

## COURSE OUTLINE: PHIL 4006

### Topics in History of Philosophy: Scepticism and Dreams in Early Modern Philosophy

Fall 2022: Mondays, 11:35-14:25, Paterson 3A36

Professor Melissa Frankel

Office: Paterson Hall 3A53 – but for Fall 2022, my “office” will primarily be virtual

Office Hours: TBA (will be virtual)

Email: [Melissa.frankel@carleton.ca](mailto:Melissa.frankel@carleton.ca), or through Brightspace

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#### Course description:

In Descartes’s first *Meditation*, he famously advances a number of sceptical hypotheses to try to uncover the ground of our knowledge. One of these – the dream hypothesis – seems to undermine our knowledge of the external world by raising a purported problem about distinguishing between dreams and reality. But what, precisely, is the problem? Is this really a problem that we ought to take seriously? Did Descartes himself take this problem seriously? And just how concerned was Descartes with scepticism overall? In this seminar, we will consider early modern sceptical and anti-sceptical philosophies, looking at texts from Descartes, Bayle, Locke, Berkeley, and Shepherd, among others. We will pay special attention, where possible, to the role of dreams; we will consider both views on which dreams pose a genuine problem for knowledge, as well as views on which they pose no problem at all. Our primary focus will be on epistemological questions, but we will also consider questions about philosophy of mind, perception, and metaphysics.

*Prerequisite for undergraduates:* eligibility for fourth-year standing in a Philosophy Honours program or permission of the Department (i.e., me).

#### Required text:

There is no required text for this course.

We will be consulting a variety of primary texts. For those of you who have taken either PHIL 3002 (17<sup>th</sup> c Philosophy) or PHIL 3003 (18<sup>th</sup> c Philosophy), you will already own an anthology of early modern primary texts entitled “Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources,” edited by Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, published by Hackett. This text contains many (but not all) of the sources that we will be looking at, so you may want to keep it on hand. If you do not already own this book, however, I will not require you to purchase it.

Because we will be consulting so many different primary sources, I will not require you to purchase any of them individually, either. Instead, I will make readings available on Brightspace, e.g. by linking to the library’s e-resources (typically the “Past Masters” database), or through the Ares course reserves system.

Note: many of these primary texts are also available in full in various places online. However, some online sources are abridged or otherwise altered. If you wish to consult an online source other than the Past Masters database, you **must** discuss this with me, so that I can help you to evaluate whether or not the source is appropriate.

Sometimes I may ask you to consult secondary sources. Whenever I ask you to consult secondary sources, I will make them available on Brightspace.

If you do want to purchase the individual texts that we will be looking at, they are all available for purchasing online. If you decide to do this, let me know, and I will send you references for the standard academic version of the texts.

#### Technology requirements:

This course is an **in-person** course. The majority of the course will take place on campus, during regularly scheduled course hours. That said, a number of elements of the course will require use of technology, including reading materials, assignments, and office hours. I may also occasionally schedule Zoom class meetings, if needed. For these and other purposes, you will need access to a computer or some other device that allows you to reliably access the internet. It will be helpful if this computer or alternative device also has a camera and microphone for videoconferencing. You will need to be able to access Brightspace, as well as the other online platforms that we will be using in this class; you will also need a pdf reader to be able to read articles in pdf format.

If you anticipate having any problems with technology or internet access, please email me so that we can discuss possible solutions.

### **Brightspace:**

This course will be supported by Brightspace. It is important for you to regularly check the Brightspace page for the course, which is where you will find (among other things) the most up-to-date information regarding our schedule of readings, which is open to revision throughout the semester.

The Brightspace for this course will be divided into weekly segments. In each of these weekly segments, you will find a list of the readings that are meant to be either begun or completed during that week, links to those readings, and a place for submitting your response papers for that week (see evaluation section, below).

Students are responsible for reading and responding appropriately to all information distributed through Brightspace. Information provided on Brightspace will be considered to have been provided to all registered students within 24 hours of posting.

### **Email / office hour appointments:**

You can email me using the email address at the top of the course outline, or through Brightspace. If you choose not to email me through Brightspace, then please be sure that your email is sent from your official Carleton email address. You should also check your Carleton email account regularly (alongside checking the Brightspace page), because when I send you emails, it will be to that email address.

