

## **Philosophy 100 (A02): Introduction to Philosophy**

**(CRN = 13765 [Fall 2023])**

### **General Course Information & Schedule (Fall Semester)**

#### **1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

Instructor: David Scott  
Classroom Location: CLE A127  
Class Meeting Times: Mon & Thurs, 8:30 am – 9:50 am.  
Instructor's Office: CLE B320  
Office Hours: Tues. & Wed. 9:30 – 10:30 (Zoom, by appointment)  
Telephone: 250-721-7517  
Email: [djfscott@uvic.ca](mailto:djfscott@uvic.ca)

#### **ABOUT THIS COURSE:**

This full-year (i.e., two semesters: Fall and Spring) course is intended to provide students with a wide-ranging introduction to the main areas of philosophy and to some of the main philosophers in the Western tradition. Students will be introduced to basic philosophical worldviews and classical questions concerning, e.g., the reality and nature of the universe, the mind, the self, God, ethics or the nature of goodness and evil. In the first semester (September to December) the course focuses on basic questions in metaphysics (theory of the nature of reality) and epistemology (theory of knowledge); whereas in the second semester (January to April) the course focuses on more on questions of value (ethics, meaning of life, philosophy of religion).

#### **TEXT AND COURSE MATERIAL:**

The readings for this course are available free through the course's Brightspace site. You can find them by going first to the "Course Tools" menu, and then selecting "Course Reserves". There you will find all the required readings for the first semester of this course. They are arranged according to the weekly class schedule (below).

#### **MARKING SCHEME AND COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Marking Scheme (semester #1): Class participation (5%); 3 in-class written tests (45%);  
Marking Scheme (semester #2): Class participation (5%); 3 in-class written tests (45%).

b) Letter grades correspond to the following marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

c) Class participation component ("reflection paragraphs"): These are brief, i.e., single-paragraph (approximately 250 words) answers to question(s) about the readings covered in class. Together they comprise 10% of the total grade (over two semesters) for this course. One

or two questions will be assigned *ahead of the class in which the reading is to be discussed*, and it will be due the day *before* that class. Submission will be through Brightspace.

These reflection paragraphs are designed to test that you have done the reading for the class ahead of time, and to help prepare you for the class lecture/discussion. Your reflection paragraphs will be graded by a graduate student in the philosophy department. (All *other* work in this course, i.e., all tests and essays, will be graded the course instructor.) It is *extremely easy* to get *great* marks in these paragraphs: if you demonstrate a good faith effort to answer these questions, and if you manage to hand in all of your answers, you'll get yourself a very easy 10% for this course, and in all likelihood your overall course experience will be significantly enhanced.

d) In this course you can assume that all essay or exam topics are intended to test you on the material covered in class, as it has been covered there. You are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for tests and essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that you are expected to take account of or do justice to in-class discussion. The reason for this requirement is that the tests and essays for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in the classroom, though of course the tests and especially the essays also provide you with room to explore topics outside of the classroom confines. Roughly speaking, "B+" and "A-" papers take account of and rise to the level of the class discussion; "A" and "A+" papers take that discussion to a higher/deeper level.

e) Evaluation Criteria: The criteria I use to evaluate essays and tests are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the assessment of a philosophy essay. Primarily my concern is with content or substance. Of course, this does not mean that form or style count for nothing (and indeed it may not ultimately be possible to divorce form from content). In indicating these evaluation criteria I emphasize that philosophy is an arts or humanities subject, which means that assessing the merits of a philosophy paper ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of philosophical writing. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative values, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e., number of points covered
- depth of analysis, i.e., how far analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination
- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overall quality of philosophical insight and expression

I stress that the order of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes less important criteria will be given more weight than more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might overlook the fact that, for instance, the student has failed to cover as many points as other students.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

a) Cheating of any kind, including collusion (working with others too closely) and plagiarism from (i) books and/or articles, (ii) other students' papers, and (iii) papers or other material on the internet, is a serious academic offence. University regulations also prohibit students from submitting the same work for two different courses; in other words, plagiarizing or "recycling" one's own work is not permitted. If detected, cheating can result in dismissal from this course (with an "F"), and dismissal from the university. Here is a link to the University's Academic Integrity policy:

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/index.php>

b) Editing: The university has a strict view about seeking the help of others for editing: "An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student's written or non-written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. The instructor should specify the extent of editing that is being authorized. Review by fellow students and tutoring that do not include editing are normally permitted. In addition to consulting with their instructors, students are encouraged to seek review of and feedback on their work that prompts them to evaluate the work and make changes themselves."

c) For further information concerning classroom conduct, please refer to the Trifaculty Code of Professional Behaviour for Students:

<https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/assets/docs/tri-fac-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>.

