

PHIL 2250: Mind, Language, and Knowledge

**Revised 13 September 2015*

University of Guelph, Fall 2015

Instructor: Doug Halls

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 4:00 – 5:00pm

Office Location: MacKinnon Building, 3rd Floor (Office wing) Room 339

Class Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30 – 3:50

Class Location: MCKN 223

Exam: Thursday, December 10, 11:30am – 1:30pm

Course Description:

What is the relationship between knowledge of the world and knowledge of the self? Can we have one without the other? If not, which project comes first: the discovery of the structure of reality, or the nature of our own being? In either case, should we begin with perceptual observation, or with an exercise of pure reasoning in the mind alone? If we start with observation, should we learn first about our sensory systems/embodiment, about sensory objects, or about the physical objects that cause those sensations? If we start with pure reasoning, should we first define or discover the essential nature of our mind, or determine the nature of its contents (ie. concepts, and thus language)? Can or should we start with definitions and axiomatic truths (truths that do not require and can be given no demonstration), or must our 'starting points' be derived somehow? These are very difficult and fundamental questions for which there are no easy answers. In this course we will study how four of the greatest Western philosophers tried to come to terms with them: Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and Merleau-Ponty.

Required Texts:

Aristotle. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Modern Library, 2001. (ISBN-10: 0375757996; ISBN-13: 978-0375757990).

Descartes, Rene. *Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*. Ed. Roger Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000. (ISBN-13: 978-0872205024; ISBN-10: 0872205029)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Don Landes. New York: Routledge, 2014 (ISBN-10: 0415834333; ISBN-13: 978-0-415-83433-9)

Spinoza, Baruch. *The Ethics with The Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*. Trans. Samuel Shirley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992 (ISBN-10: 0872201309; ISBN-13: 978-0872201309).

Requirements and Grading Scheme:

Exercises: (40%) Two short essays, ~3.0 pages each (double spaced 12 pt font). Questions for each philosopher will be distributed throughout the semester. You will write on one question prior to the midterm, and one question after the midterm. Each essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

Midterm: (20%) A midterm exam. Format TBA.

Final Exam: (40%) A cumulative final exam consisting of four short answer questions (worth 5% each) and two essay questions (worth 10% each).

Class and Reading Schedule:

Notes:

Required Reading = *Italic Font*

Recommended Reading = (Regular Font in Brackets)

“T” = Tuesday; “R” = Thursday

SCHEDULE	TOPICS & READINGS	KEY DATES
<i>Introduction</i>		
Sept 10 (R)	<u>Course Introduction; Aristotle’s Ontology of Substance</u> (<i>Metaphysics I.1-2, Posterior Analytics II.19</i>)	
<i>Aristotle</i>		
Sept 15 (T)	<u>Natural Substances & The ‘Four Causes’</u> <i>Metaphysics I.1, Physics II.1, 2, 3, 7, 8</i> (<i>Metaphysics I.2, Physics II.8, 19</i>)	
Sept 17 (R)	<u>Life and Soul</u> <i>De Anima I.1, De Anima II.1, 2, 4; Physics II.8</i> (<i>Metaphysics VII.18; Parts of Animals I.1, 5</i>)	
Sept 22 (T)	<u>Knowing Particulars: Perception, ‘Experience,’ and Imagination</u> <i>De Anima II.2, 5, 6, 12; De Anima III.1, 3</i> (<i>Metaphysics XI.1</i>)	<i>Essay 1 Out</i>
Sept 24 (R)	<u>Knowing Universals: <i>Nous</i>, or ‘Insight’</u> <i>De Anima III.4, 5, 7, 8; Posterior Analytics II.19</i> (<i>Physics VII.3</i>)	
Sept 29 (T)	<u>Knowledge in Action: <i>Praxis</i>, <i>Desire</i>, and <i>Prudence</i></u> <i>Nicomachean Ethics, I.1, 7; VI.1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 1142a23-31, 11</i> (<i>De Anima III.10; Nicomachean Ethics I.13; IV.3, 13</i>)	
Oct 01 (R)	<u>Mind and Divinity: <i>Theoria</i> and Aristotle’s God</u> <i>N. Ethics IX.4, 1170a13-1170b18, 1174b14-24, X.7; Metaphysics XII.7, 6, 9</i> (<i>Nicomachean Ethics I.13; IX.12; X.5, 8, 9; Physics III.6</i>)	<i>Essay 1 Due</i>
<i>Descartes</i>		
Oct 06 (T)	<u>Descartes’ Method and First Meditation: Radical Doubt</u> <i>Discourse on Method 1 & 2; Meditation 1</i>	
Oct 08 (R)	<u>Second Meditation: The Cogito</u> <i>Meditation 2</i>	<i>Essay 2 Out</i>
Oct 13 (T)	<NO CLASS>	
Oct 15 (R)	<u>Fourth Meditation: Truth and Falsity</u> <i>Meditation 4; Principles of Philosophy I.29-35; I.39-41; I.45; I.71-4</i>	
Oct 20 (T)	<u>Sixth Meditation & Substance Dualism</u> <i>Meditation 6 (132-136 [To ‘There is nothing...’]); Principles of Philosophy I.8-11; I.17-19; I.22; I.51, 53, 54, 56, 60-63</i>	<i>Essay 2 Due</i>
Oct 22 (R)	<u>Sixth Meditation & Mind-Body Interaction</u> <i>Meditation 6 ([From ‘There is nothing...’ 136-141]); Passions of the Soul I.7, 13, 27-32, 34-36, 50-50</i>	

