

PHILOSOPHY 100

Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Dr J.O. Young
Office: CLE B324
Telephone: 250.721.7509
Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

Office hours may be attended in person or via Zoom as follows:

Topic: James Young's Office Hours 2022
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

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E-mail: joy@uvic.ca

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 several books on philosophy of art including *Art and Knowledge* (2001) and *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (2008) *Critique of Pure Music* (2014), *Filosofía de la Música. Respuestas a Peter Kivy* (2017) and *Radically Rethinking Copyright in the Arts* (2020). I have edited three collections of essays, translated Charles Batteux’s *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle* (2015) and (with my colleague Margaret Cameron) Jean-Baptist’s *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting* (2021). I have published more than 70 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:

The plan is to have a standard, in person class. Discussion and questions are encouraged.

If you are unwell, do not come to class. If you are required to self-isolate, do not come to class. If you have reason to believe that you may have come into contact with a person with covid-19, do not come to class.

Texts:

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://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004780373.0001.000/1:3.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/descartes>

Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Correspondence
<http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/descartes>

Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/leibniz>

Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/berkeley>

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

Paley, *Natural Theology*, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?itemID=A142&viewtype=text&pageseq=1>

Locke, *Essay*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10615/10615-h/10615-h.htm#link2HCH0030>

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

Cockburn, *A Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay*,
https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Works_of_Mrs_Catharine_Cockburn/1cwJLB9SBq4C?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=catherine+cockburn+works&printsec=frontcover

Mill, *Utilitarianism; On Liberty*, <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/mill>

Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," <http://earlymoderntexts.com/authors/hume>

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 an 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 strongly 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. 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 University Calendar for the regulations on academic integrity: <https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/>. The minimum penalty for violation of the policy is a failing grade on a plagiarised assignment. Serious or repeated plagiarism can

Week Seven 17 and 20 October

Topic: What can we know?

Readings: Descartes, *Meditations* 3 and 4

Week Eight 24 and 27 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, 27 October

Week Nine 31 October and 3 November

Topic: The rationalism of Leibniz

Readings: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*

Week Ten 7 November

Topic: Leibniz continued; Berkeley introduced

Readings: Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

Week Eleven 14 and 17 November

Topic: God and Science in Berkeley's thought

Readings: Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

Week Twelve 21 and 24 November

Topic: Introduction to Hume

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

Week Thirteen 28 November and 1 December

Topic: Hume on causality; scepticism

Readings: Hume, *Enquiry*, Sections 4 to 7

Assignment: Second essay due, 5 December

Second Term

Week One 9 and 12 January

Topic: Liberty, Necessity and Morality

Readings: *Enquiry* Sections 7 and 8

Week Eleven 13 and 16 March

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

Week Twelve 20 and 23 March

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

Week Thirteen 27 and 30 March

Topic: What is Art?
Readings: Tolstoy, *What is Art?*

Week Fourteen 3 and 6 April

Topic: Evaluating art
Readings: Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste"
Assignment: Final essay due 11 April

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