

PHIL1000 – Introductory Philosophy: Fields, Figures and Problems

Instructor: Dr. Matt McLennan

Office Hours: Thursday 1:00 – 3:30pm, 329B Paterson Hall

Contact: Matthew.McLennan@carleton.ca

Class Time: Wednesday and Friday 11:35am – 12:55pm

Teaching Assistants: TBA

Required Texts: Available at the Carleton University Bookstore or on short-term reserve at MacOdrum Library.

- Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*
- Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*
- Terry Eagleton, *On Evil*

Course description:

Western philosophy is a discipline of deep questioning which takes place at the margins of science. It is traditionally divided into four sub-disciplines, containing considerable overlap: metaphysics (concerning the nature of reality), epistemology (concerning the nature of knowledge), axiology (concerning aesthetic and moral values), and logic (concerning argumentation and validity).

This course will introduce you to all four sub-disciplines of philosophy, with emphasis on metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. To meet this objective the professor will guide you through two classics and one more recent text of 20th Century Anglophone philosophy. No prior knowledge of philosophy is assumed, and the course is designed to be of interest and applicability to students in a variety of academic programs.

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated based on one midterm test, one essay assignment, and a final exam.

The marks break down as follows:

- Test (Oct. 2): 25%
- Essay assignment (Due Oct. 25 in class): 35%
- Final exam: (date and time TBA): 40%

Test: You will have 90 minutes to answer FIVE OUT OF SEVEN long answer questions, approximately two paragraphs per answer. You will be tested on your knowledge of concepts and arguments from lectures and the first eight chapters of Russell.

Essay: Choose ONE of the topics below and write an 8 – 10 page (1.5 spaced) essay. Any citation style is fine (e.g. Chicago, APA ...). The instructor and his assistants are looking for factual accuracy and good arguments. You are expected to research beyond the course textbooks (at least three secondary sources). Note: Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers etc. are NOT credible sources.

Background: Except for the final chapter where the value of philosophy is briefly discussed, Russell in *The Problems of Philosophy* is largely silent on value questions. Indeed, according to Murdoch (p.47) the philosophical tendency that Russell belongs to “thrust[s] ethic almost out of philosophy”. But Russell wrote many essays on moral, social and political questions. In fact, he was a lifelong activist on the far political left, jailed more than once for standing up for his convictions. So clearly he was very interested in value questions and he valued some things very much.

Topic 1: Explain Murdoch’s comment, with reference to the intellectual context in which *The Problems of Philosophy* was written.

Topic 2: Can value commitments, such as expressed by Russell’s activism, ever be derived in any way from metaphysics and/or epistemology?

Final exam: You will have 3 hours to answer FOUR OUT OF SIX questions and write approximately two pages per question, justifying your responses with concepts and arguments discussed in the course. You will be tested on your knowledge of concepts and arguments from lectures and from Murdoch’s text, as well as questions raised by the film *Iris*. Exam is non-cumulative.

Course Schedule: The following is a LOOSE lecture / reading schedule. We will adapt as needed. Slight changes may arise, and will be announced with reasonable advance notice in class and on the course web page.

Week 1 (Sept. 6): Introduction to the course

Part 1: Overview of the traditional sub-disciplines of philosophy
Readings: N/A

Week 2 (Sept. 11 and 13): Logic; Appearance and Reality

Part 1: Logic
Part 2: Appearance and reality from Parmenides to Russell
Readings: Russell, chapter 1

Week 3 (Sept. 18 and 20): Matter and Idea

Part 1: The existence and nature of matter
Part 2: Idealism
Readings: Russell, chapters 2, 3 and 4

Week 4 (Sept. 25 and 27): Knowledge

Part 1: Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description; Induction
Part 2: General principles and *a priori* knowledge
Readings: Russell, chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8

Week 5 (Oct. 2 and 4): Universals

TEST Oct. 2

Readings: Russell, chapters 9 and 10

Week 6 (Oct. 9 and 11): Intuition and Truth; Limits and Value of Philosophy

Part 1: Intuition and truth

Part 2: limits and value of philosophical knowledge

Readings: Russell, chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15

Week 7 (Oct. 16 and 18): Axiology

Part 1: Ethics

Part 2: Aesthetics

Readings: N/A

Week 8 (Oct. 23 and 25): Good, part 1: What is Goodness?

ESSAY DUE Oct. 25

Readings: Murdoch, chapter 1

Week 9 (Oct. 30 and Nov. 1): Fall Reading Break

NO CLASSES

Week 10 (Nov. 6 and 8): Good, part 2: The Sovereignty of Good

Readings: Murdoch, chapters 2 and 3

Week 11 (Nov. 13 and 15): Evil, part 1: What is Evil?

Readings: Eagleton, Introduction and chapter 1

Week 12 (Nov. 20 and 22): Evil, part 2: The Death Drive

Readings: Eagleton, chapter 2

Week 13 (Nov. 27 and 29): Evil, part 3: Theodicies

Readings: Eagleton, chapter 3

Week 14 (Dec. 4 and 6): Film screening and review

Part 1: Film screening: *Iris* (2001)

Part 2: Review for final exam

Readings: N/A

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