Course Description

The aim of this course is to get you involved in the activity of philosophy. We will spend our time thinking about some of life’s big questions, working to understand how some great thinkers have tried to answer them and critically examining our own answers to them. What is the nature of reality? Is it something we can have knowledge of? Does God exist? Can we justify our beliefs? What are minds? What is consciousness? What makes something morally right or wrong? How ought we to live? What (if anything) makes it true that you are the same person today that you were yesterday? Do human beings have free will? What makes a life meaningful? Is life absurd?

We will approach all of these questions philosophically. That means we will remain open to reason, articulating the questions and the answers as clearly and carefully as we can and critically assessing the answers we have with an eye to finding more satisfying responses.

Texts

Available in the campus book store:


Available in the campus book store but also available online through CourseSpaces:

George Berkeley. Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous in Opposition to Sceptics and Atheists.
René Descartes. Meditations on First Philosophy.
David Hume. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.
Bertrand Russell. The Problems of Philosophy.

All other course readings are available through CourseSpaces.

CourseSpaces

To access the course materials on CourseSpaces go to coursespaces.uvic.ca and log in with your regular network ID.

The CourseSpaces page contains all sorts of information you will need for the course. It contains many of the course readings, details about how much of particular texts you need to read, a calendar of assignments, a class list with photos and email addresses, your grades and various supplementary materials.

Any changes that need to be made to the course schedule during the term will appear on the CourseSpaces page.
Introduction to Philosophy

Course Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Term</th>
<th>Second Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Reaction Papers 4% each</td>
<td>Three Reaction Papers 4% each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam One 10%</td>
<td>Exam Four 9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Two 10%</td>
<td>Exam Five 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Three 15%</td>
<td>Exam Six 10%</td>
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<td>Exam Seven 7%</td>
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Reaction Papers

The reaction papers are short (250-350 words) responses to a question about the reading for that day. The questions and some further instructions are posted on the CourseSpaces page.

It is best to answer the question on the basis of your own reading of the text and our class discussion of related ideas. I prefer that you refrain from consulting secondary sources on the reading before writing your paper. If you do consult any other sources and use any quotations, phrases or ideas that you did not come up with on your own, you must cite your sources.

These are very short papers, but they must still be typed, correctly spelled, grammatically correct and clear.

Reaction papers are due at the start of class. Late reaction papers will not be accepted. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a reaction paper, check with me and I can give you an alternate assignment.

Each reaction paper must be submitted on a single sheet of paper with your name and “Reaction Paper 1” (or 2, etc.) in the upper right hand corner.

Exams

These will be in-class exams covering material from the readings and class discussion. They will be a combination of short answer questions and essay questions.

Missed Course Work

If you miss an exam or reaction paper due to a documented illness or accident, contact me immediately to schedule a make-up.

Missed Classes

If you miss class you should contact another student in the class to find out what you missed. Student email addresses are available in the Participants section of the CourseSpaces page.

Grading

Grades for the course will be assigned using the standard university scheme. For interpretation of the letter grades see the university calendar at [https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html#](https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 50</td>
<td>F</td>
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Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, cheating on exams and aiding others to cheat, will be taken very seriously in this course. Students are responsible for making themselves familiar with the university policy on academic integrity which you can read here: [https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#](https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#)
## Course Schedule
Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and posted on the CourseSpaces page.

### First Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 9/7</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9/9</td>
<td><strong>Logic</strong> Introduction to logic (no reading assignment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 9/13</td>
<td><strong>Logic Café</strong> Chapter One, Tutorials 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9/14</td>
<td>Fallacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9/16</td>
<td>Logic Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 9/20</td>
<td><strong>Personal Identity</strong> Perry <em>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, The First Night</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 9/21</td>
<td>Workshop for Reaction Paper 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9/23</td>
<td><strong>REACTION PAPER 1</strong> Perry <em>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, The Second Night</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 9/27</td>
<td>Perry <em>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, The Third Night</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 9/28</td>
<td><strong>EXAM ONE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 9/30</td>
<td><strong>Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief</strong> Hume <em>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Pamphilus to Hermippus, and Parts I and II</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/4</td>
<td>Hume <em>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts III through IX</em></td>
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<td>W 10/5</td>
<td><em>continued</em></td>
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<td>F 10/7</td>
<td>Workshop for Reaction Paper 2</td>
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<td>T 10/11</td>
<td><strong>REACTION PAPER 2</strong> Hume <em>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts X through XII</em></td>
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<td>W 10/12</td>
<td>Clifford <em>The Ethics of Belief: Part I The Duty of Inquiry</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 10/14</td>
<td>James <em>The Will to Believe</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/18</td>
<td>Gould <em>The Chain of Reason vs. the Chain of Thumbs</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 10/19</td>
<td>Pigliucci and Boudry <em>The Dangers of Pseudoscience</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 10/21</td>
<td><strong>EXAM TWO</strong></td>
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# Knowledge and Reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/25</td>
<td>Plato <strong>Meno</strong></td>
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<td>W 10/26</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 10/28</td>
<td>Plato <strong>Phaedo</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>T 11/1</td>
<td>Russell <em>The World of Universals</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 11/2</td>
<td>Descartes <strong>Meditations on First Philosophy</strong>, Meditation One</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 11/4</td>
<td>Descartes <strong>Meditations on First Philosophy</strong>, Meditation Two</td>
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Reading Break 11/9 — 11/11  No Classes

