



PHIL 1301: Mind, World, and Knowledge

0.5 credit. 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.

Winter Term 2026
Tuesdays & Thursdays
1:05–2:25 p.m.

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Office hours:
Tuesdays & Thursdays
2:45–3:45 p.m.

Overview & Objectives

This course will introduce you to a number of issues in two main areas of philosophy: epistemology and the philosophy of mind. Epistemology is concerned with what knowledge is (particularly in so far as it is contrasted with mere opinion or superstitious belief), how we get it, and whether we really have as much of it as we ordinarily think we do. The philosophy of mind focuses on the character of the mind (as the thing that has knowledge) and how it relates to the body. Some of the issues we will explore in the course, such as skepticism about the external world and free will, fall squarely into one or the other of these two main areas. Other issues we will explore, such as the problem of other minds and naturalism, fall just about equally into both areas.

There are two main objectives in this course. The first is to give you a good, basic understanding of the key issues in epistemology and the philosophy of mind. The second is to develop your capacity to think for yourself, critically and philosophically, about such issues.

Textbook

The following textbook will guide our lectures and discussions in the course:

Brook, A. & R. Stainton. (2000). *Knowledge and mind: A philosophical introduction*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Because our MacOdrum University Library provides you with free access to a digital copy of this book, [you are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.](#)

To access the textbook, simply visit the library's webpage at <https://library.carleton.ca/> and do a keyword search in the top search bar for "Brook+Stainton+'Knowledge and Mind'." You will find a link to the book through Cognet Library Books.

Evaluation

Test 1 = 30%

Test 2 = 40%

In-person Essay = 30%

Tests

Throughout the winter term you will be expected to take two scheduled tests, one on Thursday, January 29 at 1:05 p.m. and the other on Tuesday, March 3 at 1:05 p.m. You will have one hour to complete each test. The first test will be worth 30% of your overall grade, the second 40%.

Because these tests will be online (you'll take them on Brightspace), you won't need to come to class for them. But note that you must take the tests at the scheduled times online; you won't be able to take them afterwards, and missing one of these tests is like missing a formally scheduled exam. Test times cannot be tailored to individual student personal (including work or travel) schedules. This includes situations where students register in the class late without consulting me: they too must take the tests at the scheduled times, and it is their responsibility to make up as best they can for the lectures they have missed.

In keeping with the main objective of the course, the purpose of these tests is to ensure that you have a good understanding of the issues so-far discussed in the course and are developing your capacity for cogent philosophical reflection. Each test will consist of a number of multiple-choice questions as well as a brief essay-style question. The tests are based on what I discuss in the lectures, so your best study guides for the tests will be the notes you take about lectures.

Despite being online, these tests will be closed-book. By taking them, accordingly, you will be giving your word that you will not consult any notes, slides, books, friends, websites, or other external sources of information for their duration. Please also note, especially, that you are not permitted to make any use whatsoever generative artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, when writing these tests (e.g., when answering the brief-essay questions). If I acquire evidence that you have made use of generative AI on these tests, I will treat it as a suspected violation of academic integrity, per Section 1.3 of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences guidelines on Academic Integrity and Academic Offences, which may be found at: <https://carleton.ca/FASS-FPA-teaching-regulations/academic-integrity-and-academic-offences/#sect1.3>.

In-person Essay

You will also be expected to write an in-person essay for the course. The essay will be approximately two to three times the length of the brief-essays you write for the tests, but otherwise just the same. You will write this essay in class on Tuesday, March 24 at 1:05 p.m. Unlike the tests, then, the in-person essay requires that you come to class to write it. At the start of that class, I will provide you with a couple of questions to choose from; you will choose one of these questions and write your entire essay on that. You will have up to one hour to write the essay.

There is no final examination for this course.

