

## **SKILLED ACTION (PHIL5200)**

Carleton University, Winter 2020

**Day/Time:** Wednesdays, 11:35am – 2:35pm **Location:** Paterson Hall 3A36

Prof. Myrto Mylopoulos

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

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 2:30pm-3:30pm; Fridays, 11:30am-12:30pm (and by appointment)

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

### **Course Description**

Reflection on skilled action in a range of areas, including sports, the performing arts, and everyday life, reveals a number of fascinating questions for philosophy of action, philosophy of mind, epistemology, and even moral psychology. Among the questions we will examine in this course are the following: What is the nature of skill, and how does it relate to automaticity, habit, and intentional action more generally? What is the best way to understand the species of knowledge that skilled performers possess, and that novices lack? Does an appeal to the notions of ‘knowledge how’ and ‘knowledge that’ help us here? What is the role, if any, of consciousness, attention, and metacognition in the control of skilled action? Do they simply interfere with the smooth execution of skill as is commonly supposed, or might they be important, and even necessary? Finally, what can be said about the relationship between skill and moral capacities? Can the development of certain of these capacities, such as that for self-control, or virtue more generally, be usefully modelled as a form of skill acquisition? We will explore these questions and others through the lens of contemporary philosophy and, where relevant, cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

### **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**

<b>Course Component</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Grade</b>
Participation	20%
Critical Responses (x8)	40%
Term Paper (incl. Abstract)	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**

One of the main objective of this course is to critically engage with theoretical and claims and empirical findings presented in the readings and their implications. As such, you will be asked to write critical responses to the weekly readings (choose one to focus on). You may write **up to ten** critical reading responses (max. 500 words each) over the course of the semester (**starting in week 2**). Only your **best eight** responses will be counted. These will each be worth **5%** of your final grade for a total of **40%**.

The responses are intended to give you an opportunity to critically reflect, in writing, on the main findings, claims, arguments, or theories you encounter in the readings. As such, **you should not merely summarize** the material you are addressing, though of course some summary will be necessary, but rather **share your own reflections on it**.

At the end of each response, you should **include two questions geared towards class discussion or clarifying some aspect of the material**.

We will go over a marking rubric in class and some general suggestions for how you might approach these responses.

Responses will be submitted via cuLearn and are due **by 5pm on the day before the class** for which the relevant reading is assigned (Tuesdays). (Earlier than that is of course fine, too.) **Late submissions 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 (**12-15 pages double-spaced**) due on **April 7<sup>th</sup>** and worth **40%** of your final grade.

You will submit a short abstract (**150 – 200 words**), worth **5% of your paper grade**, tentatively due on **March 17<sup>th</sup>**.

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

## **Participation**

Participation is a key component of this seminar and worth **20%** of your final grade.

There are three main ways to earn your participation grade:

1. By attending class and contributing to our weekly class discussions.
2. By contributing to the weekly discussion forum on cuLearn.
3. By coming to discuss course material during office hours.

If for any reason you expect to miss a class, I would appreciate your sending 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)**

\*\*\*Readings TBA\*\*\*

#### **Week 1 (Jan.8): Introduction**

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

#### **Week 2 (Jan.15): Skill and Knowledge**

#### **Week 3 (Jan.22): Skill and Knowledge (cont'd)**

#### **Week 4 (Jan.29): Skill and Knowledge (cont'd)**

#### **Week 5 (Feb.5): The Psychology of Skill**

#### **Week 6 (Feb.12): The Psychology of Skill (cont'd)**

#### **Week 7 (Feb.19): No Class (Winter Break)**

#### **Week 8 (Feb.26): The Psychology of Skill (cont'd)**

#### **Week 9 (March 4): The Psychology of Skill (cont'd)**

#### **Week 10 (March 11): The Psychology of Skill (cont'd)**

**Week 11 (March 18): Skill and Virtue**

**Week 12 (March 25): TBA**

**Week 13 (April 1): Skill and Virtue (cont'd)**

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2019-20)

### **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 on the first page: student name and number; course name and number; instructor's name.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates below.
- 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.

### **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 Final Exams:**

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

### **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. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### **Academic Accommodation:**

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

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. [carleton.ca/pmc](http://carleton.ca/pmc)

**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/>

**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 its 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:** 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 4	Classes start.
Sept. 17	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. 14	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 21-25	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 22	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. 6	Last day of fall term classes. <b>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</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. 9-21	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. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Classes begin.
Jan. 17	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. 17	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 17-21	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 24	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	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. 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. 10	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 13-25	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 25	All take-home examinations are due on this day.

### **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
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising">www.carleton.ca/academicadvising</a> 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/">http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/</a> 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735