Phil 101 Syllabus
UBC Summer Term 1 2019 (Smithdeal)

Phil 101 – *Introduction to Philosophy*
Summer 2019 Term 1 (UBC)

**Instructor:** Matthew Smithdeal, matthew.smithdeal@alumni.ubc.ca
**Meetings:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10am – 1pm in Buchanan D204
**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2pm in Buchanan E274 (or by appointment)

*About the Course:*
Philosophers strive for precision and clarity in thought and expression. Philosophical discussions are often abstract, but how we answer philosophical questions shapes how we live our lives, and how we interact with others and with the world we find ourselves in. On the other hand, arguments have emerged from a wide array of disciplines, often accompanied by a growing amount of empirical evidence, which suggest that perhaps this model has things backwards. Possibly, rather than the answers we give to philosophical questions shaping our lives, our lives and our experiences and our past social interactions shape the answers that we give to philosophical questions.

This course aims to introduce students to both sides of the debate (or rather, both sides of many, many intertwined debates). Loosely, we will examine five core issues or questions that arise frequently in philosophy:

1. Who are we?
2. What kinds of creatures are we?
3. How do we acquire scientific knowledge and what is scientific knowledge?
4. How do we acquire knowledge of anything?
5. What even is knowledge and what does it mean to say we know something?

For each of these questions and topics, we will examine at least one core position, philosopher, and/or debate within the mainstream tradition of Western philosophy. We will also examine at least one core position, philosopher, and/or debate from outside the mainstream, Western tradition. The latter will often draw on feminist philosophical traditions and/or non-Western, English speaking philosophical traditions.

*Learning Outcomes:*
Upon successful completion of this course, you will have:
- Engaged critically with a text
- Seen both mainstream, Western, and non-traditional, feminist takes on core issues/questions within philosophy
- Developed the ability to construct an argument and defend a thesis
- Grasped philosophical concepts
- Done philosophy!
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Assessment:
All essays shall be submitted in paper form in class and uploaded to Turnitin (enrolment information below)

Every student will be required to complete the following:

- **Attend and participate** in all classes (20% of final grade)
  - Philosophy is an activity and we will be doing philosophy in class. You will be expected to participate in the in-class activity of doing philosophy.

- **Read** the assigned readings before class (10% of final grade)
  - Each class will have a brief reading quiz administered via tophat. This quiz will also serve as attendance. It will be administered at various times throughout each class depending on the suitability of timing.
  - Starts second week.

- **Write and revise one individual essay** (30% of final grade in total)
  - The ability to write essays is a foundational skill for philosophers (and many other academics). Philosophical writing, though, is a little bit peculiar in its own way. Throughout this course, we’ll spend some time working on and developing your writing abilities.
  - Each student will submit one individually written essay focusing on one of the five topics of the course (10% of final grade) **Due May 29th, start of class (online and paper)**
  - Each student will then be assigned a group to workshop their essays in class (5% of final grade) **In-class June 10th or 12th**
  - Each student will then submit a revised, slightly longer and more involved individually written essay (15% of final grade) **Due June 17th, start of class (online and paper)**

- **Complete a final project with a written and oral component** (40% of final grade in total – 20% from oral component and 20% from written component)
  - Each student will have the option of completing one of the following three options:
    1. Longer, more involved, and further revised single author essay and 10-15-minute one-on-one oral exam defending the final essay
    2. Longer, more involved, and further revised group authored essay and 15-20-minute group presentation on final essay
    3. Group authored philosophical dialogue or script and 10-15-minute performance (acting out of dialogue, video/live performance of script, podcast, etc)
  - Students will be required to submit their final project choice after submission of the revised, single authored essay (**Note: there is no “default” option – you must inform me of your intentions or I will assume you intend to not submit a final project**)
  - Each student/group will also be required to meet individually with me to discuss their plans/role distributions, etc – timing to be determined based on interest in each option
  - Group presentations/performances will be scheduled during the final exam time. Depending on how many students take each option, one-on-one exams may be scheduled during the final exam time slot as well or during finals week ideally (TBD)

Tophat:
We will use a free online classroom assistance software called tophat, predominately for attendance and daily reading quizzes. It is your responsibility to enroll yourself in this service at [www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com) and to come prepared with devices/internet connection every day. Should you lack access to a device capable of connecting, please let me know and we can arrange for paper options. **Please note that Arts ISIT has not yet enrolled this course in tophat so as to allow free access. Do NOT pay for tophat access for this course.** You will be updated when this has been completed so that you can enroll for free.

