

## COURSE OUTLINE: PHIL 5600

### 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.

#### Required text:

There is no required text for this course.

We will be consulting a variety of primary texts. If you were an undergraduate at Carleton, you may have taken either PHIL 3002 (17<sup>th</sup> c Philosophy) or PHIL 3003 (18<sup>th</sup> c Philosophy); in this case, 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. If you do not 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. In particular, you will be asked to consult at least one secondary source when you give your presentation (see the section on evaluation, below.) Whenever I ask you to consult secondary sources, I will make those sources available on Brightspace, again, either through a link to the library’s e-resources, or on Ares.

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. If you intend to do your graduate work (e.g. MA thesis or research paper work) in the history of philosophy, and especially in early modern philosophy, this may be a good idea for you.

**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, as well as links to those readings (if needed). There will also be a section on Brightspace for submitting assignments (see the section on evaluation, 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. Presentation (30%)**

You will be asked to present a topic to the class at least once during the semester. Presentations should be about 20-30 minutes long, including time for discussion, and typically will involve using a secondary source to provide a framework for discussion of a primary text.

For your presentation, you should produce either a detailed handout or a slideshow (on powerpoint, or whatever other software you feel comfortable using, as long as it's compatible with the classroom technology.) It's genuinely up to you to decide whether you would like to produce a handout or a slideshow; I have no preference. You should submit the handout or slideshow on Brightspace **before the beginning of class** on the day of your presentation.

Note: if you decide to produce a handout, besides submitting it on Brightspace, please also email it to me, so that I can print copies to bring to class. (Or you can do this yourself, if you like – but let me know.)

You must meet with me virtually **at least one week before your presentation**, in order to discuss the presentation as well as the handout / slideshow.

I will ask you to sign up for a presentation topic by the **third class** of the semester (**Sept 26**) at the very latest.

Your presentation plus handout / slideshow will be worth **30%** of your final grade.

## **2. Participation (10%)**

As graduate students, you are expected to come to class having read the material and being prepared to discuss it. Participation will be worth **10%** of your grade. Note: participation will be judged by quality, not by quantity. I.e., it is not necessary that you constantly participate in class discussion, but in order to count towards the 10%, your comments should be relevant to the material or discussion at hand.

## **3. Final take-home 'exam' (60%)**

A mid-length paper (**12-18 pages**) on a topic of your choosing, due on the last day of exam period for the Fall Semester (**Dec 22, 2022.**) You must consult with me on your topic at least two weeks before final papers are due. Topics *must be approved*. This paper should be submitted on Brightspace and will be worth **60%** of your grade. You are welcome to write your paper on the same topic as your presentation, if this is your preference, but you are not obligated to do so.

## 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