

## PHILOSOPHY 100

## Introduction to Philosophy

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**The Instructor:**

I was interested in philosophy from an early age. Even as a student at Burnaby North High School, I was reading (though not understanding) philosophers, including Plato. I knew going into university that I wanted to study philosophy. (This is very unusual; most students come to philosophy after deciding that they don't like whatever they initially planned to study.) After receiving my B.A. at Simon Fraser University, I completed an M.A. at the University of Waterloo in Ontario and a Ph.D. at Boston University. I taught for a year at the University of Calgary before coming to the University of Victoria. I was also a research fellow for a year at Melbourne University in Australia. I have been a visiting scholar at the Universidad de Murcia (Spain) and a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Durham University (England).

My initial area of philosophical research was aimed at answering the question 'What is truth?' and this was the subject of my first book, *Global Anti-realism* (1995). I have subsequently written three books on philosophy of art: *Art and Knowledge* (2001) and *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (2008) *Critique of Pure Music* (2014), and *Filosofía de la Música. Respuestas a Peter Kivy* (2017). I have edited three collections of essays, translated Charles Batteux's *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle* (2015) and published more than 60 papers in scholarly journals. I was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2015.

I am passionate about philosophy and I hope to convey some of my passion to you.

**Outline**

For most students, this will be their first exposure to philosophy and you may have no clear conception of what you are about to study. Unfortunately, the nature of philosophy is itself a matter of philosophical dispute and many definitions of philosophy have been proposed. I like Wilfred Sellars' account of philosophy:

"The aim of philosophy is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term."

More specifically, philosophy is the study of a series of enduring questions. In this course, we will ask fundamental questions about the nature of reality, value, beauty and knowledge. Students will be introduced to the principal problems and schools of the Western philosophical tradition. Issues in ethics, social and political philosophy, epistemology (theory of knowledge), metaphysics (theory of the basic nature of reality) and aesthetics (philosophy of art) will be addressed.

### **Course objectives:**

Students will be asked to develop the abilities to write clearly, to analyse and criticise arguments, and to construct their own arguments. Philosophy is widely recognized as the discipline best able to train students to think critically and logically. At the same time, students should develop an appreciation of the intrinsic importance and interest of philosophical questions.

Students will be encouraged to develop public speaking and debating skills by participating in discussions. Dialogue is an important part of the process of arriving at philosophical conclusions. You should feel free to offer comments and ask questions at any point. You should also feel free to provide reasons for doubting any assertion the instructor makes.

### **Format:**

Each week the instructor will offer two lectures, Mondays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. All students are encouraged to meet with the instructor in his office to discuss course material and essay topics.

### **Texts:**

This course has no text. All readings are available online, free of charge.

Here are some places the readings may be found:

Plato, *Euthyphro*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>

Plato, *Crito*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html>

Plato, *Phaedo*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1658>

Hume, 'Of the Immortality of the Soul,'  
<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hume/david/of-the-immortality-of-the-soul/>

Descartes, *Meditations*,  
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/descartes1641.pdf>

Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia,  
[www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1643\\_1.pdf](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1643_1.pdf)

Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*,  
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/leibniz1686d.pdf>

Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*,  
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/berkeley1713.pdf>

Hume, *Enquiries*, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/hume1748.pdf>

Paley, *Natural Religion*,  
<https://homepages.wmich.edu/~mcgrew/PaleyWatch.pdf>

Locke, *Essay*, [http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/locke1690book2\\_4.pdf](http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/locke1690book2_4.pdf)

Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, <https://archive.org/details/AlfredAyer>

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/mill1863.pdf>

Mill, *On Liberty*, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/mill1859.pdf>

Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste,"  
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/hume1757essay2.pdf>

Plato, *Republic*; <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11.x.html>

Tolstoy, <http://www.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361r14.html>

### **Grading:**

Students will write four essays of approximately 1500 words and a series of surprise quizzes. Two essays will be due before Christmas, and two in the second term. Students will write a total of fifteen surprise quizzes. The best ten grades on these quizzes will be used in the calculation of your final grade. Your ten best quizzes will be worth 20% of the course grade. Each of the four essays will be worth 20%. **N.B.: In order to pass the course, students must submit all four essays and write at**

**least eight quizzes. Otherwise you will be assigned and N grade. If you are having trouble completing the essays, please see the instructor as soon as possible.**

Four criteria will be used in assessing essays: (1) effective and correct use of the English language; (2) accurate presentation of the views of the philosophers discussed; (3) presentation of valid arguments; and (4) evidence of original thought. A first-class essay will be characterised by clear, grammatical prose and careful exegesis. It will display an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments being discussed. It will state a thesis and present reasoned arguments for it. A first-class essay will also contain evidence of your own efforts grapple with philosophical issues and to arrive at your own solutions. Students are not expected to make startling philosophical discoveries, but they are expected to engage the issues. Students are discouraged from making use of secondary sources. Their own reasoned reflections are more important than a survey of the extant literature.

