

Philosophy 100 (A02): Intr. to Philosophy (CRN = 13802)

Course Info & Schedule (Fall 2025)

1. COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: David Scott
Classroom Location: CLE A127
Class Meeting Times: Mon & Thurs, 8:30 am – 9:50 am.
Instructor's Office: CLE B320
Office Hours: Tues., Wed. 9:30 – 10:30 (Zoom)
Telephone: 250-721-7517
Email: djfsconfig@uvic.ca

ABOUT THIS FULL-YEAR COURSE:

This full-year (i.e., two semesters: Fall and Spring) course is intended to provide students with a wide-ranging introduction to the main areas of philosophy and to some of the main philosophers in the Western tradition. Students will be introduced to basic philosophical worldviews and classical questions concerning, e.g., the reality and nature of the universe, the mind, the self, God, ethics or the nature of goodness and evil. In the first semester (September to December) the course focuses on basic questions in metaphysics (theory of the nature of reality) and epistemology (theory of knowledge); whereas in the second semester (January to April) the course focuses on more on questions of value (ethics, meaning of life, philosophy of religion).

TEXT AND COURSE MATERIAL:

The readings for this course are available free through the course's Brightspace site. You can find them by going first to the "Course Tools" menu, and then selecting "Course Reserves". There you will find all the required readings for each semester of this course. They are arranged according to the weekly class schedule (below).

MARKING SCHEME AND COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

(a) Marking Scheme:

Semester 1: Class participation (5%); three in-class tests (15% each).
Semester 2: Class participation (5%); three in-class tests (15% each).

b) Letter and numerical grades: Letter correspond to the following numerical grades: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 -

79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

c) Class participation component (“reflection paragraphs”): These are brief, i.e., single-paragraph (approximately 250 words) answers to question(s) about the readings covered in class. Together they comprise 10% of the total grade (over two semesters) for this course. One or two questions will be assigned *ahead of the class in which the reading is to be discussed*, and it will be due the day *before* that class. Submission will be through Brightspace.

These reflection paragraphs are designed to test that you have done the reading for the class ahead of time, and to help prepare you for the class lecture/discussion. Your reflection paragraphs will be graded by a graduate student in the philosophy department. (All *other* work in this course, i.e., all tests and essays, will be graded the course instructor.) It is *extremely easy* to get *great* marks in these paragraphs: if you demonstrate a good faith effort to answer these questions, and if you manage to hand in all of your answers, you’ll get yourself a very easy 10% for this course, and in all likelihood your overall course experience will be significantly enhanced.

d) Using resources external to the classroom: In this course you can assume that all essay and/or exam topics are intended to test you on the material covered in class, as it has been covered there. In your essays and tests you are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that, when it comes to essays and tests, you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for essays and tests you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that you are expected to take account of or do justice to in-class discussion. The reason for this requirement is that the tests and essays for this course constitute part of a continuous whole with the lectures and in-class discussions. They do not float free of the work done in the classroom, though of course the tests and especially the essays also provide you with room to explore topics outside of the classroom confines. Roughly speaking, “B+” and “A-” papers take account of and rise to the level of the class discussion; “A” and “A+” papers take that discussion to a higher/deeper level. As for use of external sources (i.e., secondary literature), this will be regarded as beneficial in assignments only *after* the class-based material has been addressed.

e) Evaluation Criteria: The criteria I use to evaluate essays and tests are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the

assessment of a philosophy essay. Primarily my concern is with content or substance. Of course, this does not mean that form or style count for nothing (and indeed it may not ultimately be possible to divorce form from content). In indicating these evaluation criteria I emphasize that philosophy is an arts or humanities subject, which means that assessing the merits of a philosophy paper ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of philosophical writing. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative values, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e., number of points covered
- depth of analysis, i.e., how far analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination
- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overall quality of philosophical insight and expression

I stress that the order of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes seemingly less important criteria will be given more weight than seemingly more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might overlook the fact that, for instance, the student has failed to cover as many points as other students.

f) Handwriting Quality: Because the assignments of this course mainly take the form of in-class written tests, please be advised that your handwriting needs to be legible for your test to be graded. If you have written a test using extremely poor / illegible handwriting, you may be required to read your paper aloud to the test's grader, for the purpose of recording, electronically transcribing, and ultimately grading what you have written. On a different but related note, students whose handwriting is poor for documented or documentable medical reasons may wish to seek accommodation through UVic's Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL).