Spinoza		Ethics Key: D = Definition; A = Axiom; P = Proposition; Ex. IVP14 means 'Part 4 Proposition 14'	
Oct 27 (T)	<u>Substance, Attribute, and Mode</u> <i>Ethics ID1 - IP23 (*Key: IP1-5, 8 [Dem & Scholium 1 only], 10, 11, 14, 15 [Dem & 1st two paragraphs of Scholium only], 16, 17, 18, 20, 23)</i>	Midterm	
Oct 29 (R)	<u>God, Nature, and Power</u> <i>Ethics IP24 - IP34 (*Key: IP24, 28, 29, 31 - 35)</i> (Part I Appendix)		
Nov 03 (T)	<u>Power and Parallelism</u> <i>Ethics IID1-IIP21 (*Key: IIP1-3, 6, 7, 10-13, 14-16, 19, 21)</i>		<i>Essay 3 Out</i>
Nov 05 (R)	<u>Three Kinds of Knowledge</u> <i>Ethics IIP22 - IIP49 (*Key: IIP22-24, 28, 29, 32-42, 44, 47-49 [to end of p. 96 only])</i>		<i>Nov 6: Drop Date</i>
Nov 10 (T)	<u>Affect, Striving, and Bondage</u> <i>Ethics III (*Key: IIIPreface, IIIP1, 2, 6, 7, 11, Def. Emotions 1, 2, 3 [p.141] General Def. of Emotions [p.150-1]; Ethics IV (*Key: IVD8, IVP1-5, 18, 26-32, 35, 38)</i> (IVP37, IVAppendix)		
Nov 12 (R)	<u>Freedom, Love, and Self-Knowledge</u> <i>Ethics V (*Key: VP1-6, 10-16, 20, 23-5, 27-8, 30-33, 35-6, 38-40, 42)</i> (VPreface)		Essay 3 Due
Merleau-Ponty			
Nov 17 (T)	<u>Phenomenology and MP's Analysis of 'Sensation'</u> <i>Phenomenology of Perception (PhP), Introduction Chapter 1: pp.3-12.</i> (Forward, vii-xvi; Preface, pp. xxx-xlvi)	Essay 4 Out	
Nov 19 (R)	<u>Returning to the Phenomenal Field</u> <i>PhP, Introduction Chapter 4: pp. 52-65</i> <i>Handout on PhP Intro C2 & C3: Fallacies of 'Objectivist' Thought</i>		
Nov 24 (T)	<u>The Phantom Limb and Organic Repression</u> <i>PhP, Part I Introduction: pp. 69-74</i> <i>PhP, Part I Chapter 1: pp. 75-91</i>		
Nov 26 (R)	<u>The Body's Spatiality and Motricity</u> <i>PhP, Part I Chapter 3: pp. 100-115</i>		
Dec 01 (T)	<u>Speech and Expression</u> <i>PhP Part I Chapter 6: pp. 179-195; 203-205</i>		
Dec 03 (R)	<u>Others and Self-Knowledge</u> <i>PhP Part II Chapter 4: pp. 363-379</i>		Essay 4 Due
Exam	Thursday, December 10, 11:30am - 1:30pm (Location TBA)		

Course Notes:

- 1) **Preparation:** You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings for the day, and prepared to engage in constructive discussion on those readings. The lectures for this course should be thought of as a supplement to - but by no means a substitute for - the readings. While the size of the class is

not the most conducive to group discussion, and though it will be formatted most often as a lecture, you are encouraged to initiate and contribute to class discussion.

- 2) **No Laptop Policy:** No laptops open in class (unless by arrangement with SAS – note required). We are using textbooks in this course, so you will not need it a laptop to access the readings. There are two reasons for this no-laptop policy: (1) Studies suggest that students sitting near other students using laptops for purposes other than note-taking are distracted, and learn less in class; and (2) There is an abundance of data suggesting that you will actually retain information better if you take notes with pen and paper, rather than on your laptop. See for example:
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/professors-pushback-against-laptops-in-the-lecture-hall/article26046828/>
- 3) **Submitting Work:** Please note that you may not drop off assignments to the office staff in the philosophy department, nor can assignments be submitted via the department mailbox. Assignments must be turned in during class or the instructor's office hours.
- 4) **Late Policy:** Unless there is a prior arrangement made with me, late assignments will be penalized 5 marks on the first day and 3 marks on each late day thereafter (given a 100 point scale). Weekends and holidays will count as late days. To submit a later paper outside of class, email me with an attached copy of your assignment to 'stop the clock' on any further deductions to your grade. You will need to bring me a hard copy of your assignment in class or office hours before I will grade it.

EIGHT STANDARD STATEMENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS (FALL 2015)

E-mail Communication

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their **uoguelph.ca** e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, ID#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester **Fall 2015** courses, without academic penalty, is **November 6, 2015**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities which, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counseling Office:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>