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<tr>
<td>T 11/15</td>
<td>Descartes <strong>Meditations on First Philosophy</strong>, Meditations Three through Six</td>
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<td>W 11/16</td>
<td>continued Workshop for Reaction Paper 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 11/18</td>
<td><strong>REACTION PAPER 3</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Russell <em>Appearance and Reality, The Existence of Matter</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T 11/22</td>
<td>Locke <em>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</em></td>
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<td>T 11/29</td>
<td>Berkeley <strong>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</strong>, Third Dialogue</td>
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<td>W 11/30</td>
<td>Russell <em>Idealism</em></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F 12/2</td>
<td><strong>EXAM THREE</strong></td>
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# Second Term

## Philosophy of Mind

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/4</td>
<td>Introduction to philosophy of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 1/6</td>
<td>Ryle <em>Descartes’ Myth</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T 1/10</td>
<td><strong>REACTION PAPER 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armstrong <em>The Nature of Mind</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/11</td>
<td>Nagel <em>What is it like to be a bat?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 1/13</td>
<td>Churchland <em>Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes</em>, Sections 1 and 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 1/17</td>
<td>Searle <em>Watson Doesn’t Know It Won on “Jeopardy!”</em></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/18</td>
<td><strong>EXAM FOUR</strong></td>
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### Ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F 1/20</td>
<td>Introduction to Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 1/24</td>
<td>Plato <em>Republic</em> Book II</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/25</td>
<td>Hobbes from <em>Leviathan</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 1/27</td>
<td>Kant <em>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</em>, Chapter One</td>
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<td>T 1/31</td>
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| W 2/1  | Epicurus *Letter to Menoeceus*  
|        | Kagan *Is Death Bad for You?* |
| F 2/3  | Bentham *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*  
|        | Chapters One and Four |
| T 2/7  | Mill from *Utilitarianism*, Chapter Two |
| W 2/8  | *continued*              |
| F 2/10 | REACTION PAPER 5         |
|        | Williams from *Utilitarianism: For and Against The Trolley Problem* (video) |

Reading Break 2/13 — 2/17  No Classes

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 2/21</td>
<td>Aristotle <em>Nicomachean Ethics</em>, Book II</td>
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<td>W 2/22</td>
<td><em>continued</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/24</td>
<td>MacIntyre <em>The Nature of the Virtues</em></td>
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### Free Will

*(all readings in this section are from *Elbow Room*)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 3/1</td>
<td>Introduction to Free Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 3/3</td>
<td>Dennett <em>Please Don’t Feed the Bugbears</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 3/7</td>
<td>Dennett <em>Making Reason Practical</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/8</td>
<td>REACTION PAPER 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dennett <em>Control and Self-Control</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/10</td>
<td>Dennett <em>Self-Made Selves</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 3/14</td>
<td>Dennett <em>Acting Under the Idea of Freedom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 3/15</td>
<td>Dennett <em>“Could Have Done Otherwise”</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 3/17</td>
<td>Dennett <em>Why do we want free will?</em></td>
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**T 2/28**  EXAM FIVE

**T 3/21**  EXAM SIX
**The Meaning of Life**  (all readings in this section are from *The Meaning of Life: A Reader*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/22</td>
<td>Tolstoy</td>
<td>My Confession</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/24</td>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>The Meaning and Value of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 3/28</td>
<td>Camus</td>
<td>The Myth of Sisyphus</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/29</td>
<td>Nagel</td>
<td>The Absurd</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/31</td>
<td>Wolf</td>
<td>Meaning in Life</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cahn</td>
<td>Meaningless Lives?</td>
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T 4/4  EXAM SEVEN