least two paragraphs long.

Participation will be tracked. If you do not like to participate in public dicussions, you are invited to start or participate in a virtual discussion by responding to a couple of your peer's posts. ***Every student is in fact invited to start the conversation early and respond to their peer's posts.*** Your professor will be engaging with your posts online too, so be sure to check on them.

Final Overall Reflection
At the end of the semester, students will be asked to meet one-on-one with the professor to discuss their learning experience in the course. In preparation for this meeting, students will be asked to submit a final reflection paper addressing their overall learning experience in the class. ***The final reflection paper should be no longer than 3 pages and answer each the following prompts separately***:

a) Discuss your process as a learner: evaluate your engagement with course content by reflecting on how you handled all aspects of this course. What specific parts of your process worked and what parts would benefit from some adjustments? Why?

b) Discuss the products you generated as demonstrations of your learning: evaluate how your work has changed across the semester. Did certain elements improve more than others? Did certain elements become easier or more challenging? Describe.

c) What will you do with this knowledge in future semesters? Make a commitment to yourself.

d) What have you learned about yourself—as a learner and a member of a learning community—in this course?

e) Considering points a-d, what final grade do you believe you deserve and why? What is this grade a reflection of? How is it a fair representation of your learning this semester? Make sure to provide evidence for your reasoning by drawing on your work and participation throughout the semester.

More instructions for how to present a strong self-evaluation will be provided at the end of the semester.

COURSE, PROGRAM, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Attendance Privilege Policy:
Attendance and participation affect your grade indirectly in this course. Rather than taking away points and coercing you to be in my class, this class's attendance policy works more like a credit score. The more you attend and participate (i.e., the more effort you show) the more exceptions you become privileged to. In other words, if you regularly show up and attend the full class time, participate, and come to my office hours, you will benefit from privileges such as late submission allowances, rounding up of points, excused unexcused absences, late make ups etc…. However, if you only show up a few times, don't turn in assignments, and are generally absent throughout the semester, you will not be privy to these privileges. This is also how I decide to round up your grades at the end of the semester. Such that, if you tried your best but only made an 89% in the course, I will give you a final grade of an A-. But if you were mostly absent and silent throughout the class, then you will receive your original grade of B+.

Network Etiquette:
Remember your "netiquette," or network etiquette. Although you may traditionally interact informally with friends and family when you are online, it is important to note that this is a classroom environment and students must adhere to high standards of academic behavior. This classroom is a safe space for all ideas. Any comments, jokes, or remarks that denigrate the worth of an individual's physical/mental ability, body size, religion, race, creed, ethnic background, sexual preference, or gender are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.
   a. Do not say things in an email or forum post that you would not say face to face.
   b. Be polite, concise, and remember that all-caps signify yelling.
   c. Do not send forwards to the class list or to the professor.
   d. Proofread. Please avoid texting language, lack of punctuation, capitalization, or inappropriate signatures.
   e. Emojis should not be used in graded assignments. You are welcome to use them in informal writing.

Email Policy:
Triton email is the official means of communication at the university. Every communication with the professor should occur through UOG's official email. It should include a subject line and a body text. The email's body should include a proper salutation and clear explanation of its purpose. The professor will respond to email within 1-2 business days. The professor will respond to weekend or holiday emails at their own discretion. If you need to reach the professor urgently, hope for the best, but expect the worst (attendance policy qualifies how you can hope better).

Plagiarism Statement:

As per the Student Handbook, students are responsible for turning in their own original work for every class that they officially attend at the University of Guam. Due to this plagiarism is considered academic dishonesty (AKA cheating) and will be rewarded with a failing grade for the assignment (without possibility of making up lost points). The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited, to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. **EVERY ASSIGNMENT THAT YOU TURN IN WILL BE FILTERED THROUGH Turnitin.com TO CHECK ITS ORIGINALITY.** All assignments have a 25% AI tolerance threshold. Any submission that is less than 75% human generated will be automatically categorized as "Redo Needed"

Artificial Intelligence Statement:

ChatGPT is an amazing tool that will continue to be perfected. That being said, it is by no means perfect, and cannot write the kinds of assignments I am asking you to write. Think of AI as an assistant. While an assistant is extremely helpful, it cannot do the work for you. Here are some guidelines for how to use AI in one of my classes:

Do use A.I. to:	Don't use A.I. to:
- Proofread your essay.	- Write your essays/assignments.
- Help you put thoughts into words.	- Provide an argument
- Help you think of a word.	- Think of a topic for your projects/assignments
- Help you reword sentences.	- Qualitatively evaluate scholarly resources.
- Help clarify your flow and syntax.	- Rigorously summarize a philosophical position.
- Get an idea/Talk it out.	- Provide an opinion.
- Help you think of a clever title for your essay.	- Think of a moral position.
- Write an email to your professor	

EEO/ADA Statement:

ADA Policy and Commitment to Student Learning
The University is committed to maintaining the campus community as a place of work and study for faculty, staff and students, free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. If you experience harassment or discrimination, then you should report it immediately to the EEO/ADA &Title IX Office, Institutional Compliance Officer (671) 735-2244 located in Dorm 1. For immediate assistance in an emergency call 911.

ADA Accommodation Services

If you are a student with a disability who will require an accommodation(s) to participate in this course, please contact the Disability Support Services office to discuss your specific accommodation needs confidentially. You will need to provide me with a Faculty Notification letter from the DSS counselor. If you are not registered, you should do so immediately at the Student Center, Rotunda office #6, ph/TTY: 735-2460, or uogdss@triton.uog.edu to coordinate your accommodation request.

COURSE CALENDAR*
Tentative Schedule. Official Schedule can be found on Moodle

WEEK 1: Introduction to the Course
    01/20: **Course Session 1**
    MLK Jr. Day NO CLASS

    01/22: **Course Session 2**
    Introduction to the course
    Introduction to AI in the course

WEEK 2: Introduction to Philosophical Thinking and Arguing pt. 1
    01/27: **Course Session 3**
    Introduction to Ungrading and Assignments

    01/29: **Course Session 4**
    Watch: Crash Course Philosophy **episodes [1], [2],** and **[3]**

WEEK 3: Introduction to Philosophical Thinking and Arguing Pt. 2
    02/03: **Course Session 5**
    Read: Plato's Meno 70b - 79e

    02/05: **Course Session 6**
    Discussion Day 1: Argument Reconstruction and Analysis
    Read: Plato's Meno 86c – 100b
This discussion day will focus on reconstructing and critically reflecting on the final argument in Plato's Meno regarding the teachability of virtue. Begin by carefully identifying all the premises of the argument. Consider Socrates' claims about the relationship between virtue and knowledge, the implications of virtue being or not being knowledge, and any assumptions he makes about teaching, learning, and human nature. Next, articulate the final conclusion of the argument: does Socrates conclude that virtue can be taught, and why or why not? Pay close attention to the methodology Socrates employs—such as his use of hypothesis, analogy, or other reasoning tools—to arrive at this conclusion.
Once the argument has been reconstructed, critically evaluate it. Are the premises reasonable, or can you identify counterexamples or alternative interpretations? Does the conclusion logically follow from the premises, and why or why not? Reflect on Socrates' methodology: is it effective in addressing the question of virtue's teachability? What strengths or weaknesses do you notice in how he reasons through the issue? Finally, consider the broader implications of this argument for how we think about education, morality, and human development. By the end of the discussion, aim to achieve both a clear reconstruction of the argument and a nuanced critique of its philosophical significance.

WEEK 4: METAPHYSICS – WHAT IS REAL?

02/10: Course Session 7
Metaphysics and the Learner's Paradox
Read: Plato's Meno 80a-87c

02/12: Course Session 8
The Allegory of the Cave
Read: Plato's Republic "The Allegory of the Cave"

WEEK 5: METAPHYSICS – WHAT IS REAL?

02/17: Course Session 9
Descartes' Metaphysical Skepticism
Read: Descartes' *Meditation on First Philosophy Meditation 1*

02/19: Course Session 10
Simulation Hypothesis
Read: Nick Bostrom's "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?"

WEEK 6: METAPHYSICS – WHAT IS REAL?

