

**PHIL 100 A02**  
CRN# 13519 + 23371

September-April 2020-2021  
TWF: 11:30am – 12:20pm

# Introduction to Philosophy

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10am-11am group hours + individual meetings by appointment

## Course Description:

The aim of this course will be to introduce students to the most fundamental questions in Western philosophy. A mix of classic and contemporary readings will be used. We will work our way through the essential issues that have attracted attention from philosophers as old as Plato right up to those working in the field today. Careful examination of these issues will give students a sense of what philosophy is about, and it will allow students to learn the more general (and exceedingly valuable!) skill of thinking critically about tough conceptual problems. Topics will include: Can rational arguments be used to prove the existence of God? Do human beings have free will, or are our 'decisions' determined by purely physical forces? How can we be certain about what we think we know about the external world? Is there an objective basis for morality? The goal of the course will be to encourage students to develop informed opinions about these difficult questions.

**Course Website:** Online materials will be made available via Uvic *Brightspace*. Access your customized *Brightspace* page by signing in to Uvic and clicking on *Online Tools*. You should see *Brightspace* as an option.

**Texts:** *Reason and Responsibility*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed. by Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau  
*Writing Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. by Lewis Vaughn and Jillian Scott MacIntosh

Note: The *R&R* textbook is very expensive, but if

## Grading System

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definition
90 – 100	A+	9	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically <b>superior</b> , shows mastery of the subject ma



## An Important Note on Diversity:

You may notice that in this course we will be reading an overwhelming majority of “dead white men”. You may wonder why this is the case. Why not read more women and non-European philosophers? This is an excellent question. Here are some initial answers:

1. This course introduces students to a particular thread of philosophical thought that is grounded in work from Ancient Greece and European enlightenment thinking, but it should not be viewed as the *only* valuable thread in the history of philosophy. It is a thread best studied comprehensively as a linked narrative, but it is one among many.
2. I obviously believe this thread of philosophical thought is worth studying, but I also encourage students to take courses at Uvic that explore alternative perspectives. For example, courses like *Gender Studies* (GNDR 100; Gender, Power and Difference) and *Indigenous Studies* (IS 101; Indigenous Foundations) would nicely complement our survey of Western philosophy.
3. The fact that there are so few women and persons of colour on our reading list is *not* because they are less philosophically capable than white men! It is because Western civilization has a long history of gender discrimination, racism, and colonialism that excluded women and persons of colour from the formal study of philosophy.
4. There is still much work to be done to make philosophy fully inclusive for members of disadvantaged groups, but remember that (despite our reading list) there are many distinguished philosophers today who are women, persons of colour, members of the LGBTQ community and disabled persons. Students who identify with these groups can take inspiration from the fact that these contemporary role models exist.

If you have further concerns about diversity in our course or suggestions for how it may be more effectively promoted, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

**Note:** Dates and page numbers listed are subject to change, so regular class attendance is essential to stay informed about scheduling changes. Material should be read *before* the class in which it is discussed. Note that the page numbers assigned often refer to selected passages from longer chapters in the text.

**RR** page #'s refer to the 16<sup>th</sup> Edition of the, *Reason & Responsibility* textbook.

**WP** page #'s refer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the *Writing Philosophy* textbook.

Other readings listed by author are available online via *Brightspace*. Access these online readings well in advance to avoid last-minute technical problems.

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Oct. 20	Anselm of Canterbury: <i>The Ontological Argument</i> [RR 31 – 33] Gaunilo of Marmoutiers: <i>On Behalf of the Fool</i> [RR 33 – 36]
Oct. 21	William L. Rowe: <i>The Ontological Argument</i> [RR 36 – 46]
Oct. 23	William Paley: <i>The Argument from Design</i> [RR 59 – 64]
Oct. 27	David Hume: <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> [RR 76 – 88]
Oct. 28	David Hume: <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> [RR 88 – 90, 101–6]
Oct. 30	Richard Dawkins: <i>Accumulating Small Change</i> [pdf]

Nov. 3 Saint Thomas Aquinas: *The Five Ways* Oct. 27

Nov. 4

Nov. 6

Dec. 1	Blaise Pascal: <i>The Wager</i> [RR 169 – 172] Simon Blackburn: <i>Infini – Rien</i> [RR 180 – 183]
Dec. 2	Review
<b>Dec. 4</b>	<b>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</b> <b>Uvic classes cancelled from 11:30am – 12:30pm</b>

**\*\*\*Note: There will be an Online Exam in December\*\*\***  
Details TBA

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### Schedule of Readings and Assignments Continued

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<b>WINTER 2021</b>
Jan. 5	Frank Jackson: <i>The Qualia Problem</i> [RR 372 – 376]	
Jan. 6	Brie Gertler: <i>In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism</i> [RR 359 – 372]	
Jan. 8	David Papineau: <i>The Case for Materialism</i> [RR 376 – 382]	
Jan. 12	William G. Lycan: <i>Robots and Minds</i> [RR 407 – 413]	
Jan. 13	John R. Searle: <i>Minds, Brains, and Programs</i> [RR 400 – 407]	
Jan. 15	Daniel C. Dennett: <i>Imagining a Conscious Robot</i> [pdf]	
<b>Jan. 19</b>	<b>How to Write a Philosophy Paper</b> [WP chapters 3 – 5, 7 – 9]	
Jan. 20	Paul Churchland: <i>Functionalism and Eliminative Materialism</i> [RR 387 – 391]	
Jan. 22	Paul Churchland: <i>Functionalism and Eliminative Materialism</i> [RR 382 – 387]	
Jan. 26	John Locke: <i>The Prince and the Cobbler</i> [RR 413 – 416]	
Jan. 27	Thomas Reid: <i>Of Mr. Locke's Account of Personal Identity</i> [RR 416 – 419]	

Jan. 29	David Hume: <i>The Self</i> [RR 419 – 421] Derek Parfit: <i>Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons</i> [RR 421 – 427]
Feb. 2	James Rachels: <i>The Case against Free Will</i> [RR 481 – 490]
Feb. 3	Roderick M. Chisholm: <i>Human Freedom and the Self</i> [RR 459 – 467]
<b>Feb. 5</b>	Helen Beebe: <i>Compatibilism and the Ability to Do Otherwise</i> [RR 510 – 521]



Mar. 17	Peter Singer: <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i> [RR 672 – 678]
Mar. 19	John Harris: <i>The Survival Lottery</i> [RR 678 – 683]
Mar. 23	Hilde Lindemann: <i>What is Feminist Ethics?</i> [RR 663 – 670]
Mar. 24	Sally Haslanger: <i>Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?</i> [pdf]
<b>Mar. 26</b>	Kwame Anthony Appiah: <i>What Will Future Generations Condemn Us For?</i>  <b>*** Writing Assignment #4 Due ***</b>

**Mar. 30** Richard Taylor:

Mar. 31

