

PHIL 110A Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality
Fall 2011

Syllabus

Instructor: Prof. Doreen Fraser

E-mail (for quick questions): dlfraser@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours (for substantive questions): Mondays 11:30a.m-12:30p.m. and
Wednesdays 12:30-1:30p.m.

Office: HH 330

Teaching Assistant: Nathan Haydon

E-mail (for quick questions): nhaydon@uwaterloo.ca

Office Hours (for substantive questions): Tuesdays 10-11a.m.

Office: HH 361

Course Meeting Time and Location: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays,
10:30-11:20a.m., AL105

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to some central questions about knowledge and reality. What is knowledge? What are our best sources of knowledge? What are the distinguishing features of our best sources of knowledge? What sorts of things exist? How do we know? What is the relationship between our minds and our brains? We will study answers to these questions offered by a selection of philosophers past and present, including Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Russell, Ryle, and Goodman. Methods for analyzing and assessing philosophical arguments will be an important focus of the course.

Readings

All of the texts for the course are available free of charge online from either the UW-ACE course web site or the library e-reserves web site. Required readings for each class are listed on the attached course schedule. Students are expected to read each assigned text prior to the class for which it is assigned. The assigned texts should be brought to class. You will probably find that it is necessary to re-read the texts at least once after they are discussed in class.

UW-ACE Web Site

There is a UW-ACE course web site for this course. This site contains links to the readings, copies of the assignments, and your grades. Any Power Point slides that are shown in class will be posted. To access the log in page, type the following address into your web browser:

<http://www.uwace.uwaterloo.ca>

The username and password are the same as your UW Quest/WatIAM username and password.

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UW Library e-Reserve Course Web Site

There is a link to the UW library e-reserve course web site under the “Resources” tab of the UW-ACE web site. You will need to enter your WatIAM username and password to enter the site. For copyright reasons, only students registered in the class may access these materials. Alternatively, you can log in to the library e-reserves site directly at

<https://www.reserves.uwaterloo.ca/ares/>

Expectations

In addition to fulfilling the coursework requirements outlined below, it is expected that students will complete the assigned readings, attend class regularly, and participate in class discussions.

Coursework

The grade for the course will be broken down as follows

45% - Three tests (each worth 15%)

20% - Short paper

35% - Term paper

Tests

Tests will be written **in class on October 5, November 9, and December 5.**

They will cover material from class and the assigned readings. Each test will consist of several short answer questions (i.e., requiring an answer of at most a few sentences) and one short essay question. Make up tests may only be written if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, death in the family) and if appropriate documentation is provided (e.g., note from doctor). If there are extenuating circumstances, you must contact me prior to the test (unless, of course, your extenuating circumstance prevents you from doing so).

Short paper

A short paper analyzing an argument, maximum length two pages double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, standard margins (1 inch = 2.54 cm on each side). A handout with paper topics and a detailed description of the requirements will be distributed later in the term. A paper copy is **due in class on November 16.** If you are unable to attend this class, then **before** it is due you may hand in a paper copy to the Department of Philosophy drop box in door HH 3018B. Submissions by e-mail will not be accepted. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per 24 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., a grade of 72% would be reduced to 62% if the assignment is handed in 24 hours past the deadline). Submit late assignments to the Department of Philosophy drop box in door HH 3018B. Extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, death in the family) if appropriate documentation is provided (e.g., note from doctor). If there are

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extenuating circumstances, contact me prior to the deadline (unless, of course, your extenuating circumstance prevents you from doing so).

Term paper

A term paper analyzing and evaluating an argument, maximum length five pages double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, standard margins (1 inch = 2.54 cm on each side). A handout with paper topics and a detailed description of the requirements will be distributed later in the term. A paper copy is **due before 3p.m. on December 12**. You may submit the paper during office hours from 1 to 3p.m. on December 12 in HH 330. Outside of these times, you may hand in a paper copy to the Department of Philosophy drop box in door HH 3018B. Submissions by e-mail will not be accepted. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per 24 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., a grade of 72% would be reduced to 62% if the assignment is handed in 24 hours past the deadline). Submit late assignments to the Department of Philosophy drop box in door HH 3018B. Extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, death in the family) if appropriate documentation is provided (e.g., note from doctor). If there are extenuating circumstances, contact me prior to the deadline (unless, of course, your extenuating circumstance prevents you from doing so).

The Writing Centre

There is a Writing Centre on campus that offers help to students who want to improve their writing skills: <http://elpp.uwaterloo.ca/writingcentre.html>.

Note for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Academic Offenses

Note that I consider plagiarism to be a very serious offence. If you have any questions about appropriate documentation of sources or what counts as plagiarism, please come talk to me. As per University policy,

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/> for more information.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration

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should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>.

Academic Integrity website (Arts):

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

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Course Schedule and Readings

All readings are available on the UW-ACE course web site under the “Resources” tab. Bring the readings to the class for which they are assigned. This schedule may be adjusted as the term progresses.

Date	Topic	Reading
Mon. Sept. 12	Introduction: What is Philosophy?	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
Wed. Sept. 14	Epistemology	
Fri. Sept. 16	Metaphysics	
Mon. Sept. 19	Paradox #1	
Wed. Sept. 21	Descartes	<i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditation 1
Fri. Sept. 23	Descartes	Meditation 2
Mon. Sept. 26	Descartes	Meditation 3
Wed. Sept. 28	Descartes	Meditation 3
Fri. Sept. 30	Descartes	Meditation 6
Mon. Oct. 3	Russell on Descartes	Russell, <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , Chapter II (The Existence of Matter)
Wed. Oct. 5	Test #1	
Fri. Oct. 7	Berkeley	<i>Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous</i> , First Dialogue
Mon. Oct. 10	THANKSGIVING	
Wed. Oct. 12	Berkeley	First Dialogue
Fri. Oct. 14	Paradox #2	
Mon. Oct. 17	Berkeley	First and Second Dialogues
Wed. Oct. 19	Berkeley	Second Dialogue
Fri. Oct. 21	Verificationism	Ayer, <i>Language, Truth and Logic</i> , Ch. I The Elimination of Metaphysics (up to “...what the principle of verifiability asserts” on p.41)
Mon. Oct. 24	Verificationism	
Wed. Oct. 26	Paradox #3	
Fri. Oct. 28	CLASS CANCELLED	
Mon. Oct. 31	Hume	<i>Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Section II
Wed. Nov. 2	Hume	<i>Enquiry</i> , Section IV, Part I
Fri. Nov. 4	Hume	<i>Enquiry</i> , Section IV, Part II
Mon. Nov. 7	Hume	<i>Enquiry</i> , Section V, Part I
Wed. Nov. 9	Test #2	

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Fri. Nov. 11	Problem of Induction	
Mon. Nov. 14	Problem of Induction	Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction"
Wed. Nov. 16	Paradox #4 Short paper due	
Fri. Nov. 18	Philosophy of Mind	Nagel, <i>What Does It All Mean?</i> , Chapter 4
Mon. Nov. 21	Philosophy of Mind	Ryle, "Descartes' Myth"
Wed. Nov. 23	Philosophy of Mind	Armstrong, "The Nature of Mind"
Fri. Nov. 25	Philosophy of Mind	
Mon. Nov. 28	Philosophy of Mind	Russell, "The Argument from Analogy for Other Minds"
Wed. Nov. 30	Paradox #5	
Fri. Dec. 2	Review and Wrap up	
Mon. Dec. 5	Test #3	
Mon. Dec. 12 by 3p.m.	Term paper due Office hours for submitting term paper: 1-3p.m. in HH330	