**MIND AND ACTION**

**(PHIL 3502 A)**

Carleton University, Winter 2023

**Day/Time:** Wednesday, Friday 8:35pm – 9:55pm **Location:** Southam Hall 417

Prof. Myrto Mylopoulos

**Office:** 3A47 Paterson Hall **Office Telephone:** 613-520-2600 x3943

**Office Hours:** By appointment (over Zoom or in-person, depending on availability)

**E-mail:** Myrto.Mylopoulos@carleton.ca

**Course Website:** <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/134049>

**Course Description**

In this course, we will examine fundamental issues related to human action and the psychological mechanisms that give rise to it. We will start by looking at classic attempts to satisfy the need for a basic account of what it is that distinguishes things that merely happen to us from things that we *do*, that is, things that are expressions of our own *agency*. It will emerge that such attempts force us to confront a host of puzzling questions, among them the following: What is the best way to understand an agent’s guidance and control of their intentional actions? What challenges arise in attempting to reconcile an understanding of agency and intentional action with a scientific understanding of the universe? What about an understanding of ourselves as free, morally responsible agents? How can we explain why agent’s sometimes act against their better judgement? What is the best way to understand the experience of acting and the role of consciousness in causing our behaviour, especially in light of recent empirical findings that seem to cast doubt on the existence of such a role? How do agents come to develop into highly skilled experts within certain action domains, and what is it that distinguishes skilled experts from novices? Through detailed engagement with key texts that have addressed these and other questions, this course aims to establish a theoretical foundation for understanding human action and its fascinating complexity.

**Course Objectives**

Our aim in this course will be to support and develop the following:

* An understanding of key issues, questions, and debates in contemporary action theory.
* An ability to clearly and effectively articulate a critical viewpoint on issues within contemporary action theory.
* An understanding of how contemporary action theory relates to broader philosophical questions in philosophy of mind, philosophy of cognitive science, metaphysics, epistemology, and moral psychology.

**Course Materials**

* All required readings and additional resources will be made available on Brightspace.

**Course Requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course Component** | **Percentage of Final Grade** |
| Participation | 10% |
| Reading Assignments (Perusall) | 20% |
| Writing Assignments x 2 (worth 15%, and 20% respectively) | 35% |
| Term Paper (incl. abstract) | 35% |

**Class Participation**

Participation is a key component of this course and worth **10%** of your final grade.

There are three main ways to earn your participation grade:

1. By being actively engaged throughout the duration of each class and contributing to our weekly class discussion.

2. By contributing to the weekly class discussion about the course readings on Perusall (especially going above and beyond what is strictly required for the reading assignment).

3. By making an appointment to discuss/clarify course material.

If for any reason you expect to miss a class, I would appreciate a quick note letting me know.

**Reading Assignments**

Readings will be assigned for every class session except in the first week. All readings are required, except for those marked ‘optional’. While optional, you are strongly encouraged to do these readings, as they’ll help both to fill in the background for, and expand upon, the material we’ll be discussing in class.

To work through the course readings, we will be using Perusall, a collaborative e-reading platform that enables you to tackle the readings together as a group in between our class sessions. The reading assignments you complete on Perusall will be worth **20%** of your final grade and start being counted on Jan. 20. They will be due the day before class **(Tuesdays and Thursdays) by 5pm**.

We will discuss further details for these reading assignments on the first day of class.

To register for a free Perusall account, go here: <https://app.perusall.com/> For info on how to use it, please see: <https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/categories/360002173133-Students>

**Short Writing Assignments**

There are two short writing assignments in this course. The main purpose of these writing assignments is to help you practice and develop the skills necessary for writing your term paper.

**Writing Assignment #1 (15%): (max. 750 words)**

**DUE: Monday, Feb. 13 by midnight**

We will go over instructions and a marking rubric in class.

**Writing Assignment #2 (20%) (max. 1500 words)**

**DUE: Monday, March 27 by midnight**

We will go over instructions and a marking rubric in class.

Writing assignments will be submitted via Brightspace. Late submissions will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends, except in the case of serious illness or emergency with appropriate documentation (where applicable).

**Term Paper (Take-Home Final Exam)**

You will write one term paper **(max. 2000 words, excluding references)** due on **Wednesday, April 27th** **by midnight** and worth **35%** of your final grade. Late submissions will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends, except in the case of serious illness or emergency with appropriate documentation (where applicable).

You will submit a short (approx. 150 words) abstract of your paper worth **5%** of your final paper grade. You have until **Monday**, **March 20th at 5pm** to submit your abstract. The purpose of this abstract is to articulate the basic outline of your paper, and receive some feedback from me prior to writing it. It will be graded for completion only (pass/fail).

We will discuss further instructions/guidelines and a marking rubric for the final paper in class. Both the paper and the abstracted will be submitted via Brightspace.

**Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

Please turn off (or silence) your cell phones and put them away at the start of class. The use of laptops for the **sole purpose** of note-taking is permitted.

**Online Availability**

I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours, but I may not always be able to do so. (And I’ll likely be slower on weekends or holidays.) If you think your message will require a very lengthy reply from me, it’s probably best to arrange a meeting instead.

