

# Introduction to Philosophy

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 2:30 -3:30  
 and by appointment



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## 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.

Stephen Stich and Tom Donaldson. **Philosophy: Asking Questions—Seeking Answers**. Oxford University Press. 2019.

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](https://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.

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## 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 9/18	Personal Identity	Identify an argument; check for validity and soundness
WA 2 10/16	Evidence and Belief	Explain the debate between two philosophers with divergent criteria
WA 3 11/20	Knowledge and Reality	Use an example to support an argument
WA 4 1/21	Ethics	Apply a theory to a particular case and evaluate its success
WA 5 2/28	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.

## Submitting Writing Assignments

Your writing assignments must be submitted on-line through CourseSpaces. Specific instructions are posted on CourseSpaces along with the detailed descriptions of the assignments.

Writing assignments are due at 9:30 a.m. on the dates listed on this course outline. Unexcused late submissions will immediately lose 5% and will lose an additional 5% every 24 hours. If you are submitting your assignment late and the lateness was unavoidable, let me know so that we can waive the late penalty.

## Exams

These will be in-class exams covering material from the readings, lectures and class discussion. They will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer questions and essay questions. Information about what to expect on individual exams will be posted on CourseSpaces.

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## Missed Exams

If you miss an exam due to illness or exceptional circumstance 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 links are available in the Participants section of the CourseSpaces page.

Class slides may be posted on CourseSpaces. When they are, please remember that they are designed to accompany the lecture, not to replace it.

## 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#>

If you have any doubts about what this policy requires or any questions about whether or not you are complying with it, please don't hesitate to ask me about it.

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## Course Schedule

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

“S&D” stands for Stich and Donaldson’s **Philosophy: Asking Questions—Seeking Answers**.

All readings other than those in S&D or in the texts by Dennett and Perry can be found on the CourseSpaces page.

## First Term

### Introduction

W 9/4	S&D Chapter 1: <i>What is philosophy?</i>
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### Logic

F 9/6	S&D Chapter 2: <i>What are arguments and how should we evaluate them?</i>
T 9/10	<i>continued</i>

### Searching for the Self

W 9/11	Perry <b>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, <i>The First Night</i></b> S&D Chapter 11: <i>Will you be the same person in ten years? Could you survive your death?</i> Sections 1—3
F 9/13	Workshop for Writing Assignment 1
T 9/17	Logic practice
W 9/18	<b>Writing Assignment 1 due at 9:30 a.m.</b> Perry <b>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, <i>The Second Night</i></b> S&D Chapter 11: <i>Will you be the same person in ten years? Could you survive your death?</i> Section 4
F 9/20	Perry <b>A Dialogue On Personal Identity And Immortality, <i>The Third Night</i></b> S&D Chapter 11: <i>Will you be the same person in ten years? Could you survive your death?</i> Section 5
T 9/24	Velleman <i>So It Goes</i>

W 9/25	<b>EXAM ONE</b>
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### Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief

F 9/27	<b>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</b> , Parts I and II
T 10/1	Hume <b>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</b> , Parts III through IX S&D Chapter 4: <i>Does God exist?</i> Sections 1—6

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## Philosophy of Religion and the Ethics of Belief continued

W 10/2	<i>continued</i>
F 10/4	Hume <b>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</b> , Parts X through XII S&D Chapter 4: <i>Why does God leave us to suffer?</i>
T 10/8	Clifford <i>The Ethics of Belief</i>
W 10/9	James <i>The Will to Believe</i> S&D Chapter 3: <i>Does God exist?</i> Section 9

## Philosophy of Science

F 10/11	Workshop for Writing Assignment 2
T 10/15	Gould <i>The Chain of Reason vs. the Chain of Thumbs</i> Pigliucci and Boudry <i>The Dangers of Pseudoscience</i>
W 10/16	Writing Assignment 2 due at 9:30 a.m. S&D Chapter 7: Will the sun rise tomorrow? Sections 1—3
F 10/18	S&D Chapter 7: Will the sun rise tomorrow? Sections 4—7
T 10/22	<i>continued</i>

W 10/23 EXAM TWO

## Knowledge and Reality

F 10/25	Plato <b>Meno</b>
T 10/29	<i>continued</i>
W 10/30	Plato <b>Phaedo</b>
F 11/1	Russell <i>The World of Universals</i>
T 11/5	Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditation One S&D Chapter 13: <i>What really matters?</i> , Sections 1—3
W 11/6	Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditation Two S&D Chapter 13: <i>What really matters?</i> , Section 4
F 11/8	<i>continued</i>

