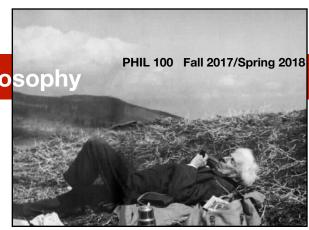# Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Karen Brown
E-mail: klbrown@uvic.ca
Office: Clearihue B 314
Office Hours: Wednesdays
10:40 -12:40
and by appointment

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 or as an ebook:

> Stan Baronett. **Journey into Philosophy: An Introduction with Classic and Contemporary Readings**. Routledge. 2016.

Available in the campus book store:

> Daniel C. Dennett. **Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting**. MIT Press. 1984.

> John Perry. **A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality**. Hackett Publishing. 1978.

All the other course readings are available on-line through the CourseSpaces page.

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

First Term		**Second Term**	
Three Writing Assignments	2.5, 5, 5 %	Three Writing Assignments	5% each
Exam One	7.5%	Exam Four	15%
Exam Two	10%	Exam Five	10%
Exam Three	15%	Exam Six	15%

Writing Assignments

Each writing assignment is designed to give you an opportunity to engage with the course material while developing particular, essential philosophical skills. For each one we will have an in-class workshop to prepare you to tackle the assignment.

	Topic	Philosophical Work
WA 1 9/19	Personal Identity	Identify an argument; check for validity and soundness
WA 2 10/17	Evidence and Belief	Explain the debate between two philosophers with divergent criteria
WA 3 11/24	Knowledge and Reality	Present an argument; offer support for premises; consider an objection
WA 4 1/30	Ethics	Apply competing theories to a case; assess their success
WA 5 2/27	Free Will and Control	Develop an argument by analogy; consider an objection
WA 6 3/16	Minds and Machines	Evaluate the success of an objection

Specific instructions for each assignment will be posted on the CourseSpaces page. It is very important to read and follow the instructions on CourseSpaces. *Each assignment will have specific criteria which must be met to receive credit.*

It is best to do the writing assignment on the basis of your own reading of the text and our class discussion of related ideas. If you choose to 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. See the note on **Academic Integrity** below.

These writing assignments are very short papers (ranging from 250 to 600 words), but they must still be typed, correctly spelled, grammatically correct and clear.

Writing assignments are due at the start of class. If you have a legitimate reason for handing your reaction paper in late, send me an email message briefly explaining your reason. Unexcused late reaction papers will not be accepted.

Exams

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

Missed Exams

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

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.

Introduction to Philosophy

Grading

Grades for the course will be assigned using the standard university scheme.
For interpretation of the letter grades see the university calendar at http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html#

Percentage	Grade
90 - 100	A+
85 - 89	A
80 - 84	A-
77 - 79	B+
73 - 76	B
70 - 72	B-
65 - 69	C+
60 - 64	C
50 - 59	D
Below 50	F

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: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#

Course Schedule
Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and posted on the CourseSpaces page.

Readings followed by —J are in **Journey into Philosophy**.

Readings followed by —CS can be found through CourseSpaces

Readings listed as Recommended are optional, supplemental readings. All other readings listed here should be read prior to class on the day they are listed.

First Term

W 9/6	Introduction

Logic

F 9/8	*Appendix 1: The Role of Logic* Read up through *Formal Fallacies*. —J
T 9/12	Recommended: The Logic Café —CS

Searching for the Self

W 9/13	Perry **A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality,** *The First Night*
F 9/15	Workshop for Writing Assignment 1
T 9/19	Writing Assignment 1 due in class
	Perry **A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality**, *The Second Night*
	Recommended: Locke Identity and Diversity —J
W 9/20	Perry **A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality,** *The Third Night*
F 9/22	Velleman *So It Goes* —J

T 9/26	EXAM ONE

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief

W 9/27   Recommended: Hume **Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion**, Parts I and II —CS

F 9/29   Payley The Watchmaker Argument —J
                  Hume   Against the Watchmaker Argument —J

T 10/3   Recommended: Hume **Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion**, Parts III through IX —CS

W 10/4   Mackie *Evil and Omnipotence* —J
                  Hume **Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion**, Parts X through XII —CS