**Course Readings/Topics Schedule**

**\*\*May be revised. Check Brightspace for most up-to-date version.\*\***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Topic | Readings |
| Jan. 11 | Introduction - Syllabus | No assigned readings |
| Jan. 13 | Introduction – Content of the Course | No assigned readings |
| Jan. 18 | Action Explanation and Reasons | Davidson (1963), “Actions, Reasons, and Causes” |
| Jan. 20 | Action Explanation and Reasons | Hursthouse (1991), “Arational Actions” |
| Jan. 25 | The Problem of Causal Deviance | Schlosser (2007), “Basic Deviance Reconsidered” |
| Jan. 27 | The Problem of Causal Deviance | Wu (2016), “Experts and Deviants: The Story of Agentive Control” |
| Feb. 1 | The Problem of the “Out of Touch” Agent | Frankfurt (1978), “The Problem of Action” |
| Feb. 3 | The Problem of the “Out of Touch” Agent | Buehler (2021), “Agential Capacities: A Capacity to Guide” |
| Feb. 8 | Intentions and Intentional Action | Mele (1989), “Intention, Belief, and Intentional Action” |
| Feb. 10 | Intentions and Intentional Action | Bratman, “Two Faces of Intention”  |
| Feb. 15 | Omissions | Clarke, “Intentional Omissions” |
| Feb. 17 | Mental Action | Proust, “A Plea for Mental Acts” |
| **Feb. 22** | **NO CLASS** |  |
| **Feb. 24** | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Mar. 1 | Action Slips | Amaya (2013), “Slips” |
| Mar. 3 | Weakness of Will and Akrasia | Rorty (1980), “Where Does the Akratic Break take Place?” |
| Mar. 8 | Weakness of Will and Akrasia | Holton (1999), “Intention and weakness of will” |
| Mar. 10 | Free Action | Strawson (1994), “The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility” |
| Mar. 15 | Free Action | Chisholm (1964), “Human Freedom and the Self” |
| Mar. 17 | Free Action | Frankfurt (1971), “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person” |
| Mar. 22 | Conscious Agency | Bayne, “The Sense of Agency” |
| Mar. 24 | Conscious Agency | Pacherie, “Can Conscious Agency Be Saved?” |
| Mar. 29 | Skilled Action | Papineau (2015), “Choking and the Yips” |
| Mar. 31 | Skilled Action | Montero (2015), “Is Monitoring One’s Actions Causally Relevant to Choking Under Pressure?” |
| Apr. 5 | Agency as Art | Nguyen (2019), “Agency as Art” |
| **Apr. 7** | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Apr. 12 | TBA |  |

**Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2022/2023)**

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 B+ = 77-79 C+ = 67-69 D+ = 57-59

A = 85-89 B = 73-76 C = 63-66 D = 53-56

A - = 80-84 B - = 70-72 C - = 60-62 D - = 50-52

F = Below 50

Grades entered by Registrar:

WDN = Withdrawn from the course

DEF = Deferred

**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 takehome 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;
* 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; and
* failing to acknowledge sources through the use of 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 conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

**Statement on Student Mental Health**

As a University 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. Here is a list that may be helpful:

**Emergency Resources** **(on and off campus):** [https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergencynumbers/](https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/)

**Carleton Resources:**

* Mental Health and Wellbeing:<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
* Health & Counselling Services:<https://carleton.ca/health/>
* Paul Menton Centre:<https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
* Academic Advising Centre (AAC):<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
* Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):<https://carleton.ca/csas/>
* Equity & Inclusivity Communities:<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

**Off Campus Resources:**

* Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550,<https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
* Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991,<http://www.crisisline.ca/>
* Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
* Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454,<https://good2talk.ca/>
* The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: [https://walkincounselling.com](https://walkincounselling.com/)

**Statement on Pandemic Measures**

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](https://carleton.ca/covid19/health-and-safety/reducing-your-risks/) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you’re sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

**Feeling sick?** Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton’s [symptom reporting protocols.](https://carleton.ca/covid19/covid-19-symptom-reporting/)

**Masks**

Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, the university continues to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained.

**Vaccines**

While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](https://carleton.ca/covid19/cuscreen/) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton’s COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University’s COVID-19 website](https://carleton.ca/covid19/) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).](https://carleton.ca/covid19/faq/) Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

**Requests for Academic Accommodations**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

* **Pregnancy obligation**: Please 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here)](https://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/pregnancy-accommodation-form/).
* **Religious obligation:** Please 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 [click here.](https://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/religious-observances/)
* **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).

* **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/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>
* **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 will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. 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. [https://carleton.ca/senate/wpcontent/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf)

**Important Dates:**

Jan. 9 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. 20 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Feb. 20-24 Winter Break – no classes.

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

Mar. 29 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. 7 Statutory holiday. University closed.

Apr. 12 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. 13-14 No classes or examinations take place.

Apr. 15-27 Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.

Apr. 27 All take-home examinations are due.

**Important Contact Information**

Department of Philosophy:

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

Tel: 613-520-2110

Registrar’s Office:

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

Tel: 613-520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:

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

Tel: 613-520-7850

Writing Services:

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

Tel : 613-520-3822

MacOdrum Library

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

Tel : 613-520-2735