Reading Break 11/11 — 11/13 No Classes

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## Knowledge and Reality continued

F 11/15	Descartes <b>Meditations on First Philosophy</b> , Meditations Three through Six S&D Chapter 5: <i>Can we be completely certain about anything?</i> , Sections 5—9
T 11/19	<i>continued</i> Workshop for Writing Assignment 3
W 11/20	Writing Assignment Three due at 9:30 a.m. Russell <i>Appearance and Reality</i> , <i>The Existence of Matter</i>
F 11/22	Locke from <b>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</b> S&D Chapter 6: <i>Can we trust our senses?</i> , Sections 1—3
T 11/26	Berkeley <b>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</b> , First Dialogue S&D Chapter 6: <i>Can we trust our senses?</i> , Sections 4 & 5
W 11/27	Berkeley <b>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</b> , Third Dialogue
F 11/29	S&D Chapter 6: <i>Can we trust our senses?</i> , Sections 6—7
T 12/3	Review

W 12/4 EXAM THREE

## Second Term

### Ethics and the Good Life

T 1/7	Introduction to Ethics
W 1/8	Aristotle <b>Nicomachean Ethics</b> , Book II
F 1/10	Epicurus <i>Letter to Menoeceus</i> S&D Chapter 13: <i>What really matters?</i> , Sections 1 & 2
T 1/14	Workshop for Writing Assignment 4
W 1/15	S&D Chapter 13: What should we do? (Part I), Sections 1—3 Kant <b>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</b> , Section One
F 1/17	<i>continued</i>
T 1/21	Writing Assignment Four due at 9:30 a.m. S&D Chapter 13: What should we do? (Part I), Sections 4 & 5 Mill from <b>Utilitarianism</b> , Chapter Two
W 1/22	<i>continued</i>

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## Ethics and the Good Life continued

F 1/24	S&D Chapter 13: What should we do? (Part I), Section 6 The Trolley Problem (video)
T 1/28	S&D Chapter 12: Are there objective truths about right and wrong?, Sections 1, 2 & 4 Saul <i>Feminism and Respect for Cultures</i>
W 1/29	S&D Chapter 15: What should we do? (Part II), Sections 1 & 2 (duty to aid)
F 1/31	S&D Chapter 15: What should we do? (Part II), Section 3 (eating meat)
T 2/4	S&D Chapter 15: What should we do? (Part II), Section 4 (abortion)
W 2/5	Review

F 2/7 EXAM FOUR

## Free Will

T 2/11	Introduction to Free Will
W 2/12	Dennett <i>Please Don't Feed the Bugbears</i>
F 2/14	Dennett <i>Making Reason Practical</i>

**Reading Break 2/17 – 2/21 No Classes**

## Free Will continued

T 2/25	Dennett <i>Control and Self-Control</i> Workshop for Writing Assignment 5
W 2/26	Dennett <i>Self-Made Selves</i>
F 2/28	Writing Assignment 5 due at 9:30 a.m. Dennett <i>Acting Under the Idea of Freedom</i>
T 3/4	Dennett <i>"Could Have Done Otherwise", Why do we want free will?</i>

W 3/6 EXAM FIVE

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## Philosophy of Mind

T 3/10	S&D Chapter 10: <i>How is your mind related to your body?</i> , Sections 1 & 2
W 3/11	Ryle from <b>The Concept of Mind</b> S&D Chapter 10: <i>How is your mind related to your body?</i> , Section 3
F 3/13	S&D Chapter 10: <i>How is your mind related to your body?</i> , Sections 4—6
T 3/17	Turing from <i>Computing Machinery and Intelligence</i> Workshop for Writing Assignment 6
W 3/18	Searle <i>Watson Doesn't Know It Won on "Jeopardy!"</i>
F 3/20	<b>Writing Assignment 6 due at 9:30 a.m.</b> Nagel <i>What is it like to be a bat?</i>
T 3/24	Churchland <i>The Hornswoggle Problem</i>

## The Good Life and the Meaning of Life

W 3/25	Tolstoy <i>My Confession</i>
F 3/27	Camus from <b>The Myth of Sisyphus</b> S&D Chapter 13: <i>What really matters?</i> , Section 3
T 3/31	Nagel <i>The Absurd</i>
W 4/1	Wolf <i>Happiness and Meaning</i> , Section II Meaning in Life S&D Chapter 13: <i>What really matters?</i> , Sections 4 & 5 Russell <i>The Value of Philosophy</i>

F 4/3      EXAM SIX