**PHILOSOPHY 1301 A**

**MIND, WORLD & KNOWLEDGE**

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY: LATE SUMMER SESSION 2022**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Professor: KENNETH FERGUSON**

**Email:** [**Kenneth.Ferguson@carleton.ca**](mailto:Kenneth.Ferguson@carleton.ca)

**Class Times: Monday/Wednesday**

**First Class: July 4, 2022**

**Zoom Lecture Link: Brightspace under Content: Module 1**

**Catalogue Description**

**PHIL 1301 [0.5 credit]  
Mind, World, and Knowledge**

Introduction to a variety of philosophical works, including contemporary, on such topics as: the nature of being, the mental, the external, consciousness, perception, experience, meaning, truth, the nature of knowledge, scientific understanding, and how language and thought represent the world.

Precludes additional credit for PHIL 1006 (no longer offered), PHIL 1501 (no longer offered).

Lectures three hours per week.

**Course Description for Summer Term 2021**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the nature of philosophical reflection and inquiry by exploring a number of traditional problems concerning the nature of knowledge, minds, persons, language and related issues. Among the issues to be considered are the following: What conditions must be satisfied, for example, if a person is to know something? How can we respond to skeptics who insist that genuine knowledge is impossible? What is consciousness? Is it something purely physical, a state of the brain, perhaps, or is it something over and above the physical world? What are persons? Is there an afterlife? Has the development of modern science undercut any rational basis for religious belief?

These and other issues have occupied the attention of reflective people for thousands of years. Although they must have answers, it proves extremely difficult to know what they are, for they do not seem to be directly amenable to the methods and procedures that we normally rely upon in forming beliefs in science or everyday life. This does not mean, however, that we may choose whichever answers we like; opinions are of no interest unless they can be supported by reasoned arguments. After looking at how some of the most prominent philosophical thinkers, both today and in the past, have tried to answer these questions, we will try to arrive some conclusions ourselves.

**Online Course**

This is an entirely online, or distance, course. All course lectures will be available for students to access online; no in-person classes will be held. The PowerPoint slides on which lectures will be based will all be posted on Brightspace, as well as all course assignments, midterms, exams, etc., and students will submit all of their required course assignments through Brightspace.

**Lectures**

Live Zoom lectures will be held during the scheduled class hours. The emphasis in the lectures will be on reasoning, analysis and critical evaluation. Readings will be assigned for each class, and students should read them beforehand. The role of the Instructor will be to guide students through the readings, to ensure that discussions remain focused on relevant and important issues, and to illustrate the processes of interpretation, analysis and criticism by repeated example in class.

**Required Readings**

There is no required text for this course. All required readings will either be available on the Web or will be posted on Brightspace. However, we will make use of the following online text, as it contains many excellent discussions of issues central to the course: *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, 12th edition, by Manuel Velasquez (Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, available online at: <https://view.publitas.com/p222-13032/philosophy-a-text-with-readings-velasquez-manuel-srg/page/36-37> (It might be convenient for students to put this on their favorites so you have quick access to it.) **In a**ddition, some readings will be posted on Brightspace, while others will be on the Web. A complete list of all required readings for the course, with online web addresses, is provided below.

**Course Requirements**

**Midterm Exam:** There will be a **midterm exam** worth 30% of the overall grade. It is (somewhat) tentatively scheduled for July 29/30. The midterm will have the following format: one week before the date of the midterm, a list of study questions on topics central to the material that has been covered will be posted on Brightspace; the instructor will then select a number of these questions for students to answer on the midterm, but students will not know beforehand which questions will be selected.

**Discussion Essay (Term Paper):** Students will write an essay of approximately 6-7 pages in length (1,500-2,000 words), which will be worth 30% of the overall grade. This will be a discussion paper, not a research paper, which will involve analyzing and evaluating some issue central to the course. A list of topics for students to choose from will be posted on Brightspace early in the course. The Discussion essay will be due about Aug. 12 (2022).

**Final Examination:** There will be a final exam scheduled during the examination period, worth 40% of the overall grade for the course grade. The format for the final exam will be very similar to that described above for the midterm.

**Short List of Topics and Readings**

(For more details see the list of Topics and Readings posted on Brightspace.)

1. What is knowledge and how is it possible?
2. How do we form meaningful thoughts?
3. Are there any innate ideas?
4. Is reality discovered or constructed?
5. Are secondary qualities, like colours and sounds, real or merely subjective?
6. Could the origin of the universe ever be fully explained, and, if so, how?
7. Do science and religion conflict or can they be reconciled?
8. Do immaterial souls exist, or is the mind simply identical to the brain?
9. Could sophisticated robots be conscious?
10. What are persons and how do we track their identity across time?
11. Is truth objective or relative?
12. Do we have free will?

**Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 2022)**

**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](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/examinations/#deferred-final-exams)). Visit the [Registrar’s Office](https://carleton.ca/registrar/) 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](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/academic-integrity-and-offenses-of-conduct/#academic-integrity-policy))

**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](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).
* *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](mailto: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](http://carleton.ca/pmc).
* *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: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)
* *Accommodation for* [*Student Activities*](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf)*:* 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:**

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| May 5 Classes start.  May 12 Last day for registration and course changes for early summer courses.  May 19Last day for registration and course changes for full summer courses.  May 20 Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from early and full summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  May 23 Statutory holiday, University closed.  June 10 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for early summer courses before the official examination period.  June 17 Last day for early summer classes.  Classes follow a Monday schedule.  Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  Last day for academic withdrawal from early summer courses.  June 18-19 No classes or examinations take place.  June 20-26 Final examinations.  June 26 Take-home examinations for early summer courses are due. | July 1 Statutory holiday, University closed.  July 4 Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.  July 11 Last day for registration and course changes for late summer courses.  July 22 Last day to withdraw from late summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  Aug. 1 Civic holiday, University closed.  Aug. 9 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for late summer and full summer courses before the official examination period.  Aug. 16 Last day of late and full summer term classes.  Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  Last day for academic withdrawal from late summer and full summer courses.  Aug. 17-18 No classes or examinations take place.  Aug. 19-25 Final examinations.  Aug. 25 Take-home examinations for late or full summer courses 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