02/24: Course Session 11
Anti-Simulation Hypothesis
In-class viewing: Futurama – "All the way down"
Read: Marcelo Gleiser "Why Reality is Not a Video Game – And Why it Matters"

02/26: Course Session 12
Discussion Day 2 – Are we in a simulation?
Students must write on one of the three topics below:

1) *Let us say that a strange creature from another dimension tells you that you are a simulated NPC that is given the illusion of self-consciousness. While you don't believe it at first, it literally rewrites reality in front of you, even visually representing the fundamental code of reality that organizes the simulation. After the existential meltdown you are bound to experience, there remains one final question: What do you do with that information? Or to increase the weight of our question: What should humans do with this knowledge? In other words, students must assess the usefulness of the simulation hypothesis for human life.*

2) *If we in fact live in a simulation, this brings us to a very important question about ourselves: Are you real? Are you really the product of your own decisions and will, or are you the culmination of coding lines in a powerful machine—like a thought in a brain? In other words, is Descartes right when he claims the certainty of his own existence?*

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3) *Okay, maybe we are not in a simulation, but the simulation hypothesis brings up many other questions. One such question is about the moral status of simulated characters. While most gamers won't typically bat an eye after killing their sims, enemy soldiers, or invading aliens, some NPCs have what we could call "moral worth". That is, there are some characters in video games or even animated shows that, while being simulated, seem wrong to kill or hurt. People sometime become sad or even angry when those characters are killed or retired from the story. Similar things happen when a character is radically changed to the point where they no longer embody their original identity. Does this mean that simulated characters have some moral worth? If so, explain in detail what is entailed by this moral worth. If not, then explain why we have these strong emotional and ethical connections with simulated characters and how is this different from what we feel towards other people?*

WEEK 7: SELF AND AGENCY
    03/03: Course Session 13
    Guam History & CHamoru Heritage Day – NO CLASS

    Self and Simulation
    Read: Descartes' *Meditation of First Philosophy* "Meditation 2"

    03/05: Course Session 14
    The Minimal Self
    Read: Shaun Ghallagher's "Philosophical conceptions of the self: Implications for cognitive science"

WEEK 8: SELF AND AGENCY
    03/10: Course Session 15
    Buddhist Concept of No-Self
    Read: Selections from *Dharmacakpravartana Sutra* and *NagarJuna's Vigrahavyavartani*

    03/12: Course Session 16
    Mid-Semester Meeting

WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES
    03/17: *NO CLASS*
    03/19: *NO CLASS*

WEEK 10: THE ONTOLOGY OF THE SELF

03/24: **Course Session 17**
Austronesian Notion of Self
Read: Vincente M. Diaz "Voyaging for Anti-Colonial Recovery: Austronesian Seafaring, Archipelagic Rethinking, and the Re-Mapping of Indigeneity"

03/26: **Course Session 18**
Pluralistic Views of the Self
Read: Maria Lugones' "Purity, Impurity, Separation"

WEEK 11: THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH

03/31: **Course Session 19**
Discussion Day 3 – Self, Agency, and Consciousness
Much of the Western European philosophical tradition operates on the assumption that human agency and moral responsibility is based on the idea of a self-conscious self. In other words, it is because there is an "I" that I am aware of (in other words, because I am self-conscious), that I can take a stand on my action and chose to do x, y, or z. However, over the past few weeks we looked at two non-western philosophical traditions who argue otherwise.

For class, students must reflect on two interrelated topics: 1) the notion and origins of human freedom and moral responsibility, and 2) the certainty of self-consciousness. First, is it the case that there is a minimal/core self that underlies our consciousness of the world? Do we really need such a concept to make sense of our epistemic agency, freedom of choice, and moral responsibility? If you defend the idea of a core self, make sure to respond to either Buddhist or Austronesian views to argue for why the notion of a core self is necessary/true. If you reject the idea of the core self, then make sure to offer an explanation as to why so many people and different cultures have a first-person pronoun? Why do so many people have a strong sense of self-identity?
Second, many people think that they know themselves best. After all they are them, and who else could know them better than themselves. If we agree with either the Buddhist tradition of anatta or with Diaz's moving ontology, however, it complicates the idea of self-consciousness. If we agree with the concept of anatta, then there should be no self that is me and that I can be conscious of. So, the very idea that you know yourself best becomes mute. If we agree with Diaz, one's sense of self is always changing and conditioned by the external ecological context that we inhabit. Hence, again, the idea that I know myself best becomes mutes. I may know certain parts of my selves best, but I am not a singular self and I am not necessarily conscious of that self from within that self-conscious position. So, for class, students need to reflect on the idea that I have access to myself best: what do we make of this? Do I know myself best? Or is knowing the self something that requires others, a society, and a community? What is the value of knowing oneself? Can we keep this value without a core self or with dynamic selves?