Tophat course enrolment code: 227121

Extra Credit:
All students are encouraged to keep a Wikipedia/dictionary style list of key terms and concepts throughout the course. Students may submit this at the time of the written final project submission for up to 5% extra credit added to their final grade to be determined based on thoughtfulness, detail, and originality.
Course Readings:
All readings will be made available via canvas and the library reserve system. There is no textbook that you need to buy for this course!
Please let me know as soon as possible if you have any issues accessing or finding the material.

Participation
The best way to learn philosophy is to do it, and as you can see above, doing the readings and engaging in class together count for a substantial portion of your final grade. Your participation in this course will be evaluated holistically. I do not take mere class attendance to be sufficient for receiving any participation marks, nor do I take making comments/asking questions in front of the entire class as necessary for a good participation mark. Class participation takes many forms. If you’re concerned about my recognizing the way in which you’re contributing to the class or engaging with the material, please come talk to me in office hours. Consider this my way of encouraging you to attend and to engage with your classmates.

Classroom Policy
The study of philosophy can be personally affecting, as many questions in philosophy relate directly to issues people may have experienced throughout their personal lives. As such, it is especially important to respect the diversity of opinions and perspectives you will encounter in this course, both of those philosophers we read and of your fellow students. You will encounter many viewpoints during this course, some of which may be quite unfamiliar and even unpleasant to you. Studying philosophy involves a willingness to foreground values different from those you yourself may hold, and to engage with questions you may not have thought to ask. Just as much, you will find that your own perspective brings something to the topics we’ll explore. We won’t shy away from critically engaging with difficult questions but remember that critical engagement is not an invitation to be unpleasant. Philosophy is a discursive discipline, and the best discussions take place in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere that allows for everyone’s voice to be heard.

Missed-lecture policy
If you miss a lecture you won’t be able to recover the content of the lecture by emailing the Instructor asking for a repeat of the lecture via email or going to them during office hours for this purpose. Office hours and email communications presupposes attendance at lecture. If you anticipate missing lectures, you are strongly encouraged to find a classmate early in the course who is willing to share notes with you or come discuss the situation with me earlier rather than later so that we can make arrangements.

Accessibility
Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the Centre for Accessibility. They will determine that student’s eligibility for accommodations in accordance with Policy 73: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with Access and Diversity should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person’s words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the
student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below:
http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959

Academic Citation
There is no required citation method for this course. Please feel free to use whichever method you are most comfortable with. Here is UBC's guide on citation:
http://help.library.ubc.ca/evaluating-and-citing-sources/how-to-cite/

Late Assignment Policy:
It is important to submit your work on time; however, I am happy to consider reasonable requests for extensions (only if the request is approved before the assignment is due). Otherwise, assignments will be penalized by having their final grade reduced by 5% per 24-hour period following the due date/time. If you know you will be absent from lecture beforehand or are forced to miss a lecture due to reasonable and unavoidable/unforeseen circumstances, please contact me to see about making up your participation/attendance mark.

Class Structure:
Summer courses are dense, sadly, and require moving at a faster pace than a normal semester. Each class is meant to approximate a week of normal semester coursework, so staying on top of the readings and attending every class is essential. While little is to be done about the structure, it must be recognized that doing any single task, much less philosophy, for three hours is nearly impossible. We will split every class into approximately equal time lecturing and doing group discussion work with a break in between. We will break for 20 minutes and end class 10 minutes early.

Recording lectures
Lectures will not be recorded. You will need to come to class in person in order to hear the lecture. No student may record a lecture without permission of the instructor.

Text-matching software
Be advised that papers will be submitted to text-matching software (e.g. Turnitin). Turnitin stores data outside of Canada. Due to privacy regulations on the storage of student data, you will be given the option to submit essays to Turnitin under an alias, which must be communicated to me before submitting the assignment.

