

## SKILLED ACTION (PHIL5200)

Carleton University, Fall 2016

**Day/Time:** Tuesdays, 2:35pm – 5:25pm **Location:** Paterson Hall 3A36

Dr. Myrto Mylopoulos

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

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 12pm – 2pm (and by appointment)

**E-mail:** [Myrto.Mylopoulos@carleton.ca](mailto:Myrto.Mylopoulos@carleton.ca)

### Course Description

This course will examine skilled action from numerous angles, each of which highlights the importance of reflecting on the nature of skill within the context of major debates in epistemology, philosophy of mind, action theory, and moral psychology. First, we'll consider the relationship between skill and knowledge. Is possession of a skill best understood as possession of knowledge how? Is knowledge how irreducible and distinct from knowledge that? Or just a species of it? Next, we approach the question of how conceptual thought relates to skill. Is skill characteristically non-reflective, non-deliberative, and arational, as some have supposed? Or is it best understood as an exercise of rational behaviour? Third, how exactly do control and automaticity relate to skill? And how can we make sense of the nature of each? Finally, we turn to consider how best to understand the ethical character of some skilled behaviours in light of their automaticity.

### Course Objectives

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

- An understanding of key issues surrounding the nature of skill within the context of major debates in epistemology, philosophy of mind, action theory, and moral psychology.
- An ability to articulate a critical viewpoint on an issue clearly and effectively in both written and oral communication.

### Course Materials

- All required readings and additional resources will be made available on cuLearn.

### Course Requirements

Course Component	Percentage of Final Grade
Participation	15%
Critical Responses (x5)	25%
In-Class Presentation	20%
Term Paper	40%

## Readings

Readings will be assigned for every class session except the first and last. All readings are required, except for those marked as 'optional' on the course syllabus. While optional, you are strongly encouraged to do these readings, as they'll help both to fill in the background for and expand on some of the material we'll be covering in class. Please ensure you complete all required readings for a class session before that session. Come prepared to discuss them.

## Critical Reading Responses

You will write **up to seven** critical reading responses (400 – 500 words each) over the course of the semester (starting in week 3). Only your **best five** responses will be counted. These will each be worth **5%** of your final grade for a total of **25%**.

The responses are intended to give you an opportunity to critically reflect, in writing, on the main claims, arguments, or theories you encounter in the readings/class discussions. As such, **you should not merely summarize** the material you are addressing, though of course some summary will be necessary, but rather **evaluate** and **expand** on it. I will go over a grading rubric in class and some general guidelines for how you might approach these responses.

Responses will be submitted via cuLearn and are due **before** the start of the class for which the relevant reading is assigned. Late responses will not be accepted.

You are encouraged to use ideas you develop in these responses as the basis for your term paper.

## Term Paper

You will write one term paper (**10-12 pages**) due on **December 6<sup>th</sup>** and worth **40%** of your final grade.

You will submit an abstract (**150 – 250 words**) for this paper, tentatively due on **November 8<sup>th</sup>**.

We will discuss further instructions/guidelines in class closer to the due date.

## In-Class Presentations

Starting in **week 4**, each of you will have the opportunity to do a "conference-style" class presentation on some aspect of the assigned readings. This is worth **20%** of your final grade.

You will sign up for presentation slots on cuLearn on a first-come, first-served basis. Presentations will be 20 minutes, followed by a five minute question and answer period. We will have two presentations per class, typically during the second half of each class.

You will meet with me no later than one week before your presentation date with an outline of what you plan to discuss. Please also consult with your fellow classmate presenting on the same day, to ensure that you do not significantly overlap in your material.

Guidelines for the presentation itself (we'll discuss further in class):

- Prepare a handout to distribute to the class **or** a slide presentation (but not both).
- Approx. 12-15 minutes of the presentation should be devoted to exposition: What is the main thesis for which the author is arguing? What is the relevant background/context within which this argument is being made? What is the structure of the main argument? What are its premises and the justification the author provides for each one?
- Approx. 5-8 minutes of the presentation should be devoted to critical discussion: Are there weaknesses you've identified in the author's overall argument? Are there counterexamples to main claims that they have failed to consider? Are there ways the author might strengthen the case they make for their view?

