

PHIL 1611: **Self, Society, Freedom**¹ – Fall 2013
Mon. and Wed., 1:00-2:20 p.m. Avard Dixon G12

Dr. Jane Dryden

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Office Hours: Mon. and Tues. 2:30-4:30 (except for Tues., Sept. 17 and Dec.3),
and by appointment.

Guiding Questions: What's a self? Is my self separate from my body? What does it mean to be a human self? Is there such a thing as human nature? Is a human self free? Are all human beings free to the same extent? What makes me the particular self that I am? How do others affect the self that I am? This course will investigate these and other questions, by means of a meandering path through the history of philosophy into the present day.

Required Texts:

Materials will be available on Moodle.

* Note: Moodle sometimes goes down. You are responsible for saving either an electronic or paper copy of all readings for your own use.

Grading:

Participation – in class assignments:	10%
Test 1 – Descartes and Hobbes:	20%
Test 2 – Locke and Sartre:	25%
Reading Response paper:	15%
Final Exam:	30%

Requirements:

General Class Information:

- If you miss a class, you are responsible for what you missed. Please contact your classmates for notes and assignments. If you are confused about anything, then email me.
- If you use a laptop for note-taking in class, please be courteous to your fellow students and do not have anything distracting on your screen. (Recent research has shown that multitasking on a laptop has a negative effect both you and students around you, even if you're not aware of it). If you are easily prone to temptation, there are many browser add-ons that can help control the urge to surf the Internet.
- Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make the course more accessible to you, or if there is anything that it is useful for me to know about your learning style or life circumstances which may affect your performance in the course (I don't want to be nosy – just a heads up is useful). Reading philosophy and writing about philosophy is difficult; but the structure of the course itself should not be a barrier to your learning.
- Formal accommodations for disabilities of any kind (including learning disabilities, ADHD, depression, health conditions) should be arranged through the Wellness Centre or the Meighen Centre as soon as possible in the semester (Information is available at <http://www.mta.ca/disability/index.html>).

¹ This course was previously titled "Images of the Self." If you have taken "Images of the Self" in the past, you should, alas, not be in this course. Please consider another PHIL 1600-series course.

Participation:

- Your participation mark will come from short in-class writing assignments based on the readings. (I will write a question on the board for you to answer in a paragraph or so.) You will be given the opportunity to discuss these in-class with your peers.
- These must either be done on paper and handed in during class, or on your laptop. If you use your laptop, the assignment must be emailed to me **within a half hour** after the end of class. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- You cannot do the assignment if you are not in the class. There are no makeups for this.

Reading Response paper:

- Pick one of the course readings. (I recommend skimming through them early on so that you can make a good decision about which one you want to pick! I'm also happy to give suggestions – please come talk with me while you're figuring this out.)
- Write a paper according to the following guidelines:
 - Due roughly 2.5 weeks after we start the reading (see schedule).
 - Roughly 4 pages (1000-1200 words, double-spaced)
 - Identify the main argument of the text, and state it as clearly as you can, in your own words. (Where the text seems to include a number of different arguments, you are welcome to focus on a single argument in particular – don't feel you need to cover absolutely everything an author brings up!)
 - What are the premises used by the author? Are they all clearly identified?
 - Does the argument make sense? Does it seem correct?
 - If *no*, can you come up with a good argument against it (a good counter-example, other evidence, etc.)?
 - If *yes*, what exactly makes the argument so persuasive?
- This will also be something I ask you on tests (and on the final exam) – the paper is an opportunity to develop it at somewhat greater length. You are welcome to use comparisons with other philosophers (ones we've studied, or ones you've encountered before).

Tests and Final Exam:

- The final exam will be administered during the final exam period and will be subject to the rules set out in section 10.7 of the Academic Calendar. It will cover the entire course, though the questions will be weighted slightly toward the last three weeks of the course.
- There will be two tests on the course content during the semester; their dates are marked on the course schedule.
- If you miss a test, contact me as soon as possible in order to schedule an oral make-up test. No written make-up tests will be administered. The oral make-up test will take place in my office, and will take roughly 45 minutes to an hour. I will ask you questions about the material, and grade you based on your understanding of the material and your ability to synthesize and evaluate the ideas.
- I will ordinarily not give any make-up tests after the original test has been graded and returned. If legitimate reasons prevent you from taking a makeup within this span, let me know and we will work out a reasonable accommodation.

Some General Advice:

- I have office hours for a reason! Please don't hesitate to come by with any questions or comments, or even just to talk about philosophy.
- Re. email: Email is a pretty good way to get a hold of me. I will answer all email within 24 hours, except over weekends. I don't answer work email after 8pm.
- Make sure you have a copy of all readings, since the Moodle site sometimes goes down.

SCHEDULE:

Week One - Sept. 4: Introduction, overview of course; Discussion: What is the self?

Week Two - Sept. 9: Descartes: *Meditations* excerpts
Sept. 11: Descartes cont'd.

Week Three - Sept. 18: Descartes cont'd.
Sept. 20: Hobbes: *Leviathan* excerpts

Week Four - Sept. 23: Hobbes cont'd.
Sept. 25: Hobbes cont'd (**Descartes papers due**)

Week Five - Sept. 30: Review: Descartes and Hobbes.
Oct. 2: **TEST: DESCARTES AND HOBBS.**

Week Six - Oct. 7: Locke: excerpts on Personal Identity
Oct. 9: Locke cont'd. (**Hobbes papers due**)

Week Seven - Oct. 14: **No class – Happy Thanksgiving!**
Oct. 16: Locke cont'd.

Week Eight - Oct. 20: Sartre: excerpt on The Look
Oct. 22: Sartre cont'd.

Week Nine - Oct. 28: Sartre cont'd. (**Locke papers due**)
Oct. 30: Locke and Sartre review.

Week Ten - Nov. 4: **TEST: LOCKE AND SARTRE**
Nov. 6: Brison: "Outliving Oneself"

Week Eleven - Nov. 11: **No classes – Remembrance Day**
Nov. 13: Brison cont'd. (**Sartre papers due**)

Week Twelve - Nov. 18: Brison cont'd.
Nov. 20: Wendell: Intro and Excerpt from *The Rejected Body*

Week Thirteen - Nov. 19: Wendell cont'd.
Nov. 27: Wendell cont'd. (**Brison papers due**)

Week Fourteen - Dec. 2: Discussion and Review

(**Wendell papers due Fri. Dec. 6 by 5pm**)

Final exam during the final exam period, Dec. 4-14.