

FYSM 1211 A - Looking at Philosophy**Fall 2020****Instructor:** Christopher McGrath**Email:** christopher.mcgrath@carleton.ca**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 16:00-18:00**Office:** Virtual Office- Chat Room on CuLearn**Lectures:** Asynchronous Pre-Recorded Lectures**Classroom:** Virtual Classroom- Course Webpage**Course Description:**

An examination of the following: What is logical thinking? Does God exist? Are values relative? Do we have responsibilities? What is a just society? Do we have free will? What is the mind? What is the nature of reality?

Precludes additional credit for FYSM 1208 (no longer offered), PHIL 1000 and PHIL 1100.

The aim of this course will be to provide students with an introduction to philosophy, while using this introduction as an occasion to practice some of the key skills involved in academic work.

Our examination of philosophy will begin with a study of four dialogues written by Plato, the first great systematic philosopher of the so-called “western” tradition. In these dialogues, Plato recounts the trial and the last days of his teacher, Socrates. This narrative of Socrates’ death may have some historical basis, but its crucial significance lies in how the character of Socrates uses his last days to lead his interlocutors, and we the readers, to consider some of the main themes of philosophy – and indeed of intellectual culture more broadly. And in his living out, and dying for, this commitment to philosophy, Socrates’ final days present a kind of myth expressing in story-form some of the fundamental values guiding philosophical inquiry. As such a myth, it has been a regular touchstone for thinkers across the two and a half thousand years since it was written. And as an introduction to philosophy, these four dialogues have been one of the classical sources for students beginning to explore the philosophical life.

We will find in these four texts an examination of how the philosophical life puts in question the usual sources of authority, in order to look for knowledge somewhere else: how it puts in question traditional authority, the common opinions of one’s peers, the demands of self-interest, and the blind dictates of natural processes. And in putting these usual sources of authority in question, this philosophical exploration introduces us to major fields of philosophical research: ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics.

In the second part of the course, we will deepen our exploration of the themes Plato has introduced by reading and discussing some more recent texts in philosophy that explore these same issues. And so the second part of the course will survey philosophical readings in ethics, the relation of the individual to society and politics, and the relation of mind and nature. We will try to always find our touchstone in the

introduction Plato has given us, while also broadening our engagement by considering these more recent and diverse sources and positions.

Lecture Schedule:

Lectures topics may be adjusted pending out ability to adequately get through the material in class.

Week Of:	Lecture Topic:
Part One: The Trial and Last Days of Socrates	
September 07	Introduction to the Course
September 14	The Charge – Plato’s <i>Euthyphro</i>
September 21	The Trial – Plato’s <i>Apology</i>
September 28	The Imprisonment – Plato’s <i>Crito</i>
October 05	The Execution – Plato’s <i>Phaedo</i>
October 12	Midterm Excursus
Part Two: Exploring the Themes Raised by Socrates’ Last Days	
October 19	Exploring Ethics
October 26	NO LECTURES – FALL BREAK
November 02	Exploring Ethics (cont’d)
November 09	Exploring the Individual, Society, and Politics
November 16	Exploring the Individual, Society, and Politics (cont’d)
November 23	Exploring Mind and Nature
November 30	Exploring Mind and Nature (cont’d)
December 07	Conclusion to the Course

Assessment:

Students who do not submit assessments by the due date, and do not have authorization for the exception on significant grounds discussed with the instructor, may not receive a mark for that assignment or may receive a penalized mark per the instructor’s judgment. Any expected inability to meet the deadlines, or any failure to meet a deadline, should be discussed with the instructor at the earliest reasonable time so that accommodations may be made in appropriate cases, or course requirements discussed if significant grounds for an exception are not present.

Weekly Exercises – Analytic and Synthetic Reading Exercises: 28% (DUE MOST WEEKS)

During part one of the course, there will be four weeks when analytic reading exercises are due, based on the assigned readings for the week. During part two of the course, there will be four weeks when synthetic reading exercises are due, likewise based on the assigned readings for the week. How to do these exercises will be taught in the introduction to the course and the midterm excursus, respectively. The aim of these exercises will be to help improve reading, interpretive,

and critical thinking skills to the level needed to excel in university studies. The submissions will be different kinds of summary of assigned readings, of approximately one page or shorter in length, and due by midnight on the Tuesday of the following week.

Weekly Exercises – Participation: 11% (DUE MOST WEEKS)

During most weeks of the course, students will be required to submit a brief question or request for explanation pertaining to the readings assigned for that week. How to do this exercise will be taught in the introduction to the course. The aim of this exercise will be to encourage student participation in the course and inform Q&A sessions with the instructor. The submission will be around a couple sentences long, and due by midnight on Monday of the following week.

Midterm: 25% (DUE OCTOBER 19th)

At the conclusion of part one of the course, students will be required to submit answers to provided questions, in long-answer format, that will be based on the readings and lectures of part one. The aim of this exercise will be to consolidate and test students' understanding of the material so far taught, as well as to help students develop confidence in independent writing, with an emphasis on accurately describing the material.

Research Exercise: 11% (DUE NOVEMBER 4th)

Students will be required to submit a research exercise the week following the fall break. How to do this exercise will be taught during the midterm excursus. It will involve presenting a suitable topic for a research paper, along with a brief bibliography with simple annotation. The aim of the exercise will be to help students develop confidence in these preliminary steps of research methodology.

Final Exam: 25% (DUE DECEMBER 23rd)

At the conclusion of part two of the course, students will again be required to submit answers to provided questions, in long-answer format, that will be based on the readings and lectures of part two. The aim of this exercise will be to consolidate and test students' understanding of the material of the second part of the course, as well as to help students develop confidence in independent writing, however the emphasis will be on a critical consideration of the arguments covered in class.

Readings:

Readings will be provided online via the course webpage.

Since part one of our course is structured around four of Plato's texts, students who would like to purchase a book for the class are encouraged to purchase a copy of Plato's writings containing these

texts. Philosophy students or others interested in pursuing further studies in philosophy are particularly encouraged to do this, as they may have occasion to continue to consult Plato's writings.

The standard complete collection of Plato's writings in English translation is Cooper's (ed.) *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett 1997).

Students looking for a more affordable selection of just the writings used in this course may purchase any of the following editions:

- Grube and Cooper (transl.) *The Trial and Death of Socrates* (Hackett 2000)
- Griffith (transl.) *Plato: Symposium and the Death of Socrates* (Woodsworth 1997)
- Rowe (ed.) *The Last Days of Socrates* (Penguin 2010)

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2020-21)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

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:

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](#))

Academic Accommodation:

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

- *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 [EDC](#) 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. 9	Classes start.
Sept. 23	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. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 27	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. 11	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> 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. 12-23	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. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Classes begin.
Jan. 20	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. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 26	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. 2	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 9	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter 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 two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 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:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735