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

a) Cheating of *any* kind on any of the assigned work in this course (including reflection paragraphs) is **a serious academic offence**. Cheating includes (but is not restricted to) (i) collusion (working with others too closely), (ii) plagiarism from books and/or articles (or other students' papers, or papers or other material on the internet), and (iii) submission of AI-generated material as one's own. UVic regulations also prohibit students from submitting the same work for two different courses; in other words, plagiarizing or "recycling" one's own work is not permitted. If detected, cheating can result in dismissal from this course (with an "F"), and dismissal from the university. Here is a link to the University's Academic Integrity policy:

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/index.php>

b) Editing: The university has a strict view about seeking the help of others for editing: "An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student's written or non-written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. The instructor should specify the extent of editing that is being authorized. Review by fellow students and tutoring that do not include editing are normally permitted. In addition to consulting with their instructors, students are encouraged to seek review of and feedback on their work that prompts them to evaluate the work and make changes themselves."

c) For further information concerning classroom conduct, please refer to the Trifaculty Code of Professional Behaviour for Students:
<https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/assets/docs/tri-fac-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>.

SUBMITTING AND RECEIVING BACK GRADED WORK:

(a) Unless otherwise specified, any take-home essays assigned in this course must be *typed (12-font, Times), double-spaced, paginated, and contain the word-count on the front cover*. I will not accept essays that exceed the maximum word limit. Unless otherwise specified, any essays assigned in this course must be submitted *both* as hard-copies (as per the specific instructions of the essay) *and* through Brightspace.

(b) I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the day they are due to be written or submitted, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

(c) In general tests and essays are returned within two weeks of submission. Tests and essays are returned in class, not through

Brightspace. When graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your work with me, please read those comments first. To give you a chance to do this, as a matter of policy I do not discuss work on the same day as it is returned.

(d) In cases when I return graded work in class and students are not present in class to receive it, it is *up to those absent students* to claim their work: I am not responsible for tracking down absent students to deliver them their work. Once I have returned graded work in class, I continue to bring that work to class (usually for about the next two classes), so that students continue to have the opportunity to claim it. After that, however, any unclaimed work is obtainable only by in-person appointment with me. Finally, I will not be available to discuss any work that has gone unclaimed by the time lectures have finished and the examination period has begun.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:

Late assignments will be accepted *without* penalty only with medical or other compelling reason. Otherwise, late assignments will be accepted *with* penalty (of a reduction of 5% of the assessed grade of the paper per working or non-working day or part thereof, up to a maximum of 4 days [including weekend days]). After 4 days late papers will not be accepted. Missed tests can be made up, but only with medical or other compelling reason. Please note: this policy concerning late assignments does *not* apply to the reflection paragraphs that are the basis of your class participation grade. Those paragraphs will be accepted late, with 10% penalty, and only if the assigned topic has not yet been covered in class.

OFFICE HOURS:

Office hours will be conducted synchronously (by Zoom), and there will be a total of two office hours per week dedicated specifically to this course. If for some reason you cannot meet me in my posted office-hour times, please contact me to arrange an alternative time. Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due-dates), if you wish to see me during office hours you need to make an appointment well ahead of time. To set up a meeting with me in my office hours, contact me either in class or by email, and I will send you the Zoom link for the appointment.

To get the most out of your appointment, it's best to come prepared with specific questions about the course material. While students are welcomed and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss course

related matters (incl. class content, tests, essays, etc.), students wishing to make an appointment to discuss class content in particular need first to have attended class, or at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. This requirement is to prevent this course's office hours being used simply as a way for students to catch up on classes they have missed. Missed classes can be made up by listening to the class recordings posted on Brightspace.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Under the heading of "Attendance", UVic's Undergraduate Calendar states the following: "Students are expected to attend *all* classes in which they are enrolled." The full policy statement in the calendar is here:

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/ryNRsfE?bc=true&bcCurrent=03%20%20Attendance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies>.

