

# **AS/PHIL 1000 6.0A**

## **INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**Course Director:** A. MacLachlan  
**Office:** S418 Ross  
**Office Hours:** M, W, F: 10.00-11.00  
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**Lecture Location:** CSE C  
**Lecture Times:** M, W 11.30-12.30

\*\* I check email daily, and will respond within 24 hours. I check my voice mail several times a week only. Email is therefore the best way to reach me. Please include the course number AND your tutorial section/leader in the subject line of your email.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a full year introduction to philosophy. We will explore some of the central questions of philosophical thinking, including the following: What is the nature of reality, and how can we know it? Do humans have free will? How do we determine the right or wrong thing to do? Is there a God? What is the nature of the good life? We will examine these questions through a careful study of selected writings by philosophers such as Plato, Descartes and Hume, as well as more modern thinkers.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this course is to acquaint students with the fundamental questions and arguments that have shaped the Western philosophical tradition. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the views and arguments of major philosophical figures, and will be able to raise, defend and critique philosophical arguments of their own.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

*Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.* Ed. John Perry, Michael Bratman and John Fischer. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Copies of this textbook are available at the York campus bookstore. I will also make copies available on 2-hour reserve at the Scott Library.

Almost all your weekly readings are taken from this text. There are, however, several supplementary readings assigned; these will be posted as PDF files on the course website. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MATERIAL IN ALL ASSIGNED READINGS.** Please make sure you have access to them, in electronic or hard form.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In-Class Tests	2 x 15%	October 17, Feb. 4
Take-home Essays	2 x 15%	November 28, Mar. 17
Final Exam	1 x 30%	TBA (Apr.7-29)
Tutorial Participation	10%	

**NOTE:** Do not book a trip for any time during the exam period, April 7-29.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENT**

### *1. In-Class Tests:*

You will answer two questions, chosen from a longer list. The longer list will be given to you at least one week in advance, and will be reviewed in your tutorials.

BOTH questions are mandatory.

You will be assessed on your comprehension of the question, your understanding of the philosophical text, the strength of your argument and your writing skills.

### *2. Take-home Essays:*

A list of assigned questions will be posted on the course website (Moodle). These questions will be reviewed in class and in your tutorials.

You **MUST** submit two copies of your essays: an electronic copy to turnitin.com, and a hard copy to your TA. Please staple the receipt from turnitin.com to the hard copy you submit.

A list of assessment criteria will be posted along with the essay questions. Please review these **BEFORE** you write your essay. You will be assessed on your comprehension of the question, your understanding of the philosophical text, the strength of your argument and your writing skills.

### *3. Final Exam:*

The format for the final exam will be announced in class at least 3 weeks prior to the beginning of the winter exam period. **NOTE:** the final exam is cumulative; i.e., it will cover material from lectures and readings for the entire year.

### *4. Tutorial Participation:*

Attendance is necessary, but not sufficient for tutorial participation. You will be graded on the quality of your contributions to tutorial discussion, as well as your attendance.

Your participation in online discussion forums also counts toward this grade.

**LATE PENALTIES AND MISSED TESTS:** Late essays will only be accepted without penalty in the event of a documented emergency. All other work will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, up to a maximum of five days. After that, the essay will not be accepted.

A make-up test or examination will be granted only in the event of prior approval from the course director, or in the event of a documented emergency.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Important information for students regarding the Ethics Review process, Access/Disability, Academic Honesty and Integrity, Student Conduct and Religious Observance Days is available on the CCAS webpage:

[www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate\\_cte\\_main\\_pages/ccas.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm) (See final page for details)

## **IMPORTANT DATES:**

Last date to enroll without permission of the course director: Sept. 20

Last date to enroll with permission of the course director: Oct. 19

Last date to drop course without receiving a grade: Feb. 1

## FALL TERM 2007 CLASS SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Sept. 5        *No Reading*

### KNOWLEDGE, REALITY AND SKEPTICISM

Sept. 10        Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation I (Perry/Bratman, pp. 171-173)

Introduction: On the Study of Philosophy (Perry/Bratman, pp. 1-7)

Sept. 12        Descartes, Meditation II (Perry/Bratman, pp. 173-176)

Sept. 17        Descartes, Meditation III (Perry/Bratman, pp. 176-182)

Sept. 19        Descartes, Meditation IV (Perry/Bratman, pp. 182-185)

Sept. 24        Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 225-234)

Sept. 26        Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 234-240)

Oct. 1         Review of Knowledge, Reality and Skepticism

No Reading

**NO CLASS:** Lecture and slides will be posted on class Moodle site. You are responsible for all material covered.

**TEST QUESTIONS POSTED ON MOODLE**

### MINDS, BRAINS AND PERSONS

Oct. 3         Descartes, Meditations V and VI (Perry/Bratman, pp. 186-195)

Oct. 8         **NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)**

Oct. 10        Ryle, "Descartes's Myth" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 287-294)

Oct. 15        Test Review

Oct. 17        **1<sup>st</sup> IN-CLASS TEST**

Oct. 22        Lewis, "Mad Pain and Martian Pain" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 302-308)

