**PHILOSOPHY 1301 A**

**MIND, WORLD & KNOWLEDGE**

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY: EARLY SUMMER SESSION 2021**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Professor: KENNETH FERGUSON**

**Email:** [**Kenneth.Ferguson@carleton.ca**](mailto:Kenneth.Ferguson@carleton.ca)

**Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday 6:05-8:55**

**First Class: Thursday, May 6**

**Zoom Lecture Link: Brightspace under Content: Module 1**

**Catalogue Description**

**PHIL 1301 [0.5 credit]  
Mind, World, and Knowledge**

Introduction to a variety of philosophical works, including contemporary, on such topics as: the nature of being, the mental, the external, consciousness, perception, experience, meaning, truth, the nature of knowledge, scientific understanding, and how language and thought represent the world.

Precludes additional credit for PHIL 1006 (no longer offered), PHIL 1501 (no longer offered).

Lectures three hours per week.

**Course Description for Summer Term 2021**

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.

**Online Course**

This is an entirely online, or distance, course. All course lectures will be available for students to access online; no in-person classes will be held. The PowerPoint slides on which lectures will be based will all be posted on Brightspace, as well as all course assignments, midterms, exams, etc., and students will submit all of their required course assignments through Brightspace.

**Lectures**

Live Zoom lectures will be held during the scheduled class hours. The emphasis in the lectures will be on reasoning, analysis and critical evaluation. Readings will be assigned for each class, and students should read them beforehand. The role of the Instructor will be to guide students through the readings, to ensure that discussions remain focused on relevant and important issues, and to illustrate the processes of interpretation, analysis and criticism by repeated example in class.

**Required Readings**

There is no required text for this course. All required readings will either be available on the Web or will be posted on Brightspace. However, we will make use of the following online text, as it contains many excellent discussions of issues central to the course: *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, 12th edition, by Manuel Velasquez (Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, available online at: <https://view.publitas.com/p222-13032/philosophy-a-text-with-readings-velasquez-manuel-srg/page/36-37> (It might be convenient for students to put it on their favorites so you have quick access to it.) **In a**ddition, some readings will be posted on Brightspace, while others will be on the Web. A complete list of all required readings for the course, with online web addresses, is provided below.

**Course Requirements**

**Midterm Exam:** There will be a **midterm exam** worth 30% of the overall grade. It is (somewhat) tentatively scheduled for June 27. The midterm will have the following format: one week before the date of the midterm, a list of study questions on topics central to the material that has been covered will be posted on Brightspace; the instructor will then select a number of these questions for students to answer on the midterm, but students will not know beforehand which questions will be selected.

**Discussion Essay (Term Paper):** Students will write an essay of approximately 6-7 pages in length (1,500-2,000 words), which will be worth 30% of the overall grade. This will be a discussion paper, not a research paper, which will involve analyzing and evaluating some issue central to the course. A list of topics for students to choose from will be posted on Brightspace early in the course. The Discussion essay will be due on June 8.

**Final Examination:** There will be a final exam scheduled during the examination period, worth 40% of the overall grade for the course grade. The format for the final exam will be very similar to that described above for the midterm.

**Short List of Topics and Readings**

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

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

**Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 2021)**

Assignments:

Please follow your professor’s instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than three working days of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than three working days after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/examinations/#deferred-final-exams)). Visit the [Registrar’s Office](https://carleton.ca/registrar/) for further 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. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/academic-integrity-and-offenses-of-conduct/#academic-integrity-policy))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

Pregnancy or religious obligation: Please contact your instructor 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://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).

Academic accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](http://carleton.ca/pmc).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton’s Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

Accommodation for [Student Activities](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf): Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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.

Important Dates:

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| May 6 Classes start.  May 13 Last day for registration and course changes for early summer courses.  May 20 Last day for registration and course changes for full summer courses.  May 21 Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from early and full summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  May 24 Statutory holiday, University closed.  June 11 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for early summer courses before the official examination period.  June 18 Last day for early summer classes.  Classes follow a Monday schedule.  Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  Last day for academic withdrawal from early summer courses.  June 19-20 No classes or examinations take place.  June 21-27 Final examinations.  June 27 Take-home examinations for early summer courses are due. | July 1 Statutory holiday, University closed.  July 2 Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.  July 9 Last day for registration and course changes for late summer courses.  July 23 Last day to withdraw from late summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  Aug. 2 Civic holiday, University closed.  Aug. 9 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for late summer and full summer courses before the official examination period.  Aug. 16 Last day of late and full summer term classes.  Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  Last day for academic withdrawal from late summer and full summer courses.  Aug. 17-18 No classes or examinations take place.  Aug. 19-25 Final examinations.  Aug. 25 Take-home examinations for late or full summer courses are due. |

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:

[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)

520-2110

Registrar’s Office:

[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)

520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:

[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)

520-7850

Writing Services:

<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

520-3822

MacOdrum Library

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>

520-2735

**List of Topics and Readings**

**(Please note that minor revisions might still be made)**

**I. Introduction: The Nature of Philosophy**

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| **Reading 1**: Manuel Velasquez, Philosophy: A Text with Readings, 12th edition, Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, Chapter 1, Section 1, What Is Philosophy?, pp. 1-12, available online at: <https://view.publitas.com/p222-13032/philosophy-a-text-with-readings-velasquez-manuel-srg/page/36-37> |

**II. Background**

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| **Reading 2:** Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, 12th edition … Chapter 6, Section 1. “Knowledge as Justified True Belief”, pp. 421-425  **Reading 3 (optional):** “An Outline of theCopernican Revolution BBC”,online at: (to get this reading Google title) |

**III. René Descartes: Scepticism and the Possibility of Knowledge**

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| **Reading 4 (Brightspace):** René Descartes, *Meditations* 1 & 2, translated by John Cottingham (posted on Brightspace)  **Reading 5 (online):** “Cartesian Scepticism”, available at <http://www.princeton.edu/~grosen/puc/phi203/descrartes.html>  **Reading 6 (online):** Manuel Velasquez … Chapter 5. The Sources of Knowledge … “Descartes: Doubt and Reason”, p. 346 – p. 350  **Reading 7:** G.E. Moore, “Proof of an External World,” online at: <http://fitelson.org/proseminar/moore_poaew.pdf>  **Reading 8 (optional online):** Bertrand Russell, Chapter 2, “The Existence of Matter” from *The Problems of Philosophy* (Just Google “*The Problems of Philosophy*”) online at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5827/5827-h/5827-h.htm> |

**III. John Locke’s Empiricism: The Origin of Ideas**

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| **Reading 9:** Manuel Velasquez … Chapter 5. Section 3. “Can the Senses Account for all of our Knowledge?”  **Reading 10 (online):** Peter Markie, “Rationalism Versus Empiricism”, Section 4, The Innate Concept Thesis, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rationalism-empiricism/#4>  **Reading 11:** Michael Lacewing, “Primary and Secondary Qualities”,  Posted on Brightspace  **Reading 12 (on CuLearn):** Noam Chomsky, “On Language”, available at: <http://www.answers.com/topic/language-chomsky-s-theory>  **Reading 13 (online):** “Chomsky’s Universal Grammar” from the website: *The Brain from Top to Bottom*, sponsored by McGill University, available at<http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/capsules/outil_rouge06.html> |

**IV. David Hume on the Nature of Causality**

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| **Reading 14 (online):** Michael Lacewing, “Hume on Causation”, Google author and title, or you can go to: <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/alevelphilosophy/data/A2/Hume/HumeFreeWill.pdf>  **Reading 15 (online):** Manuel Velasquez … Chapter 5.3, “Hume and Scepticism”, p. 368 –76 |

**V. Immanuel Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World?**

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| **Reading 16:** Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, Chapter 5, “The Sources of Knowledge”, Section 5.4, “Kant: Does the Knowing Mind Shape the World?”, pp. 376-84.  **Reading 17:** Tom Kearns, “Introduction to Immanuel Kant”, posted online, available at:  <https://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-kant.html>  **Reading 18:** Ralph Blumeneau, “Kant and the Thing In Itself”, from *Philosophy Now*, August/September 2016, at: <https://philosophynow.org/issues/31/Kant_and_the_Thing_in_Itself> |

**VI. Cosmology: Can We Explain the Universe as a Whole?**

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| **Reading 19 (Online):** Richard Taylor, “The Cosmological Argument”, from *Metaphysics*, by Richard Taylor, available online at: <https://iweb.langara.bc.ca/rjohns/files/2013/01/taylor_cosmological.pdf>  **Reading 20 (online):** Ron Rosenbaum, “Has the Meaning of Nothing Changed?” from the website [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com) (to view article Google title)  **Reading 21 (Optional online):** Review of “A Universe from Nothing”, by physicist Lawrence Krause”, by David Albert, March 23, 2012, NY Times, online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/books/review/a-universe-from-nothing-by-lawrence-m-krauss.html> |

**VII. The Relationship between Science and Religion**

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| **Reading 22:** Manuel Velasquez … Chapter 4: Philosophy and God, section 4.1. “The Significance of Religion pp. 262-266  **Reading 23 (online): “**The Nature of Science”, American Association for the Advancement of Science, available at: <http://www.project2061.org/publications/sfaa/online/chap1.htm>  **Reading 24 (online):** Stephen Jay Gould, “Nonoverlapping Magisteria”, available at: <http://www.stephenjaygould.org/library/gould_noma.html>  **Reading 25 (online):** Richard Dawkins, “The Improbability of God”, available at: <https://richarddawkins.net/2014/06/the-improbability-of-god/>  (To get this reading, just Google author and title)  **Reading 26 (optional online):** Tim Crane, “Mystery and Evidence”, posted on Brightspace |