In this course I will be enforcing a minimum class attendance requirement: class attendance is required for a *minimum* of 14 out of the 21 classes scheduled for the semester. (This excludes the three scheduled class days which we will be using for in-class tests.) Starting on the first day of classes (September 4, 2025) attendance will be taken in every class. For any given class, any student who arrives after half the time has elapsed will be marked absent. Any student who fails to meet the minimum overall attendance requirement of 14 classes for the semester will lose 25% of the overall semester mark.

The main rationale for requiring that at least 14 classes be attended is that this number represents 2/3 of the total number (21) of attendable classes (which excludes the 3 class days on which we have in-class tests). That at least 2/3 of all classes be attended seems is a reasonable requirement if penalty is to be avoided, particularly given UVic's requirement that "students...attend *all* classes in which they are enrolled", but also given the nature of the subject matter and the method I employ to teach it.

To elaborate on this point, the underlying rationale is that all students who—for *whatever* reason—fail to attend at least 2/3 of the course's classes miss simply too many of those non-quantifiable but essential elements demanded when it comes to learning this course's material. Active listening, responding to questions, etc.—e.g., the live performance of human reasoning and discourse, with its attendant experience of success and failure in the shared effort to consider

philosophical positions—are essential elements of learning and doing philosophy, and they demand a student's presence. In the end, students who have missed more than 2/3 of classes have been, in effect, significantly less involved in the course than those who have attended more regularly; and their diminished involvement should be reflected in their final grades (whatever the grades otherwise achieved in the course's assignments/tests).

Regular class attendance is also required for students wishing to discuss class content during office hours. While students are welcome and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss class content, to do so students must first have attended class or at least have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. The reason for this requirement is that student use of office hours is intended to function primarily as *supplement* to classroom lecture and discussion. Office hours are not intended as replacement or substitute for class attendance.

Finally, as noted above, class attendance is extremely important in this course when it comes to essays and tests. The reason is that, when it comes to these forms of evaluation, the minimum expectation is that you deal with *the material covered in class as it has been covered in class*. In all assignments you need to take explicit account of and do justice to the material covered in class as it has been covered there. Obviously, the best way to do this is to attend class. Material not covered in class but used by students on tests will not be recognized unless, additionally, the material covered in class has been addressed.

If you happen to miss a class, a recording of the class, along with a brief written summary of the main points covered in the class, will be posted on Brightspace shortly thereafter (usually within 24 hours).

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION:

In general, my classes involve lots of discussion. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a frequently unacknowledged fact of the classroom that if you have a question or comment, it's highly likely that others have the same one too. So, go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. If, however, you are more reserved but still have comments or questions, please come see me during office hours.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND CLASS POLICIES:

a) Emailing me: Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I have to request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the “subject” line of your email to identify you as a student in this course. If you don’t do this, and I don’t recognize your name, I will delete your email without opening it.

In addition to this, I would greatly appreciate it if you observed the (still) standard courtesy of beginning your emails with a salutation, e.g., “Dear Dr. Scott”, “Hello Dr. Scott”, etc. (as opposed to, e.g., “Hey Dave” or “Dude”, which is too informal). Use of formal salutation is social etiquette rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to. After all, unlike ATM machines, humans have the *option* to respond, so it’s wise to ask them nicely.

b) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment. It can be a distraction when people walk in late. So please try to be on time. If you arrive in class after half the class time has passed, you will be marked absent.

c) Visits to the classroom by non-registered students: As the instructor for this course I am duty-bound to ensure that a work environment is preserved in class. Both students and I can find it a distraction for strangers to walk into the classroom. It takes some students time before they gain confidence to participate in the class proceedings, and the presence of a stranger can be disruptive in that regard. If, as sometimes happens, you wish to invite a friend to attend my class to check it out, you need to ask permission ahead of time.

d) Use of computers in the class: For the purpose of taking notes, you are of course welcome to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom. Watching films and other distracting uses of computers are prohibited.