Students will receive a final grade out of 100 points. Numbers will be converted to a letter grade in accordance with the following scale: 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; 0-49=F. Final grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

After the deadlines, essays will be accepted without penalty for ten days. If papers are submitted after the deadline, I will not feel under an obligation to provide extensive comments on them. No papers will be accepted more than ten days after the deadline. Exceptions will be made only in cases of illness or personal crisis. Requests for exceptions must be received **in writing** and **no more than ten days after the deadline**.

### **Academic integrity**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are serious academic offences and will not be tolerated. Please see the University Calendar for the regulations on academic integrity: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>. The minimum penalty for violation of the policy is a failing grade on an assignment produced. Serious or repeated plagiarism can result in failure of a course and even suspension from the University. A good way to avoid plagiarism is to take the instructor's advice and avoid secondary sources altogether.

## Schedule of Lectures: First Term

Week One                      5 September

Topic: What is Philosophy?  
Readings: None

Week Two                      9 and 12 September

Topic: Introduction to Philosophical Reasoning  
Readings: Plato, *Euthyphro*

Week Three                    16 and 19 September

Topic: The authority of the state  
Readings: Plato, *Crito*

Week Four                    23 and 26 September

Topic: Is the soul immortal? (introduced)  
Readings: Plato, *Phaedo*

Week Five                    30 September and 3 October

Topic: Is the soul immortal? (continued)  
Readings: Plato, *Phaedo*; Hume, 'Of the Immortality of the Soul'

Week Six                      7 and 10 October

Topic: Introduction to Descartes  
Readings: Descartes, *Meditations* 1 and 2

Week Seven                   17 October

Topic: What can we know?  
Readings: Descartes, *Meditations* 3 and 4

Week Eight                   21 and 24 October

Topic: Does God exist? Are mind and body distinct?  
Readings: *Meditations* 5 and 6; Elisabeth of Bohemia, Correspondence with Descartes  
Assignment: First essay due, 21 October

Week Nine                      28 and 31 October

Topic: The rationalism of Leibniz  
Readings: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*

Week Ten                      4 and 7 November

Topic: Leibniz continued; Berkeley introduced  
Readings: Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

Week Eleven                  14 November

Topic: God and Science in Berkeley's thought  
Readings: Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

Week Twelve                 18 and 21 November

Topic: Introduction to Hume  
Readings: Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections 1 to 3

Week Thirteen               25 and 28 November

Topic: Hume on causality; scepticism  
Readings: Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections 4 to 7

Week Thirteen               2 December

Topic: Hume continued  
Readings: none  
Assignment: Second essay due, 2 December

### **Second Term**

Week One                      6 and 9 January

Topic: Liberty, Necessity and Morality  
Readings: *Enquiry* Sections 7 and 8

Week Two                      13 and 16 January

Topic: Miracles and a Future State  
Readings: *Enquiry* Sections 10 and 11; Paley, *Natural Religion*

Week Three                    15 and 18 January

Topic: Scepticism  
Readings: *Enquiry*, Section 12

Week Four                      20 and 23 January

Topic: Identity and personal Identity  
Readings: Locke, *Essay*, Book II, Ch. XXVII

Week Five                      27 and 30 January

Topic: Introduction to logical positivism and the principle of verifiability  
Readings: *Language, Truth and Logic* Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Week Six                      3 and 6 February

Topic: Phenomenalism  
Readings: *Language, Truth and Logic*, Chapters 4 and 5

Week Seven:                      Reading break

Week Eight                      24 and 27 February

Topic: Positivist solutions to philosophical problems  
Readings: *Language, Truth and Logic* Chapters 6 to 8  
Assignment: Third essay due 24 February

Week Nine                      26 February and 1 March

Topic: Utilitarianism  
Readings: *Utilitarianism*

Week Ten                      2 and 5 March

Topic: The Principle of Liberty  
Readings: *On Liberty* Sections 1 to 3

Week Eleven                      9 and 12 March

Topic: Individuals and the state; applications of the Principle of Liberty  
Readings: *On Liberty* Sections 4 to 5; *Chapters on Socialism*

Week Twelve                      16 and 19 March

Topic: What is Art?

Readings: Plato, *Republic*, Book X; Tolstoy, *What is Art?*

Week Thirteen                      23 and 26 March

Topic: Judging works of art

Readings: Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste"

Week Fourteen                      30 March and 2 April

Topic: Concluding remarks

Readings: No new readings

Assignment: Final essay due 6 April

N.B.: This syllabus is tentative, and intended only to give students a rough guide to readings, dates and topics.