### **SUBMITTING AND RECEIVING BACK GRADED WORK:**

(a) Unless otherwise specified, any take-home essays assigned in his course must be *typed (12-font, Times), double-spaced, paginated, and contain the word-count on the front cover*. I will not accept essays that exceed the maximum word limit. Unless otherwise specified, any essays assigned in this course must be submitted *both* as hard-copies (as per the specific instructions of the essay) *and* through Brightspace.

(b) I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the day they are due to be written or submitted, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

(c) In general tests and essays are returned within two weeks of submission. Tests and essays are returned in class, not through Brightspace. When graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your work with me, please read those comments first. To give you a chance to do this, as a matter of policy I do not discuss work on the same day as it is returned.

(d) In cases when I return graded work in class and students are not there to receive it, it is *up to those absent students* to claim their work: I am not responsible for tracking down absent students to deliver them their work. Once I have returned graded work in class, I continue to bring that work to class (usually for about the next three classes), so that students continue to have the opportunity to claim it. After that, however, any unclaimed work is obtainable only by in-person appointment with me. Finally, I will not be available to discuss any work that has gone unclaimed by the time lectures have finished and the examination period has begun.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:**

Late assignments will be accepted *without* penalty only with medical or other compelling reason. Otherwise, late assignments will be accepted *with* penalty (of a reduction of 5% of the assessed grade of the paper per working or non-working day or part thereof, up to a maximum of 4 days [including weekend days]). After 4 days late papers will not be accepted. Missed tests can be made up, but only with medical or other compelling reason. Please note: this policy concerning late assignments does *not* apply to the reflection paragraphs that are the basis of your class participation grade. Those paragraphs will be accepted late, with 10% penalty, and only if the assigned topic has not yet been covered in class.

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

Office hours will be conducted synchronously (by Zoom), and there will be a total of two office hours per week dedicated specifically to this course. Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due-dates), if you wish to see me during office hours you need to make an appointment well ahead of time. To set up a meeting with me in my office hours, contact me either in class or by email, and I will send you the Zoom link for the appointment.

To get the most out of your appointment, it's best to come prepared with specific questions about the course material. If for some reason you cannot meet me in my posted office-hour times, please contact me to arrange an alternative time. While students are welcomed and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss course related matters (incl. class content, tests, essays, etc.), students wishing to make an appointment to discuss class content in particular need first to have attended class, or at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. This requirement is to prevent this course's office hours being used as a way for students to catch up on classes they have missed. Missed classes can be made up by listening to the class recordings posted on Brightspace.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

Under the heading of “Attendance”, Vic’s Undergraduate Calendar states the following: “Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.” The full policy statement in the calendar is here:

[https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/ryNResf\\_E?bc=true&bcCurrent=03%20%20Attendance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemtype=policies](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/ryNResf_E?bc=true&bcCurrent=03%20%20Attendance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemtype=policies).

In this course class attendance will be required for students wishing to discuss class content during office hours. While students are welcomed and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss class content, to do so students need first to have attended class, or at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace.

Class attendance is *extremely important* in this course when it comes to evaluation, because you can assume that all forms of testing adopted in this course will focus on the material covered in class. The minimum expectation in all forms of evaluation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings; nor does it mean that you cannot look to external sources for guidance. What it does mean is that in any and all assignments you need to take explicit account of the texts and passages covered in class and to do justice to the in-class discussions of them. Obviously, the best way to ensure that you meet those requires is to attend class. As for use of external sources (i.e., secondary literature), this will be regarded as beneficial only *after* the class-based material has been addressed.

Overall, then, the various assignments for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in class, but are deliberately constructed to incorporate what goes on there. Assignments that fail to incorporate important points arising out of class discussion will be penalized accordingly. At the same time, essays can also provide you with room to explore topics more deeply than they have been treated in class, and good essays do precisely that. Overall, then, “B+” and “A-” papers take account of and rise to the level of the class discussion; “A” and “A+” papers take that discussion to a higher/deeper level.

If you happen to miss a class, a written summary of the material scheduled for that day will be posted on Brightspace shortly (usually within 24 hours) thereafter. However, it must be emphasized that these are just general summaries, *not* detailed class-notes. They do little more than list the key themes covered in the lecture on a given day, and refer to the passages explicitly covered during the class. A recording of the class will also be posted on Brightspace—again, usually within 24 hours of the class.

### **IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION:**

In general my classes tend to involve lots of discussion. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a

frequently unacknowledged fact of the classroom that if you have a question or comment, it's highly likely that others have the same one too. So, go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. If, however, you are more reserved but still have comments or questions, please come see me during office hours.

### **MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND CLASS POLICIES:**

a) Emailing me: Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I have to request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the "subject" line of your email to identify you as a student in this course. If you don't do this, and I don't recognize your name, I will delete your email without opening it.