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: We acknowledge and respect the Songhees, Esquimalt (Lək̓ʷəŋən), and Saanich (W̱SÁNEĆ) Peoples, on whose territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

2. SCHEDULE (Fall Term 2025)*

WEEK 1 (Class 1: Sept. 4)

1. Thurs. Sept. 4: Course Introduction: Main Areas of Philosophy.

WEEK 2 (Classes 2 & 3: Sept. 8 & 11)

2. Mon. Sept. 8: Reading #1 (Plato, *Apology*).

3. Thurs. Sept. 11: Reading #1 (Plato, *Apology*).

WEEK 3 (Classes 4 & 5: Sept. 15 & 18)

4. Mon. Sept. 15: Reading #2 (Plato, *Meno*). Nature of reality; problem of knowledge; the soul.

5. Thurs. Sept. 18: Reading #2 (Plato, *Meno*). Nature of reality; problem of knowledge; the soul.

WEEK 4 (Classes 6 & 7: Sept. 22 & 25)

6. Mon. Sept. 22: Reading #3 (Aristotle, *Categories*). Nature of reality.

7. Thurs. Sept. 25: Reading #3 (Aristotle, *Categories*). Nature of reality. 1st draft of questions for 1st in-class test.

WEEK 5 (Class 8 & 9: Sept. 29 & Oct. 2)

8. Mon. Sept. 29: Plato and Aristotle compared. 2nd draft of questions for 1st in-class test.

9. Thurs. Oct. 2: In-class test #1.

WEEK 6 (Class 10 & 11: Oct. 6 & 9)

10. Mon. Oct. 6: Reading #4 (Descartes, *Meditations* I-III, VI). Early Modern Philosophy: Rationalism.

11. Thurs. Oct. 9: Reading #4 (Descartes, *Meditations* I-III, VI). Early Modern Philosophy: Rationalism.

WEEK 7 (Class 12: Oct. 16)

Mon. Oct. 13: No Classes (Thanksgiving Day).

12. Thurs. Oct. 16: Reading #4 (Descartes, *Meditations* I-III, VI).
Early Modern Philosophy: Rationalism.

WEEK 8 (Classes 13 & 14: Oct. 20 & 23)

13. Mon. Oct. 20: Reading #5 (Hume, *Enquiry...Human Understanding*). Early Modern Philosophy: Empiricism & skepticism.

14. Thurs. Oct. 23: Reading #5 (Hume, *Enquiry...Human Understanding*). Early Modern Philosophy: Empiricism & skepticism.
1st draft of questions for 2nd in-class test.

WEEK 9 (Classes 15 & 16: Oct. 27 & Oct. 30)

15. Mon. Oct. 27: Review for test. 2nd draft of questions distributed for 2nd in-class test.

16. Thurs. Oct. 30: In-class test #2.

Fri. Oct 31: Last day for withdrawing from first term courses without penalty of failure.

WEEK 10 (Class 17 & 18: Nov. 3 & 6)

17. Mon. Nov. 3: Reading #6 (Plato, *Phaedo*), & Reading #4 (Descartes' *Meditations* I-III, VI). Personal identity / attributes of the soul.

18. Thurs. Nov. 6: Reading #7 (Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.) Personal identity / attributes of the soul.

WEEK 11 (Class 19: Nov. 13)

Mon. Nov. 10: No Classes (Reading Break).

19. Thurs. Nov. 13: Reading #8 (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*.)
Personal identity / attributes of the soul.

WEEK 12 (Classes 20 & 21: Nov. 17 & 20)

20. Mon. Nov. 17: Reading #9 (Russell, "Do We Survive Death?").
Nature & immortality of the soul.

21. Thurs. Nov. 20: Reading #10 (Hick, “The Re-Creation of the Psycho-Physical Person”.) Nature & immortality of the soul.

WEEK 13 (Classes 22 & 23: Nov. 24 & 27)

22. Mon. Nov. 24: Reading #10 (Hick, “The Re-Creation of the Psycho-Physical Person”.) Nature & immortality of the soul. Draft of questions for 3rd in-class test.

