

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

PHIL 1301: Mind, World, and Knowledge

Course Syllabus Fall Term 2016

Professor
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Office Hours:
TBA

Class Time

Mon/Wed:
2:35 – 3:55

Location:
Check Website

COURSE SUMMARY

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the nature of philosophical reflection and inquiry by exploring a number of traditional problems concerning the nature of knowledge, minds, persons, language and related issues. Among the issues to be considered are the following: What conditions must be satisfied, for example, if a person is to know something? How can we respond to skeptics who insist that genuine knowledge is impossible? What is consciousness? Is it something purely physical, a state of the brain, perhaps, or is it something over and above the physical world? What are persons? Is there an afterlife? Has the development of modern science undercut any rational basis for religious belief?

These and other issues have occupied the attention of reflective people for thousands of years. Although they must have answers, it proves extremely difficult to know what they are, for they do not seem to be directly amenable to the methods and procedures that we normally rely upon in forming beliefs in science or everyday life. This does not mean, however, that we may choose whichever answers we like; opinions are of no interest unless they can be supported by reasoned arguments. After looking at how some of the most prominent philosophical thinkers, both today and in the past, have tried to answer these questions, we will try to arrive some conclusions ourselves.

REQUIRED TEXT

A course pack of readings with the title, *Philosophy 1301: Mind, World and Knowledge*, has been prepared by the Instructor. This course pack can only be purchased at **Haven Books**, located at 43 Seneca Street, just off Campus. Their phone number is: (613) 730-9888.

CLASS FORMAT

The emphasis in the course will be on reasoning, analysis and critical evaluation. The role of the Instructor will be to guide students through the readings, and to illustrate the processes of analysis, interpretation and criticism by repeated example in class. Although attendance will not be taken, as it is not feasible in a class of this size, regular attendance at class is extremely important, and students are fully responsible for any material missed due to absence.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm: There will be a midterm exam which will be worth 30% of the final grade. The format for the midterm will be as follows: a week or two before the date of the midterm students will be given a list of questions; the instructor will then select some of these for students to answer.

Term Paper: Students will be required to write a term paper worth 30% of the final grade. The paper will be about 5 – 8 pages in length (1500 – 2000 words). It will not be a research paper that requires library or Internet sources but will consist of a critical discussion of some topic or issue central to the course. A list of topics, along with guidelines for writing the paper, will be available early in the term.

Final Examination: There will be a final exam, worth 40% of the final grade, scheduled during the examination period. The format for the final will be similar to the midterm.

SHORT LIST OF TOPICS/ISSUES

(For more details see the list of Topics and Readings posted on CuLearn.)

- 1) What is knowledge and how is it possible?
- 2) Are there any innate ideas?
- 3) Is reality discovered or constructed?
- 4) Are secondary qualities, like colours and sounds, real or merely subjective?
- 5) Could the origin of the universe ever be fully explained, and, if so, how?
- 6) Do science and religion conflict or can they be reconciled?
- 7) Do immaterial souls exist, or is the mind simply identical to the brain?
- 8) Could sophisticated robots be conscious?
- 9) What are persons and how we track their identity across time?
- 10) Is truth objective or relative?
- 11) Do we have free will?

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting

accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Dec. 9	Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 10-25	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 14	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 25	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735