

**CARLETON
UNIVERSITY**

**FYSM 1208:
Looking At
Philosophy**

**Course Syllabus
Fall Term 2013**

**Professor
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**Office Hours:
TBD**

Class Time

**Mon-Wed:
16:05 – 17:25**

**Location:
TBD**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the nature of philosophy by looking at some of the most important problems and issues that have occupied the attention of philosophers throughout history. Questions to be discussed include the following: What is rational thought? Does God exist? Can God's existence be reconciled with the fact that there is much pain and suffering in the world? Is genuine knowledge of the world possible, and, if so, how? What are persons? Could a robot ever be a person? Do we have free will? Does life have any meaning, and does it matter whether it does? Is there such a thing as the good life, or the best way to live our lives? Does morality have an objective existence? What would a just state be like?

In discussing these and other issues it is important to keep in mind that our goal is not merely to express our own opinions; rather, we will be engaged in an *inquiry*. We want to know what positions might be adopted with respect to these issues, what arguments have been, or might be, offered for and against these different positions, and we want to subject them to a rigorous critique in order to determine, to the extent that this may be possible, where the truth of the matter lies.

REQUIRED TEXT

Consider Philosophy, by Bruce Waller (New York: Prentice-Hall, 2011), available in the University Bookstore. It will be supplemented by online readings and readings on CuLearn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Short Essays – 25% of grade
Presentations – 20% of grade
Exams – 20% of grade
Term paper – 20% of grade
Class participation – 15% of grade

ATTENDANCE POLICY

As this course is a seminar, regular attendance at class is essential to success, and students are fully responsible for any material they miss due to absence. Readings will be assigned for each class, and students will be expected to have read them. The emphasis in the course will be on reasoning, analysis and critical evaluation of issues and texts. (Attendance will be taken at each class.)

OUTLINE OF TOPICS FOR FALL TERM

(Note: See CuLearn for a more detailed list of Topics and Readings for both terms.)

- 1) **Introduction: What is philosophy?**
- 2) **The Elements of Reasoning**
 - arguments versus claims
 - valid and invalid arguments
 - distinction between deduction and induction
 - mistakes of reasoning
- 3) **Philosophical Questions about Religion?**
 - Traditional Proofs of God's Existence
 - Explaining the origin of the universe
 - The problem of evil
 - Pascal's Wager
 - Religion and science
- 4) **How Is Knowledge possible?**
 - The justified true belief analysis of knowledge
 - Cartesian skepticism
 - Descartes' solution to skepticism
 - Other solutions
 - Theories of knowledge
- 5) **Nature of Thought**
 - Locke's empiricist account of ideas
 - Decartes' theory of innate ideas
 - Chomsky and innateness
 - Kant's categories of the understanding
- 6) **The Mind/Body Problem**
 - Cartesian dualism
 - The Identity Theory
 - Functionalism
 - Minds and Computers
 - Explaining consciousness
- 7) **What are Persons?**
 - Nature of persons
 - What things in the world are persons?
 - Personal identity
 - Parfit's skepticism about persons
- 8) **Do We Have Free Will?**
 - Determinism
 - Compatibilism
 - Libertarianism
 - Moral responsibility

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2013-14)

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 in the lower right corner of the cover sheet:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- 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://www4.carleton.ca/calendars//ugrad/current/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html#14.3>)

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 me 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 me 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 me 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*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me 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. 5	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 18	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. 11	University Day – no undergraduate classes.
Oct. 14	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Oct. 28 – Nov. 1	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. 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	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 11-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 17	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. 17-21	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 8	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. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-26	Final Examinations. Exams will not be held Apr. 18-20.
Apr. 18	Good Friday – university closed.
Apr. 26	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