Turnitin Class ID: 21172208
Enrolment Key: 227121

Copyright
Instructor-generated course material (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.), including material posted on Canvas are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

Policy on laptops and cell phones
The use of laptops, tablets, and smart phones with access to the university Wi-Fi is essential for certain components of this class. So, laptops, tablets, and smart phones are permitted, as long as they are used for class-related purposes and only during specified periods. Outside of these specified periods, you may use a laptop for note-taking purposes; however, you must be seated in the back two rows of the classroom. Even if laptops, tablets, and smart phones are permitted in class, surfing the web will be distracting to other students around you. If I notice excessive non-class related content on your screen or that you are distracting others around you, I will simply count you absent, rather than disrupt class. Please be considerate of your peers.
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**Tentative Schedule**
Please note that this schedule may change at the instructor's discretion to suit the pace of the course and the interests of the students. Please also note that all readings are to be read **before** the date listed.

**Week 1**
Monday, May 6th  **Introducing philosophy and arguments** (no readings)
Set up personal identity topic

Wednesday, May 8th  **Personal Identity**
Parfit, *The Self and the Future*

**Week 2**
Monday, May 13th  **Personal Identity**
Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*

Wednesday, May 15th  **Natural and Social Kinds**
Haslanger, *Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?*

**Week 3**
Monday, May 20th  **No Class – Victoria Day**

Wednesday, May 23rd  **Natural and Social Kinds**
Haslanger continued

**Week 4**
Monday, May 27th  **Scientific Inquiry**
*Cancelled due to illness*

Wednesday, May 29th  **Paper Due**
Dupre, *Natural Kinds and Biological Taxa*

**Week X**
Monday, June 3rd  **No Class – Congress**

Wednesday, June 5th  **No Class – Congress**

**Week 5**
Monday, June 10th  **Skepticism and Deeper Worries** (Paper writing workshop this week)
Hacking, *Madness: Biological or Constructed?*

Wednesday, June 12th  Berkeley, Pages from *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*
Hume, Pages from *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

**Week 6**
Monday, June 17th  **Knowledge and Objectivity**
Harding, *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is “Strong Objectivity?”*
*Optional:* Kitcher, “Well Ordered Science” from *Science, Truth, and Democracy*
*Optional:* Code, *Public Knowledge, Public Trust: Towards Democratic Epistemic Practice*

Wednesday, June 19th  *Atleo, Prologue and Introduction to Tsawalk: a Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*
*Gettier, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?*
*Revised Paper Due*
Final Exam TBA – June 24th-28th
Group presentations/group performances/one-on-one oral exams (TBD)

**Tips on Doing Philosophy**
The following are some very general tips on how to approach the study of philosophy and succeed.

Do the readings! Lectures will not just be a regurgitation of the reading material; they will describe the material, but move ahead with it with interpretation and analysis. Doing the readings before class will allow you to better follow what is covered in the lectures. Moreover, doing the readings will make for better discussions, and will enable you to participate in the day’s conversation.

Listen carefully in lectures. Do not just try and write everything down that your lecturer is saying. Instead, try to discern the themes of what’s being discussed (don’t lose the forest for the trees).

Read carefully and critically. Philosophy is difficult, in part because of the nuance and complexity of philosophical writing. Be prepared to re-read difficult passages. Make notes of your reactions in the margins – this is better than just underlining or highlighting passages, as it forces you to slow down and think. If you feel you’re burning out, take a break and return to the text with fresher eyes.

Talk about the readings, the lectures, and the topics they cover with others (whether they’re classmates or friends not doing philosophy themselves). Try explaining the topic/issue/passage to them, putting things in your own words. Ask them to do the same. Explore each other’s questions and concerns, and see what resolutions you can reach.

Philosophy is difficult, and philosophical topics are complex. Avoid conclusions like “well that’s just obviously right/wrong”. Little is obvious in philosophy. If you think something is or is not the case, think about why it is or is not the case and articulate your reasons.

**Other Resources**
The following are some online resources you may find helpful.

- **The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**
  A repository of entries surveying most topics in philosophy. The articles here are approachable for students new to philosophy.

- **The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**
  A repository of entries surveying most topics in philosophy. The articles here are more complex and detailed than those of the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and they will be more useful if you have some familiarity with the topics being discussed.

- **Philosophy Tube**
  A series of short videos in which a PhD student explains a variety of philosophical topics and questions. Excellent for first-time exposure to philosophy.

- **Philosophy Bites**
  A series of interviews with professional philosophers discussing the topics they are interested in, the questions they consider, as well as their own answers to them. The discussions can get complex and technical at times, but they are typically approachable if you are new to those topics.