Oct. 24        Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 321-325)

Oct. 29 Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 341-353)  
**ESSAY TOPICS POSTED ON MOODLE**

Oct. 31 Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat?" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 354-362)

### **IDENTITY AND FREEDOM**

Nov. 5 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*  
Book II, Chapter XXVII "Of Identity and Diversity"  
(PDF on Moodle)

Nov. 7 Dennett, "Where Am I?" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 412-420)

Nov. 12 Hume, "Of Liberty and Necessity" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 440-450)

Nov. 14 Taylor, "Freedom and Determinism" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 451-463)

Nov. 19 Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"  
(Perry/Bratman, pp. 470-480)

Nov. 21 Review  
*No Reading*

### **FAITH, GOD AND REASON**

Nov. 26 St. Anselm, The Ontological Argument (Perry/Bratman, pp. 78-80)  
Aquinas, "The Existence of God" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 80-82)

Nov. 28 Pascal, "The Wager" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 82-86)  
Russell, "Why I am not a Theist" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 86-90)  
**1<sup>st</sup> ESSAY DUE**

Dec. 3 Buber, "I and Thou" (PDF on Moodle)  
Review of God, Faith and Reason

**WINTER TERM 2008  
CLASS SCHEDULE**

**GOD, GOOD AND EVIL**

- Jan. 7           Pascal, "The Wager" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 82-86)
- Jan. 9           Plato, *Euthyphro* pp. 1-5 (PDF on Moodle)
- Jan. 14          Plato, *Euthyphro* pp. 6-13 (PDF on Moodle)
- Jan. 16          Plato, *Euthyphro* pp. 13-20 (PDF on Moodle)  
Review of God, Good and Evil

**ETHICAL THEORIES I: UTILITARIANISM**

- Jan. 21          Bentham, "The Principle of Utility" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 489-492)  
Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 492-501)  
**TEST QUESTIONS POSTED ON MOODLE**
- Jan. 23          Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 501-508)
- Jan. 28          Williams, "Utilitarianism and Integrity" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 519-527)
- Jan. 30          Test Review
- Feb. 4           **2<sup>nd</sup> IN-CLASS TEST**

**ETHICAL THEORIES II: KANTIAN ETHICS**

- Feb. 6           Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 536-538)

***FEB 11-18 NO CLASSES (READING WEEK AND FAMILY DAY)***

- Feb. 20          Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 539-544)  
**ESSAY TOPICS POSTED ON MOODLE**
- Feb. 25          Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 545-552)
- Feb. 27          O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"  
(Perry/Bratman, pp. 553-559)

### **ETHICAL THEORIES III: ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS**

- Mar. 3 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I (Perry/Bratman, pp. 572-578)
- Mar. 5 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II (Perry/Bratman, pp. 578-585)
- Mar. 10 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book X (Perry/Bratman, pp. 585-587)
- Mar. 12 Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 527-535)  
Review of Ethical Theories

### **JUSTICE AND SOCIETY**

- Mar. 17 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 607-620)
- Mar. 19 Nozick, "Justice and Entitlement" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 620-628)  
**2<sup>nd</sup> ESSAY DUE**
- Mar. 24 Appiah, "Racisms" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 663-673)
- Mar. 26 Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (Perry/Bratman, pp. 644-648)

### **PHILOSOPHY AND THE MEANING OF LIFE**

- Mar. 31 Nagel, "The Absurd" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 21-27)  
Russell, "The Value of Philosophy" (Perry/Bratman, pp. 9-12)
- April 2 Exam Review

## **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty.  
(<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>).

There is also an academic integrity website with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website.  
(<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity>).

## **Access/Disability**

York provides services for students with disabilities (including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials.

It is the student's responsibility to register with disability services as early as possible to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Failure to make these arrangements may jeopardize your opportunity to receive academic accommodations.

Additional information is available at [www.yorku.ca/disabilityservices](http://www.yorku.ca/disabilityservices) or from disability service providers:

- **Office for Persons with Disabilities:** N108 Ross, 416-736-5140, [www.yorku.ca/opd](http://www.yorku.ca/opd)
- **Learning and Psychiatric Disabilities Programs - Counselling & Development Centre:** 130 BSB, 416-736-5297, [www.yorku.ca/cdc](http://www.yorku.ca/cdc)
- **Atkinson students - Atkinson Counselling & Supervision Centre:** 114 Atkinson, 416-736-5225, [www.yorku.ca/atkcsc](http://www.yorku.ca/atkcsc)
- **Glendon students - Glendon Counselling & Career Centre:** Glendon Hall 111, 416-487-6709, [www.glendon.yorku.ca/counselling](http://www.glendon.yorku.ca/counselling)

## **Ethics Review Process**

York students are subject to the York University *Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research*

*Involving Human Participants*. In particular, students proposing to undertake research involving human participants (e.g., interviewing the director of a company or government agency, having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately

## **Religious Observance Accommodation**

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class.

Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course director immediately.