23. Thurs. Nov. 27: Review.

WEEK 14 (Class 24: Dec. 1)

24. Mon. Dec. 1: In-class test #3.

Final exam period for Fall Term: Dec. 6 – 20

* This schedule may be subject to slight revision, as sometimes discussion and the flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally planned.

3. SCHEDULE (Spring Term 2026)*

WEEK 1 (Classes 1 & 2: Jan. 5 & 8)

1. Mon. Jan. 5: Reading #1 (Aquinas: Five Proofs).

2. Thurs. Jan. 8: Reading #1 (Aquinas: Five Proofs).

WEEK 2 (Classes 3 & 4: Jan. 12 & 15)

3. Mon. Jan. 12: Reading #2 (Anselm: Ontological argument.) The idea of God.

4. Thurs. Jan. 15: Reading #3 (Mackie: *Inventing Right and Wrong*, excerpts.) On the general strangeness/weirdness of value(s).

WEEK 3 (Classes 5 & 6: Jan. 19 & 22)

5. Mon. Jan. 19: Reading #4 (Russell-Copleston debate). Discussion of “real value”.

6. Thurs. Jan. 22: Reading #5 (Broad: “Argument for the Existence of God II”). Meaning of religious experience. **Distribution of first test preparatory questions.**

WEEK 4 (Classes 7 & 8: Jan. 26 & Jan. 29)

7. Mon. Jan. 26: Reading #5 (Broad: “Argument for the Existence of God II”). Meaning of religious experience.

8. Thurs. Jan. 29: **Review for in-class test #1.**

WEEK 5 (Classes 9 & 10: Feb. 2 & 5)

9. Mon. Feb. 2: **In-class test #1.**

10. Thurs. Feb. 5: Reading #6 (Hume, Sentiment as the Basis of Morals.)

WEEK 6 (Classes 11 & 12: Feb. 9 & 12)

11. Mon. Feb. 9: Reading #3 (Mackie: *Inventing Right and Wrong*, excerpts.)

12. Thurs. Feb. 12: Reading #3 (Mackie: *Inventing Right and Wrong*, excerpts.)

WEEK 7 (No Classes: Feb. 16 & 19)

Mon. Feb. 16: No Class (Family Day: First Day of Reading Break)

Thurs. Feb. 19: No Class (Reading Break)

WEEK 8 (Classes 13 & 14: Feb. 23 & 26)

13. Mon. Feb. 23: Reading #7 (Baron d'Holbach, Defense of Determinism).

14. Thurs. Feb. 26: Reading #7 (Baron d'Holbach, Defense of Determinism); Reading #8 (Taylor, Mystery of Free Will).
Distribution of second test preparatory questions.

Sat. Feb. 28: Last day for withdrawing from this full-year course without penalty of failure.

WEEK 9 (Classes 15 & 16: March 2 & 5)

15. Mon. Mar 2: Reading #8 (Taylor, Mystery of Free Will).

16. Thurs. Mar 5: In-class test #2.

WEEK 10 (Classes 17 & 18: March 9 & 12)

17. Mon. Mar 9: Reading #9 (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bks 1 & 2). Virtue ethics.

18. Thurs. Mar 12: Reading #9 (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bks 1 & 2). Virtue ethics.

WEEK 11 (Classes 19 & 20: March 16 & 19)

19. Mon. Mar 16: Reading #10 (Mill, *Utilitarianism*).

20. Thurs. Mar 19: Reading #10 (Mill, *Utilitarianism*).

WEEK 12 (Classes 21 & 22: March 23 & 26)

21. Mon. Mar 23: Reading #10 (Mill, *Utilitarianism*). Reading #11 (Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*).

22. Thurs. Mar 26: Reading #11 (Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*).
Distribution of third (final) test preparatory questions.

WEEK 13 (Classes 23 & 24: March 30 & April 2)

23. Mon. Mar. 30: Reading #11 (Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*).

24. Thurs. April 2: In-class test #3.

April 7 – 22: Final exam period for Spring Term.

* This schedule is subject to revision, as sometimes discussion and the flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally planned.