Office hours this semester will be virtual; there will be a link on the Brightspace page for you to self-schedule a meeting with me during those office hours. I am also available to meet outside of office hours, by appointment; send me an email and we will work out a time.

### **Evaluation:**

#### **1. Response papers (50%)**

Over the course of the semester, I will ask you to write **five (5)** short response papers of 1-2 pages (double-spaced) each. These response papers will be due **before class begins** and *should be on the topic of the previous week's reading / class discussion*. You can choose which weeks you'd like to submit your response papers, within the scheduling constraints noted below.

I will be asking you to **read these response papers out loud in class**; you should be prepared to briefly discuss them, as well.

Each response paper will be worth **10%** of your final grade, for a total of **50%**. Please note: **it is part of the assignment to read the response papers in class**. So you should not hand in response papers if you are not planning to attend class. If you hand in a response paper on a week that you do not attend class, you will be penalized by 2/3 of a letter grade (so: a response paper that would have otherwise earned a grade of B+ will drop to a B-, etc.) You cannot earn full marks for a response paper that you submit on a

week when you do not attend class. Please note: if you anticipate having trouble with this aspect of the assignment, please let me know so that we can discuss possible solutions.

### What are the expectations for response papers?

Response papers should involve a brief reconstruction or summary of at least one aspect of the previous week's reading, with specific references to the text. In addition, response papers should engage critically with the aspect of the reading that you've reconstructed or summarized, again, with specific references to the text. For instance, your response paper could consider one of the following points (this list is not exhaustive):

- A question raised by the reading, along with the author's answer to that question, or your answer on behalf of the author
- An objection to the reading, along with the author's answer to the objection, or your answer on behalf of the author
- An aspect of the reading that you found particularly illuminating, along with your reasons for finding it illuminating (e.g., a connection that you made after doing the reading, or a way in which that reading helped you understand a difficult point)
- A clarification of a difficult issue addressed in that reading
- An issue raised by the author that was not discussed in the previous class discussion, and that you think ought to be addressed

### Scheduling constraints on response papers:

(a) Because the first class is mostly an introductory class, you should not write a response paper on that class. That is: the first possible response paper you could write would be on the subject matter that we cover in class 2 (Sept 19), and would be due at the beginning of class 3 (Sept 26).

(b) Because response papers are due the week *after* we discuss the reading on which they are based, you cannot write a response paper on the subject matter that we discuss in our final class. That is: the last possible response paper you could write would be on the subject matter that we cover in class on Dec 5, and would be due at the beginning of class on Dec 9.

(c) You must write and submit at least one (1) of your response papers before the Fall break, that is, by Monday, **Oct 17** at the latest. If you do not submit a response paper before the Fall break, **you will receive a mark of 0/10 for your first reading response**; that is, you will only be graded on four (4) response papers after this date has passed.

### Submitting response papers:

Response papers should be submitted on Brightspace before the beginning of class on the day that you submit them. You should also have a copy in front of you (whether printed out, or on a screen) during class, so that you can read it out loud during class. If you like, you are welcome to share your response paper with the class (e.g. by email), but you are not obligated to do this.

## **2. Final take-home 'exam' (50%)**

A mid-length paper (**8-10 pages**) on a topic of your choosing, due on the last day of exam period for the Fall 2022 Semester (**Dec 22, 2022.**) You must consult with me on your topic at least two weeks before the end of classes. Topics *must be approved*.

Final papers should be submitted on Brightspace and will be worth **50%** of your final grade.

### **Lateness policy:**

1. I will not accept response papers late, because we will be discussing them in class.

2. No extensions will be granted for final take-home papers, as it is university policy that the last day for handing in take-homes is the last day of exam period (in this case, **Dec 22.**) If you require extra time, you will need to obtain a deferral through the Registrar's Office. Please feel free to let me know if this is the case, as I will be glad to support you through the deferral process, if such support is desired.

**Philosophy department policies:** Please see the final page of course outline.

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2022-23)

### **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](mailto: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. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	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. 10	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	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. 9	Last day of fall term classes. <b><i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i></b> 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. 10-22	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. 22	All take-home examinations are due.
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. 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. <b><i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i></b> 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. 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.

**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