Schedule

The left column of the following table lists the scheduled weeks of class for the term. The centre column indicates the topics I plan to address in my lectures for each of those weeks. In the right column are the readings from the text corresponding to these topics. This is all meant as only a rough guide, however; chances are good that we will fall behind or move ahead of the scheduled discussions at various points, and the best way for you to keep up when we do is to make sure that you attend the lectures regularly.

Because I will be away at an academic conference at the time, there will be no in-person class on March 26. In lieu of my in-person lecture that day, I will post a video lecture (or other online material) for you to consider in relation to the day's lecture topic.

January 6	Introducing epistemology and the philosophy of mind; basics of philosophical reasoning	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 1
January 8	Skepticism about the external world	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 2, pp. 1-20
January 13	Skepticism about the external world (continued)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 2, pp. 20-29
January 15	The Gettier problem for the traditional analysis of knowledge	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 2, pp. 29-31
January 20	Knowledge of language	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 3, pp. 33-42
January 22	Knowledge of language (continued)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 3, pp. 42-49
January 27	Language and thought	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 3, pp. 49-56
January 29	<u>Test 1</u>	
February 3	Dualism and materialism about the mind	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 4, pp. 63-66, 68-72, 79-95
February 5	Resisting the scientific image: Traditional arguments for dualism	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 5, pp. 103-108
February 10	Resisting the scientific image: Traditional arguments for dualism (continued)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 5, pp. 108-120
February 12	The mind-body problem	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 4, pp. 66-68
February 17	Winter Break	
February 19	Winter Break	

February 24	The specter of eliminativist materialism	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 4, pp. 95-101
February 26	The mark of the mental	
March 3	<u>Test 2</u>	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 4, pp. 73-79
March 5	Free will, determinism, and responsibility	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 6, pp. 135-141
March 10	Free will, determinism, and responsibility (continued)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 6, pp. 141-162
March 12	The problem of other minds	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 7, pp. 165-168
March 17	The problem of other minds (continued)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 7, pp. 170-183
March 19	Self-knowledge and introspection	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 7, pp. 168-170 & 184-187
March 24	<u>In-person Essay</u>	
March 26	Naturalism in the philosophy of mind and epistemology (No in-person class.)	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 8, pp. 189-207; Chapter 5, pp. 120-126
March 31	Naturalistic challenges: Mind and meaning	Brook & Stainton, Chapter 8, pp. 207-18
April 2	Naturalistic challenges: Knowledge and value	
April 7	Naturalistic challenges: the claim of widespread irrationality	

Please see the following three pages for relevant departmental and university-wide policies.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2025-26)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. We no longer allow hard copies to be placed in the department's essay box.

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](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as '*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*' This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own;
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous [process for academic integrity allegations](#), including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the full 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](#))

Statement on AI:

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described in the course outline with the instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Mental Health:

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>.

Academic Accommodation:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Exenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline). Examples of special arrangements include:

- *Pregnancy or 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 [EIC](#) website.
- *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 test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *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](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* 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:

Sept. 3 Classes start.

Sept. 16 Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.

Sept. 30 Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.

Oct. 13 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Oct. 20-24 Fall Break – no classes.

Nov. 21 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.

Dec. 5 Last day of fall term classes. *Classes follow a Monday schedule.* Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. 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 a fall term course.

Dec. 6-7 No classes or examinations take place.

Dec. 8-20 Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

Dec. 20 All take-home examinations are due.

Jan. 5 Classes begin.

Jan. 16 Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.

Jan. 31 Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.

Feb. 16 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Feb. 16-20 Winter Break – no classes.

Mar. 15 Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.

Mar. 25 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.

Apr. 3 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Apr. 8 Last day of two-term and winter term classes. *Classes follow a Friday schedule.* Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.

Apr. 9-10 No classes or examinations take place.

Apr. 11-23 Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

Apr. 23 All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:

www.carleton.ca/philosophy

520-2110

Registrar's Office:

www.carleton.ca/registrar

520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:

www.carleton.ca/academicadvising

520-7850

Writing Services:

<https://carleton.ca/cosas/support/>

520-3822

MacOdrum Library

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

520-2735