### **Participation**

Active participation is a requirement in this course. This means, among other things, attending each class on time having done the readings carefully, being prepared to discuss them, asking questions during class and after class presentations, responding to questions asked by myself or a classmate, and visiting office hours to discuss course material. This will be worth **15%** of your final grade.

If for any reason you expect to miss class, please send me a quick note letting me know.

### **Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

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

### **Office Hours and Availability**

My regular office hours are as stated up top. I'm happy to meet you at other days/times as well—just make arrangements with me over email or in person.

I will do my best to respond to your emails within 24 hours, but I may not always be able to do so. If you think your message will require a lengthy reply from me, please arrange to come and see me in person instead.

### **Course Readings/Topics Schedule (may be revised)**

#### **Week 1 (Sept. 13): Introduction**

- Optional: Wallace (2006) "Roger Federer as Religious Experience" Available here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/20/sports/playmagazine/20federer.html>

#### **Week 2 (Sept.20): Skill and Knowledge**

- Ryle (1949) *The Concept of Mind*, Ch.2
- Optional: Ryle (1945) "Knowing How and Knowing That"

**Week 3 (Sept.27): Skill and Knowledge**

- Stanley & Williamson (2001) “Knowing How”
- Stanley & Krakauer (2015) “Motor Skill Depends on Knowledge of Facts”
- Optional: Stanley (2011) “Knowing (How)”

**Week 4 (Oct.4): Skill and Knowledge**

- Noë (2005) “Against Intellectualism”
- Devitt (2011) “Methodology and the Nature of Knowing How”

**Week 5 (Oct.11): Skill and Thought**

- Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1988) *Mind Over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*, Ch.1
- Dreyfus (2005) “Overcoming the Myth of the Mental: How Philosophers Can Profit from the Phenomenology of Everyday Expertise”
- McDowell (2007) “What Myth?”
- Optional: Dreyfus (2007) “The Return of the Myth of the Mental”; McDowell (2007) “Response to Dreyfus”; Dreyfus (2007) “Response to McDowell”; Dow (2015) “Just Doing What I Do: On the Awareness of Fluent Agency”

**Week 6 (Oct.18): Skill and Thought**

- Montero (2010) “Does Bodily Awareness Interfere With Highly Skilled Movement?”
- Optional: Montero & Evans (2011) “Intuitions Without Concepts Lose the Game: Mindedness in the Art of Chess”

**Week 7 (Oct.25): No Class (Fall Break)****Week 8 (Nov.1): Skill and Thought**

- Papineau (2015) “Choking and the Yips”
- Optional: Beilock (2001) “On the Fragility of Skilled Performance: What Governs Choking Under Pressure?”

**Week 9 (Nov.8): Skill and Control \*\*\*ABSTRACTS DUE\*\*\***

- Fridland (2014) “They’ve Lost Control: Reflections on Skill”
- Optional: Shepherd (2014) “The Contours of Control”

**Week 10 (Nov.15): Skill and Control**

- Christensen, Sutton, McIlwain (2016) “Cognition in Skilled Action: Meshed Control and the Varieties of Skilled Experience”
- Optional: Moors & de Houwer (2006) “Automaticity: A Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis”; Bargh & Chartrand (1999) “The Unbearable Automaticity of Being”; Fridland (2015) “Automatically Minded”

**Week 11 (Nov.22): Skill and Ethical Behaviour**

- Brownstein & Madva (2012) “Ethical Automaticity”
- Brownstein & Madva (2012) “The Normativity of Automaticity”
- Optional: Gendler (2008) “Alief and Belief”

**Week 12 (Nov.29): Skill and Ethical Behaviour**

- Arpaly & Schroeder (2012) “Deliberation and Acting for Reasons”

**Week 13 (Dec.6): Wrap-Up \*\*\*TERM PAPERS DUE\*\*\***

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

### **Assignments:**

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more 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. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

### **Academic Accommodation:**

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

**Pregnancy 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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**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 Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**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 scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting

accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Dec. 9	Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. 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 Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 10-25	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 14	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 25	Take-home exams are due.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a> 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/">http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/</a> 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735