

PHIL 2340 Philosophy and Popular Culture
Carleton University

Course Outline

Term: Summer 2025

Time: Mon & Wed

Location: Online

Instructor: Philippe-Antoine Hoyerck

Teaching Assistants: TBA

Office: N/A

Office hours: By appointment only

Phone: N/A

Email: PhilippeAntoin.Hoyerck@carleton.ca

Course Description

Philosophy is all around us; it permeates culture. This course explores philosophical questions through the lens of popular culture. Materials used may include films, shows, music, novels, video games, advertising, comic books, and so on. This semester, the course will focus on the genre of science fiction, in particular in film and television.

Learning Outcomes

This course will serve as a general introduction both to the genre of science fiction and to the discipline of philosophy. In the first place, students will become familiar with the history of science fiction, its subgenres and characteristic elements. They will also learn to analyze texts using key works of science fiction in film and television from the 1960s to the 2010s.

In the second place, students will be introduced to debates in contemporary analytic philosophy. They will learn to think critically about arguments and thought-experiments in contemporary epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Special emphasis will be placed on argument reconstruction. No prior knowledge of philosophy is required.

Course Materials

Materials for this course include both audiovisual materials and readings. Almost all required audiovisual materials can be accessed via the MacOdrum library website. The remaining materials may be accessed with a Netflix Canada subscription (\$7.99/month). All readings are also available online via the MacOdrum Library website. Students do not need to purchase any books or course packs for this course.

Course Requirements

This is an asynchronous course. All lectures consist in recorded videos that will be made available on Brightspace. Students are expected to keep up with course materials, including readings, audiovisual media, and lectures.

Evaluations:

Test #1 (July 18 th)	25%
Test #2 (Aug 1 st)	25%
Final exam (TBA)	30%
Practice Quizzes (x10)	20%

Course Policies

1. Evaluations for this course are e-proctored using the CoMaS software. Students must download the software, test it ahead of time, and reach out to the instructor in the event of technical difficulties. *Failure to connect to the software will result in academic penalty.*
2. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. This includes using generative AI like ChatGPT to generate answers to questions. Any suspected academic integrity violations will automatically be submitted to the Office of the Dean for further action.
3. Much of the information about this course will be communicated via email. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly and reading communications from the instructor carefully.
4. The instructor reserves the right to change the content in the course outline, including readings, as well as the order in which it is presented. Students will always be notified ahead of time in the event of a change.
5. Students have the responsibility to inform the instructor in a timely manner—ideally ahead of time—if they must miss an evaluation. Adequate documentation may be required depending on a student's reasons for missing the evaluation.
6. No make-up work will be assigned to supplement the course evaluations under any circumstances and no evaluations will be reweighed under any circumstances. However, alternate evaluations will be provided to students who miss evaluations for good reasons.

Course Calendar

Course Introduction

July 2nd **Philosophy and Science Fiction**
No readings

I. Knowledge of the External World

July 7th **Knowledge of the External World, pts. 1-2**
Media: *The Matrix* (required)
 Inception (recommended)

July 9th **Knowledge of the External World, pts. 3-4**
Reading: Hilary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat"

July 14th **Knowledge of the External World, pt. 5**
Reading: Robert Nozick, "Happiness"

II. The Nature of the Mind

- July 16th **The Nature of the Mind, pts. 1-2**
Media: *Star Trek* TNG, S2, E9, “The Measure of a Man” (required)
 Blade Runner (recommended)
- July 18th Test #1
- July 21st **The Nature of the Mind, pts. 3-4**
Readings: John Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs”
 David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind* (excerpts)
- July 23rd **Knowledge of the External World, pt. 5**
Reading: Mary Anne Warren, *Moral Status* (excerpts)

III. Personal Identity and the Self

- July 28th **Personal Identity and the Self, pts. 1-2**
Media: *Annihilation* (required)
 Star Trek TOS, S1, E5 “The Enemy Within” (recommended)
 Star Trek TNG, S6, E24 “Second Chances” (recommended)
 Star Trek VOY, S2, E24 “Tuvix” (recommended)
- July 30th **Personal Identity and the Self, pts. 3-4**
Reading: Derek Parfit, “Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons”
- Aug 1st Test #2
- Aug 6th **Personal Identity and the Self, pt. 5**
Reading: Marya Schechtman, “The Same and the Same”

IV. Free Will and Determinism

- Aug 11th **Free Will and Determinism, pts. 1-2**
Media: *Minority Report* (required)
 12 Monkeys (recommended)
- Aug 13-14th **Free Will and Determinism, pts. 3-4**
Readings: J.J.C. Smart, “Free Will, Praise, and Blame”

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 2025)

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](#)). 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:* 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](#).
- *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 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](#).
- *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: <https://carleton.ca/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:

May 5	Classes start.	July 1	Statutory holiday, University closed.
May 9	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>early</u> summer courses.	July 2	Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.
May 16	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>full</u> summer courses.	July 8	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>late</u> summer courses.
May 16	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from <u>early</u> summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.	July 15	Last day to withdraw from <u>late</u> summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
May 19	Statutory holiday. University closed.	Aug. 1	Last day for academic withdrawal from full and late summer courses.
May 31	Last day to withdraw from full summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.	Aug. 4	Civic holiday, University closed.
		Aug. 7	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>late</u> summer and <u>full</u> summer courses before the official examination period.
June 10	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>early</u> summer courses before the official examination period.	Aug. 14	Last day of <u>late</u> and <u>full</u> summer term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.
June 17	Last day for <u>early</u> summer classes. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.		
June 18-19	No classes or examinations take place.	Aug. 15-16	No classes or examinations take place.
June 20-26	Final examinations.	Aug. 17-23	Final examinations.
June 26	Take-home examinations for <u>early</u> summer courses are due.	Aug. 23	Take-home examinations for <u>late</u> or <u>full</u> summer courses 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