**VIII. The Nature of Minds and Their Relation to the Physical World**

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| **Reading 27:** Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text With Readings* (Toronto, Wadsworth publishers, 2005) Chapter 2, "How Do Mind and Body Relate?" pp. 104-118, available online at: <https://view.publitas.com/p222-13032/philosophy-a-text-with-readings-velasquez-manuel-srg/page/106-107>  **Reading 28:** Rene Descartes, *The Meditations* (Meditation VI only)  **Reading 29 (online):** *Website: The Mind Project* – (to get this, Just Google “The Mind Project”) Read the following modules: Functionalism: An Introduction; The Turing Test; Artificial Intelligence: Can a Machine Think?; and “Searle and the Chinese Room Argument”.  **Reading 30:** Thomas Sturm, Consciousness Regained: Philosophical Arguments for and against Reductive Physicalism, online at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3341650/>  **Reading 31:** Susan Blackmore, *Consciousness: An Introduction*, Chapter 2 “What is it Like to be …?” (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2012) pp. 19-31  **Reading 32 (optional, online):** Susan Blackmore, “The Grand Illusion: Why  Consciousness Exists Only When You Look For It” (originally published in New Scientist, June 22, 2002) available online at: <http://www.susanblackmore.co.uk/journalism/ns02.htm>  **Reading 33 (online)**: David Chalmers, “The Puzzle of Conscious Experience”, in *Scientific American*, 2002, available at: <http://consc.net/papers/puzzle.pdf> |

**IX. What Can We Know About Alien Minds?**

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| **Reading 34 (online):** Daniel Dennett, “Daniel Dennett Explores Darwinism and Outer Space”, video from Big Think, available at: <http://bigthink.com/videos/daniel-dennett-explores-darwinism-and-outer-space>  **Reading 35 (online):** Craig Delancey, “Will Aliens be Alien?”, taken from the website ClarkesWorld, award winning science fiction and fantasy magazine, Issue 88, January, 2014, available at: <http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/another_word_01_14/>  **Reading 36 (online):** Jayarava Raves, “Why Artificial Intelligences Will Never Be Like Us and Aliens Will Be Just Like Us”, June 27, 2014, available at:  <http://jayarava.blogspot.ca/2014/06/why-artificial-intelligences-will-never.html>  **Reading 37 (optional online):** Peter Godfrey-Smith, “The Mind of an Octopus”, from the publication *Scientific American*, available online at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-mind-of-an-octopus/>  **Reading 38 (optional online):** Murray Shanahan, “Conscious Exotoca: From algorithms to aliens, could humans ever understand minds that are radically unlike our own?”, from the website *Aeon*, available at: <https://aeon.co/essays/beyond-humans-what-other-kinds-of-minds-might-be-out-there> |

**XI. What Are Persons and How Do We Track Their Identity Across Time?**

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| **Reading 39:** Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text With Readings* 11th edition (Boston, Wadsworth publishers, 2011) Chapter 2.4: “Is There an Enduring Self? ”, and “Are we Independent and Self-Sufficient beings?”, pp.88-107, available online at: <https://view.publitas.com/p222-13032/philosophy-a-text-with-readings-velasquez-manuel-srg/page/106-107>  **Reading 40 (online):** David Anderson, “What is a Person?”, from the website *The Mind Project*, at: <https://mind.ilstu.edu/curriculum/what_is_a_person/what_is_a_person.html>  **Reading 41 (optional online):** Daniel Dennett, “The Self as the Narrative Center of Gravity”, at:  <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic565657.files/9/Dennett%20self%20as%20center%20of%20gravity.pdf>  **Reading 42: (optional online):** Eric Olson, “Personal Identity”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/> |

**XI. Free Will and Determinism**

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| **Reading 43:** “Determinism and Free will in Science and Philosophy”, by C.J.M. Hewitt, 2006, from the website *The Great Debate*, online at: <http://www.thegreatdebate.org.uk/determinismandfreewill.html>  **Reading 44:** Richard Taylor, “ Freedom and Determinism”, online at: <http://jwood.faculty.unlv.edu/unlv/Articles/TaylorFreeWill.PDF>  **Reading 45 (online):** Patricia Churchland, “The Big Questions: Do We Have Free Will?”, in the New Scientist Magazine, November, 2006, available at:  <http://web.missouri.edu/~segerti/1050H/docs/churchlandFreeWill.pdf>  **Reading (optional) 46:** Daniel Dennett, “Reflections on Free Will”, online at: <https://samharris.org/reflections-on-free-will/> |

**XII. Epistemological Relativism and Constructivism**

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| **Reading 47 (online):** Chris Swoyer, “The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/supplement2.html>  **Reading 48 (online):** “Epistemological Relativism”, University of Reading (Anonymous)(To get this article, Google the title and Reading.)  **Reading 49 (online):** Paul Boghossian, “ What Is Social Construction?”, available online at:<http://philosophy.fas.nyu.edu/docs/IO/1153/socialconstruction.pdf> |

**XIII. Truth and Meaning**

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| **Reading 50 (online):** Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* … Chapter XII, “Truth and Falsehood”, at: <http://www.ditext.com/russell/rus12.html>  **Reading 51:** Manuel Velasquez … Chapter 6, section 2. What is Truth?”, pp. 426-446  **Reading 52 (online)**: “Truth”, Norman Swartz, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, available at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/truth/#H3>  2018, sections 1, 3, 4, and 5 |