

PHIL 2540: Personal Identity and the Self (Winter 2022)

Instructor: Lesley Jamieson

Contact: LesleyJamieson@cunet.carleton.ca

Department: Philosophy

Office Hours: Virtual, available by appointment

Precludes: additional credit for PHIL 2502

Prerequisites: a course in philosophy or second-year standing

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Lectures posted to Brightspace by Monday, Q&A sessions held on Wednesdays

Course Description:

In this course, we will study a number of philosophical perspectives on personal identity and the self. We'll begin by asking why we care about the continuity of identity over time and the conditions that must be met for an individual to be a person, considering moral responsibility, survival, and self-interest. We will focus on two philosophical approaches to personal identity. The first half of the course will be dedicated to considering the reidentification problem, asking how we determine that a given person is the same as another person at a past or future time and what sorts of changes to our bodies and minds are compatible with identity. In the second half of the course, we will be asking what constitutes a particular individual as a person, reflecting on the role of narrative, the importance of integrity, and asking what distinguishes our essential personal characteristics from those that are peripheral to our identities. Some major themes we will explore include: the relationship between minds and bodies, the significance of species-membership, and the importance of our social identities.

Delivery:

This class will be taught remotely; in addition to weekly readings, the course will be comprised of asynchronous lectures posted to Brightspace and synchronous Q&A sessions conducted over Zoom.

- **Lectures:** I will post short lectures each week to guide you through the assigned readings for the week. These lectures will offer context to support you in your own reading, helping you to: understand the significance of philosophers' views in their historical context; grasp the norms and assumptions that shape how philosophers approach particular questions; and understand how their arguments work. These will be posted to Brightspace before the Monday timetable slot each week
- **Q&A Tutorial:** During the Wednesday, 11:35am-1:05pm timeslot, there will be an informal, optional Zoom meeting for discussion of the readings or assignments. The link to access these sessions will be the same all throughout the semester and can be found on the Brightspace course page.
 - **What to expect?** These sessions will begin with a short introduction, providing a general overview of the text and lectures to refresh everyone's memory; we'll

then have a structured discussion about: what we find perplexing in the texts; the strengths of the position or arguments; and weaknesses of the position or arguments. You are encouraged to comment on what is said or to clarificatory or critical questions in the chat, or raise your hand to speak.

Texts:

There is no book that you need to purchase for this course. Pdf. readings will be shared directly to Brightspace under the “course readings and resources” tab.

Learning Outcomes:

To successfully complete this course, students will:

- develop a critical understanding of some major positions in the philosophy of personal identity, seeing both their explanatory strengths and weaknesses.
- learn to identify, charitably reconstruct, and critically assess a variety of types of philosophical argument.
- develop an expanded philosophical vocabulary.

These outcomes will be evaluated over the course of the semester through three online tests comprised of multiple choice and long answer questions, and one take-home final exam.

Evaluation:*60%, Critical Reflection Assignments*

You will be asked to complete at least 2 critical reflection assignments of 500-750 words each. These assignments will prompt you to respond to a particular article assigned during this course, reconstructing the philosophers’ argument and responding critically to it. Each critical reflection comprises 30% of your total grade.

40%, Take-home final exam

Late assignments will be penalized by a deduction of one grade per day (e.g., 1 day late, A becomes A-; 3 days late, A becomes B)

Course Calendar:

(Brightspace Lectures posted by Sunday evening, Zoom Q&A sessions held Wednesdays)

Week 1 (January 12th) Course Introduction

- Brightspace Lecture: Why does Personhood Matter?

Module 1: The Reidentification Question

- Week 2 (January 17/19)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Introduction to Psychological Continuity Theory
 - Reading: Locke “On Identity and Diversity”; Reid “Locke’s Account of Personal Identity”
- Week 3 (January 24/26)

- Brightspace Lectures: Contemporary Psychological Continuity Theory
- Reading: Derek Parfit “What We Believe Ourselves to Be”
- Week 4 (January 31/February 2)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Bodily Continuity Theory
 - Reading: Judith Jarvis Thompson “People and their Bodies”

First Critical Reflection Assigned; Due by 11:59pm on February 6th.

- Week 5 (February 7/9)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Animalism
 - Reading: Eric Olson “Animals”; Mary Midgley “The Concept of Beastliness”
- Week 6 (February 14/16)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Identity and Multiplicity
 - Reading: Thomas Nagel “Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness”; Kathleen Wilkes “Multiple Personality and Personal Identity”

Week 7: Fall Break (No classes or readings)

Module 2: The Characterization Question

- Week 8 (February 28/March 2)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Narrative Theories of Identity
 - Reading: Marya Schechtman “The Narrative Self-Constitution View”
- Week 9 (March 7/9)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Challenging Narrative Theory
 - Reading: Galen Strawson, “Against Narrativity”

Second Critical Reflection Assigned; Due by 11:59pm on March 13th.

- Week 10 (March 14/16)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Personal Identity and Race
 - Reading: Kwame Appiah “But Would I still be Me?”; Francoise Baylis “Black as Me: Narrative Identity”
- Week 11 (March 21/23)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Self-Making and Action
 - Reading: Christine Korsgaard, “Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant”
- Week 12 (March 28/30)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Self-Consciousness, Personhood, and Freedom
 - Reading: Harry Frankfurt, “Freedom of Will and the Concept of Person”
- Week 13 (April 4/6)
 - Brightspace Lectures: Non-human animal Personhood
 - Reading: Thomas I. White, “What Kind of Beings are Dolphins?”

Monday April 11th, 11:35-1:00, Zoom Q&A, final take home exam discussion

****Take-home Final Exam will be posted on April 6th, due by April 14th 7pm****

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2021-22)

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 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. 8	Classes start.
Sept. 22	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. 11	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 25-29	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 26	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. 10	Last day of fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. 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. 11-23	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. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 10	Classes begin.
Jan. 24	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. 21	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 22-25	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. 12	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule. 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	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 14-28	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 28	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
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