

# Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 100  
Fall 2018/Spring 2019

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays  
1:30 -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. 2015.

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

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

## 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. If you have difficulty accessing CourseSpaces or if a link to a particular reading is malfunctioning, please let me know by email right away so that I can take care of the problem.

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

Please add a photo of yourself to your CourseSpaces profile. This is not required, but in a large class it is very helpful.

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

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Three Writing Assignments | 2.5, 5, 5 % |
| Exam One                  | 7.5%        |
| Exam Two                  | 10%         |
| Exam Three                | 15%         |

### Second Term

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Three Writing Assignments | 5% each |
| Exam Four                 | 15%     |
| Exam Five                 | 10%     |
| 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 11/27 | Ethics                | Apply a theory to a particular case and evaluate its success        |
| WA 4 1/29  | Knowledge and Reality | Use an example to support an argument                               |
| WA 5 3/1   | Free Will and Control | Develop an argument by analogy; consider an objection               |
| WA 6 3/20  | 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 those instructions. *Each assignment will have specific criteria which must be met to receive credit.*

It is best to do the writing assignments 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 written assignment in late, send me an email message briefly explaining your reason. Unexcused late writing assignments 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 Uvic Undergraduate Grading Scale:

| 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   | N or F |

A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically **superior**, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations.

B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates **good** comprehension of the course material, good command of the skills needed to work with it, and full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application.

C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an **adequate** comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.

D is earned by work that indicates **minimal** command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.

N indicates that the course requirements were not completed.

## Academic Integrity

The University Policy on Academic Integrity (covering plagiarism, multiple submission, unauthorized use of an editor, 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 <https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/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

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W 9/5 Introduction

#### **Logic**

F 9/7 *The Logic Café*, Chapter 1, Tutorials 1 and 2

T 9/11 *continued*

W 9/12 logic practice

#### **The Self**

F 9/14 Perry *A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality*, *The First Night*

T 9/18 Workshop for Writing Assignment 1

# Introduction to Philosophy

## *The Self continued*

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| W 9/19 | Writing Assignment 1 due in class<br>Perry A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, <i>The Second Night</i> |
| F 9/21 | Perry A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, <i>The Third Night</i>                                       |
| T 9/25 | Velleman <i>So It Goes</i>  |

W 9/26 EXAM ONE

## *Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| F 9/28  | Hume Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts I and II       |
| T 10/2  | Hume Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts III through IX |
| W 10/3  | <i>continued</i>   |
| F 10/5  | Hume Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts X through XII  |
| T 10/9  | Clifford <i>The Ethics of Belief</i>                             |
| W 10/10 | James <i>The Will to Believe</i>                                 |

## *Philosophy of Science*

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| F 10/12 | Workshop for Writing Assignment 2   |
| T 10/16 | Peirce <i>The Nature of Inquiry</i>   |
| W 10/17 | Writing Assignment 2 due in class<br>Gould <i>The Chain of Reason vs. the Chain of Thumbs</i><br>Pigliucci and Boudry <i>The Dangers of Pseudoscience</i> |
| F 10/19 | Longino <i>Can There Be a Feminist Science?</i>   |
| T 10/23 | Koertge <i>Wrestling with the Social Constructor</i>  |

W 10/24 EXAM TWO

## *Ethics*

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| F 10/26 | Introduction to Ethics  |
| T 10/30 | Plato from <b>Republic</b> , Book II                              |
| W 10/31 | Hobbes from <b>Leviathan</b>                                      |
| F 11/2  | Kant <b>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</b> , Section One |
| T 11/6  | <i>continued</i>  |

# Introduction to Philosophy

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| W 11/7 | Epicurus <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i><br>Kagan <i>Is Death Bad for You?</i>                             |
| F 11/9 | Bentham <b>An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</b> ,<br>Chapters One and Four |

## Reading Break 11/12 – 11/14 No Classes

### *Ethics continued*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| F 11/16 | Mill from <b>Utilitarianism</b> , Chapter Two  |
| T 11/20 | <i>continued</i>   |
| W 11/21 | The Trolley Problem (video)  |
| F 11/23 | Workshop for Writing Assignment 3  |
| T 11/27 | Writing Assignment Three due in class<br>Aristotle <b>Nicomachean Ethics</b> , Book II |
| W 11/28 | <i>continued</i>   |
| F 11/30 | Saul <i>Feminism and Respect for Cultures</i>  |
| T 12/4  | Review   |

W 12/5 EXAM THREE

## Second Term

### **Knowledge and Reality**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| T 1/8  | Plato <b>Meno</b>  |
| W 1/9  | <i>continued</i>   |
| F 1/11 | Plato <b>Phaedo</b>  |
| T 1/15 | Russell <i>The World of Universals</i>   |
| W 1/16 | Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditation One                |
| F 1/18 | Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditation Two                |
| T 1/22 | <i>continued</i>   |
| W 1/23 | Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditations Three through Six |

# Introduction to Philosophy

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| F 1/25 | <i>continued</i><br>Workshop for Writing Assignment 4  |
| T 1/29 | Writing Assignment Four due in class<br>Russell <i>Appearance and Reality, The Existence of Matter</i> |
| W 1/30 | Locke from <b>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</b>  |
| F 2/1  | Berkeley <b>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</b> , First Dialogue                           |
| T 2/5  | Berkeley <b>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</b> , Third Dialogue                           |
| W 2/6  | Review   |

F 2/8 EXAM FOUR

## **Free Will**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| T 2/12 | Introduction to Free Will                     |
| W 2/13 | Dennett <i>Please Don't Feed the Bugbears</i> |
| F 2/15 | Dennett <i>Making Reason Practical</i>        |

## **Reading Break 2/18 – 2/22 No Classes**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| T 2/26 | Dennett <i>Control and Self-Control</i><br>Workshop for Writing Assignment 5         |
| W 2/27 | Dennett <i>Self-Made Selves</i>  |
| F 3/1  | Writing Assignment 5 due in class<br>Dennett <i>Acting Under the Idea of Freedom</i> |
| T 3/5  | Dennett "Could Have Done Otherwise"  |
| W 3/6  | Dennett <i>Why do we want free will?</i>   |

F 3/8 EXAM FIVE

## **Philosophy of Mind**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| T 3/12 | Introduction   |
| W 3/13 | Ryle from <b>The Concept of Mind</b>   |
| F 3/15 | Turing from <i>Computing Machinery and Intelligence</i><br>Workshop for Writing Assignment 6 |

# Introduction to Philosophy

T 3/19 Searle *Watson Doesn't Know It Won on "Jeopardy!"*

W 3/20 Writing Assignment 6 due in class  
Nagel *What is it like to be a bat?*

F 3/22 Churchland *The Hornswoggle Problem*

## ***The Meaning of Life***

T 3/26 Tolstoy *My Confession*

W 3/27 Schopenhauer *The Vanity of Existence*

F 3/29 Camus from **The Myth of Sisyphus**

T 4/2 Nagel *The Absurd*

W 4/3 Wolf *Happiness and Meaning*, Section II *Meaning in Life*  
Russell *The Value of Philosophy*

F 4/5 EXAM SIX