F 10/6   Clifford *The Ethics of Belief* —J

T 10/10   James *The Will to Believe* —J

Philosophy of Science

W 10/11   Workshop for Writing Assignment 2

F 10/13   Peirce *The Nature of Inquiry* —J

T 10/17   **Writing Assignment 2 due in class**
                  Gould *The Chain of Reason vs. the Chain of Thumbs* —CS
                  Pigliucci and Boudry *The Dangers of Pseudoscience* —CS

W 10/18   Longino *Can There Be a Feminist Science?* —J

F 10/20   Koertge *Wrestling with the Social Constructor* —J

T 10/24   E X A M   T W O

Knowledge and Reality

W 10/25   Plato Knowledge is Recollection —J
                  Recommended: Plato **Meno** —CS

F 10/27   *continued*

T 10/31   Plato The Divided Line and the Cave —J
                  Recommended: Plato selections from **Phaedo** —CS

W 11/1   Russell *The World of Universals* —CS

F 11/3   Descartes **Meditations on First Philosophy**, Meditation One —J

T 11/7   Descartes **Meditations on First Philosophy**, Meditation Two —J

W 11/8   *continued*

F 11/10   Recommended: Descartes **Meditations on First Philosophy,** Meditations Three through Six —CS

Introduction to Philosophy

Reading Break 11/13 — 11/15   No Classes

Knowledge and Reality (continued)

F 11/17	Russell *Appearance and Reality* —CS Workshop for Writing Assignment 3	
T 11/21	Locke Knowledge Derives from Experience —J	
W 11/22	Berkeley **Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous** , First Dialogue —CS	

F 11/24	Writing Assignment 3 due in class

T 11/28	Berkeley To Be Is to Be Perceived —J
W 11/29	Review

F 12/1	EXAM THREE

Second Term

Ethics

W 1/3	Introduction to Ethics
F 1/5	Plato Why Should We Be Good? —J Read up through "…becomes unjust as far as he can be."
T 1/9	Hobbes Solitary, Poor, Nasty, Brutish and Short —J
W 1/10	Kant **Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals**, Chapter One—CS
F 1/12	*continued*
T 1/16	Epicurus In Waking or in Dream —J
W 1/17	Bentham **An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation**, Chapters One and Four —CS
F 1/19	Mill The Principle of Utility —J
T 1/23	continued
W 1/24	Williams from **Utilitarianism: For and Against** —CS *The Trolley Problem* —CS
F 1/26	Workshop for Writing Assignment 4

T 1/30	Writing Assignment 4 due in class
	Aristotle Virtues —J

Introduction to Philosophy

Ethics *(continued)*

    W 1/31   continued

    F 2/2   MacIntyre *The Nature of the Virtues* —CS

> **T 2/6   EXAM FOUR**

Free Will

    W 2/7   Introduction to Free Will

    F 2/9   Dennett *Please Don't Feed the Bugbears*

Reading Break 2/12 — 2/16   No Classes

    T 2/20   Dennett *Making Reason Practical*

    W 2/21   Dennett *Control and Self-Control*
                    Workshop for Writing Assignment 5

    F 2/23   Dennett *Self-Made Selves*

    T 2/27   Writing Assignment 5 due in class
                    Dennett *Acting Under the Idea of Freedom*

    W 2/28   Dennett *"Could Have Done Otherwise"*

    F 3/2   Dennett *Why do we want free will?*

> **T 3/6   EXAM FIVE**

Philosophy of Mind

    W 3/7   Introduction

    F 3/9   Ryle from **The Concept of Mind** —CS

    T 3/13   Turing from *Computing Machinery and Intelligence* —CS
                    Workshop for Writing Assignment 6

    W 3/14   *Searle Watson Doesn't Know It Won on "Jeopardy!"* —CS

    F 3/16   Writing Assignment 6 due in class
                    James Does Consciousness Exist —J

    T 3/20   Nagel *What is it like to be a bat?* —J

    W 3/21   Churchland *The Hornswoggle Problem*—J

Introduction to Philosophy

The Meaning of Life

       F 3/23   Tolstoy *My Confession* —CS

       T 3/27   Schopenhauer The Vanity of Existence —J

       W 3/28   Kierkegaard What Then Would Life Be? —J
                             Camus from **The Myth of Sisyphus** —CS

Easter Break 3/30 — 4/2   No Classes

       T 4/3   Nagel *The Absurd* —J

       W 4/4   Wolf *Happiness and Meaning*, Section II Meaning in Life —CS
                             Recommended: Russell *The Value of Philosophy* —J

       F 4/6   E X A M   S I X