In addition to this, I would greatly appreciate it if you observed the (still) standard courtesy of beginning your emails with a salutation, e.g., "Dear Dr. Scott", "Hello Dr. Scott", etc. (as opposed to, e.g., "Hey Dave" or "Dude", which is too informal). Use of formal salutation is social etiquette rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to. After all, unlike ATM machines, humans have the *option* to respond, so it's wise to ask them nicely.

b) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment. It can be a distraction when people walk in late. So please try to be on time.

c) Visits to the classroom by non-registered students: As the instructor for this course I am duty-bound to ensure that a work environment is preserved in class. Both students and I can find it a distraction for strangers to walk into the classroom. It takes some students time before they gain confidence to participate in the class proceedings, and the presence of a stranger can be disruptive in that regard. If, as sometimes happens, you wish to invite a friend to attend my class to check it out, you need to ask permission ahead of time.

d) Use of computers in the class: For the purpose of taking notes, you are of course welcome to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom. Watching films and other distracting uses of computers are prohibited.

## **2. SCHEDULE\***

### **WEEK 1 (Class 1: Sept. 7)**

1. Thurs. Sept. 7 - Introduction. 1. Plato, *Apology* [pdf].

### **WEEK 2 (Classes 2 & 3: Sept. 11 & 14)**

2. Mon. Sept. 11 - Plato, *Apology* [pdf].

3. Thurs. Sept. 14 - Plato, *Meno* [pdf]. Doctrine of the Forms (Reality).

**WEEK 3 (Classes 4 & 5: Sept. 18 & 21)**

4. Mon. Sept. 18 - Plato, *Meno* [pdf]. Doctrine of the Forms (Reality).  
5. Thurs. Sept. 21 - Aristotle, *Categories* [pdf]. Theory of Substance (Reality).

**WEEK 4 (Classes 6 & 7: Sept. 25 & 28)**

6. Mon. Sept. 25 - Plato, *Meno* [pdf]. Learning as Recollection of Prior Knowledge.  
7. Thurs. Sept. 28 - Descartes, *Meditations* [pdf]. Meditation III. What's in the Mind.

**WEEK 5 (Class 8: Oct. 5)**

- Mon. Oct. 2 - **No Class (National Day of Truth and Reconciliation)**  
8. Thurs. Oct. 5 - **First in-class test of term.**

**WEEK 6 (Class 9: Oct. 12)**

- Mon. Oct. 9 - **No Class (Thanksgiving Day)**  
9. Thurs. Oct. 12 - Locke, *Essay CHU* [pdf]. Contra Innate Ideas

**WEEK 7 (Classes 10 & 11: Oct. 16 & 19)**

10. Mon. Oct. 16 - Hume, *Enquiry CHU* [pdf]. Empiricism and Skepticism.  
11. Thurs. Oct. 19 - Hume, *Enquiry CHU* [pdf]. Empiricism and Skepticism.

**WEEK 8 (Classes 12 & 13: Oct. 23 & 26)**

12. Mon. Oct. 23 - Hume, *Enquiry CHU* [pdf]. Empiricism and Skepticism.  
13. Thurs. Oct. 26 - Locke, *Essay CHU* [pdf]. Personal Identity: Idea of the Mind (Self).

**WEEK 9 (Classes 14 & 15: Oct. 30 & Nov. 2)**

14. Mon. Oct. 30 - Hume, *Treatise OHN* [pdf]. Personal Identity: Idea of Mind (Self).  
15. Thurs. Nov. 2 - **Second in-class test.**

**WEEK 10 (Class 16 & 17: Nov. 6 & 9)**

16. Mon. Nov. 6 - Descartes, *Meditations* [pdf]. Meds. I & II: Theory of Mind (Self).

17. Thurs. Nov. 9- Descartes, *Meditations* [pdf]. Meds. I & II: Mind (Self) vs. Matter.

**WEEK 11 (Class 18: Nov. 16)**

Mon. Nov. 13 - **No Class (Remembrance Day)**

18. Thurs. Nov. 16 - Descartes, *Meditations* [pdf]. Meds. I & II: Mind (Self) vs. Matter.

**WEEK 12 (Classes 19 & 20: Nov. 20 & 23)**

19. Mon. Nov. 20 - Plato's *Phaedo* [pdf]. Nature & Immortality of Soul.

20. Thurs. Nov. 23 - Russell, "Do We Survive Death?" Nature & Immortality of Soul.

**WEEK 13 (Classes 21 & 22: Nov. 27 & 30)**

21. Mon. Nov. 27 - Hick, "The Re-Creation of the Psycho-Physical Person".

22. Thurs. Nov. 30 - Hick, "The Re-Creation of the Psycho-Physical Person."

**WEEK 14 (Class 23: Dec. 4)**

23. Mon. Dec. 4 - **Last class of term: Third and final in-class test.**

Exams for first term begin on Dec. 7 and end on Dec. 20.

\* This schedule is subject to revision, as sometimes discussion and the flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally planned.