



**Instructor:** Karen Brown  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays & Thursdays  
2:30-3:00  
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:

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

E.D. Klemke and Steven M. Cahn. **The Meaning of Life: A Reader**. Oxford University Press. 2008.

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

All other course readings are available through CourseSpaces.

## CourseSpaces

To access the course materials on CourseSpaces go to [coursespaces.uvic.ca](http://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.

## Course Work (See the schedule below for dates.)

Four Reaction Papers		5% each
Exam One	Logic, Personal Identity, Religion	20%
Exam Two	Ethics	20%
Exam Three	Mind, Knowledge and Reality	20%
Exam Four	Free Will, Meaning of Life	20%

# Introduction to Philosophy

## 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.

### Academic Integrity

The University Policy on Academic Integrity (covering plagiarism, multiple submission, falsifying materials, cheating and aiding others to cheat) will be enforced in this course. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the policy. You can find it online in the UVIC Calendar at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>.

## 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 N and DEF status, please see Department of Philosophy Policies posted in glass cabinets adjacent to CLE B315.

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVIC Calendar at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/religious-observanc.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

# Introduction to Philosophy

## Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is tentative. Any changes will be announced in class.

### Logic

- |       |                                           |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|
| M 5/8 | First Meeting (no reading assignment)     |
| T 5/9 | Logic Café Chapter One, Tutorials 1 and 2 |

### Personal Identity

- |         |                                                                                                                       |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| W 5/10  | Perry <b>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality</b> The First Night                                          |
| Th 5/11 | REACTION PAPER 1<br>Perry <b>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality</b><br>The Second Night, The Third Night |
| F 5/12  | no class                                                                                                              |

### Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief

- |         |                                                                                                                      |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| M 5/15  | Hume <b>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</b><br><i>Parts I through IX</i>                                       |
| T 5/16  | Hume <b>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</b><br><i>Parts X through XII</i>                                      |
| W 5/17  | Clifford <i>The Ethics of Belief: Part I The Duty of Inquiry</i><br>James <i>The Will to Believe</i>                 |
| Th 5/18 | Gould <i>The Chain of Reason vs. the Chain of Thumbs</i><br>Pigliucci and Boudry <i>The Dangers of Pseudoscience</i> |

F 5/19 EXAM ONE

### Ethics

- |         |                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| M 5/22  | VICTORIA DAY— NO CLASS                                                                                                                             |
| T 5/23  | Epicurus <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i><br>Kagan <i>Is Death Bad for You?</i>                                                                          |
| W 5/24  | Bentham <b>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</b><br>Chapters One and Four<br>Mill from <b>Utilitarianism</b> Chapter Two |
| Th 5/25 | Kant from <b>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</b> Chapter One                                                                               |
| F 5/26  | REACTION PAPER 2<br>Williams from <b>Utilitarianism: For and Against</b><br><i>The Trolley Problem</i> (video)                                     |
| M 5/29  | Plato from <b>Republic</b> Book II<br>Allen <i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i> (video)                                                                 |
| T 5/30  | Hobbes from <b>Leviathan</b>                                                                                                                       |
| W 5/31  | Aristotle <b>Nicomachean Ethics</b> , Book II                                                                                                      |
| Th 6/1  | no class                                                                                                                                           |

F 6/2 EXAM TWO

# Introduction to Philosophy

## **Philosophy of Mind**

- M 6/5 Ryle *Descartes' Myth*  
Armstrong *The Nature of Mind*
- T 6/6 Nagel *What is it like to be a bat?*  
Churchland *Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes* Sections 1 and 2

## **Knowledge and Reality**

- W 6/7 Plato *Meno*
- Th 6/8 Plato *Phaedo*  
Russell *The World of Universals*
- F 6/9 Descartes **Meditations on First Philosophy**, Meditations One and Two
- M 6/12 Descartes **Meditations on First Philosophy** Meditations Three through Six
- T 6/13 REACTION PAPER 3  
Russell *Appearance and Reality, The Existence of Matter*  
Locke from **An Essay Concerning Human Understanding**
- W 6/14 no class
- Th 6/15 Berkeley **Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous**  
First Dialogue
- F 6/16 Berkeley **Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous**  
Third Dialogue
- M 6/19 no class

T 6/20 EXAM THREE

## **Free Will**

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

- W 6/21 Dennett *Please Don't Feed the Bugbears, Making Reason Practical*
- Th 6/22 REACTION PAPER 4  
Dennett *Control and Self-Control, Self-Made Selves*
- F 6/23 Dennett *Acting Under the Idea of Freedom, "Could Have Done Otherwise"*

## **The Meaning of Life**

(all readings in this section are from **The Meaning of Life: A Reader**)

- M 6/26 Tolstoy *My Confession*  
Edwards *The Meaning and Value of Life*
- T 6/27 Camus *The Myth of Sisyphus*  
Nagel *The Absurd*
- W 6/28 Wolf *Meaning in Life*  
Cahn *Meaningless Lives?*
- Th 6/29 no class

F 6/30 EXAM FOUR