04/02: Course Session 20
Modern Enlightenment Epistemology
Read: Francis Bacon *Selections* from *Novum Organum*

WEEK 12: THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH
04/07: Course Session 21
Rethinking our Relationship to Knowledge
Read: Edmund Husserl's "The Crisis of the Sciences as Expression of the Radical Life-Crisis of European Humanity"

04/09: Course Session 22
Truth as a Function of Life
Read: Selections from Friedrich Nietzsche's *On Truth and Lies in an Extra Moral Sense*

WEEK 13: THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH
04/14: Course Session 23
Truth as a Function of Power
Read: Michel Foucault's Mental Illness and Psychology Chapter 5

04/16: Course Session 24
Discussion Day 4 – ADHD, Medical Knowledge, and Normality
Read: Timimi and Taylor "ADHD is best understood as a cultural construct"

For this discussion, students must contextualize the Timimi and Taylor article within the history of knowledge we discussed over the last three weeks. First, read through the article, and then connect it with the crisis of knowledge discussed by Husserl, Nietzsche, or Foucault. Second, offer a critical discussion of either 1) ADHD as a medical condition or 2) ADHD as a cultural construct of power through your own research and/or one of the three authors we engaged with in this section.
This is not a debate about whether ADHD is a real condition. It certainly tracks real behaviors in individuals. In this discussion, students are asked to reflect on whether ADHD is a "pathology", a medical, biological, and/or psychological abnormality or deviance. Should, in other words, we treat ADHD as a pathological condition that needs to be managed or even cured? Or should we stop pathologizing these behaviors and change society to adapt to real human characters?

WEEK 14: THE GOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
04/21: Course Session 25
Utilitarianism
Read: John Stuart Mill's "On Utilitarianism"

04/23: Course Session 26
Deontology
Read: Immanuel Kant *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals Chapter 1*

WEEK 15: THE GOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
04/28: Course Session 27
Modern Ethics and the Banality of Evil
Read: Hannah Arendt's Selections from *The Banality of Evil*

04/30: Course Session 28
The Banality of Fascism
Read: Nalin Ranasinghe's "Ethics for the Little Man: Kant, Eichmann, and the Banality of Evil"

WEEK 16: THE GOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
05/05: Course Session 29
The Banality of Climate Collapse
Read: Hamilton's "The Banality of Ethics in the Anthropocene"

05/07: Course Session 30
The Banality of Democratic Colonialism
Read: Downes v. Bidwell, 182 U.S. 244 (1901) + Davis v. Guam (2012)

WEEK 17: THE GOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
05/12: Course Session 31
Guam as a Banal Colony
Read: Bevacqua and Cruz's **"**The Banality of American Empire: The Curious Case of Guam, ~~USA~~"

05/14: Course Session 32
 Discussion 5
As we saw over the last few weeks, normalized evil is evil that finds a legitimate existence through an ethical theory. In other words, normalized evil is evil that 1) constitutes a necessary part of our everyday normal living, and 2) is morally justifiable/required by some ethical system. We looked at a few examples of normalized evil— the first being the 2008 economic collapse and its financial consequences, blind obedience to the Nazi regime in Germany, the climate crisis, and even Guam's colonial existence. For class, students have to research their own example of normalized evil. That is, they must look for an example of evil that is both normalized in everyday life and required by an ethical theory. While you are more than welcome to use your own moral theory, you are free to also use Mill's or Kant's respective ethics. First, you should describe your example of evil and explain why you believe this to be

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evil. Then students will have to explain how it is a "normalized" form of evil by showing how it is 1) normalized in everyday life and 2) how it is required or justified by a moral theory.

FINALS WEEK (May 19-21)
TBD
End of the Semester Meeting
*During Final Exam Week, the class meets according to the Approved Exam Schedule. All UOG classes are required to meet during Final Exam Week.