

# PHIL\*1050 DE S12

## Introduction to Philosophy

---

### Instructor

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Aaron Masecar

EMAIL: [aaron.masecar@uoguelph.ca](mailto:aaron.masecar@uoguelph.ca)

Skype: aaron.r.masecar

Twitter: @aaronmasecar

Course Hashtag: #PHIL1050S12

### Instructor

Aaron has been an independent contractor, an intern, a project co-ordinator, a manager, a Graduate Student Association President, and a member of the Board of Governors, but for most of his life, he has been studying philosophy. He did his undergrad at King's College at the University of Western Ontario, his Master's at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, and recently finished up his PhD at the University of Guelph. His main work focuses on Charles S. Peirce's theory of habit and habit formation.

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the basic problems of philosophy. We will read some basic texts from Plato that start us off by asking how to live a good life and then focus on the nature of justice. Next we will turn to Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, which will help us develop that question of how to live a good life in greater detail. From there we will look at Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals which will help us to take a critical look at our own sense of morality. Last we will look at a contemporary understanding of the role of philosophy.

The point is to develop a set of competencies that ask us to think more critically about our activities; to ask who is involved, to what extent, who is responsible, what is the impact on my sense of self, my workplace, my society, my world? This course will ask us to broaden our scope in understanding difficult situations.

### Course Goals

The main goal of this course is to give you a set of philosophical tools that will help us to understand and respond to situations that we're facing today. Each of the following goals function as subcomponents of this main goal.

You will be able to summarize and explain the different theories.

You will be able to identify a current issue that is effecting us on either a local or a global level.

You will be able to apply the theory to this current issue.

You will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of those theories to respond to these issues. For example, are there components of the current situation that were not accounted for by a particular theory?

In each unit, you will be able to identify the theory that is being used and assess the value of that theory for dealing with a contemporary issue. In each situation, you will ask, “is this the best way to handle this situation?” This question will guide all inquiry and require that you critically assess and contrast different responses to the situation.

### **A Note about the course**

There are certainly going to be times when you have a lot of work due and other times when there is not quite as much work to do. Make sure you plan well in advance so that you are not caught off guard.

According to Senate guidelines, this course should require 10-12 hours of work per week. There are some weeks that will require more work, and others less. If you find yourself only spending a few hours one week, then you should prepare to spend approximately 20 hours the following week.

Online courses are unique in that they afford you the opportunity to work when it most benefits you. I find that some of my most productive work hours are before 9am and between 6 and 8pm. It would be good to ensure that you set aside some time each day to work on this course. It is quite easy to fall behind and end up missing some of the deadlines.

The most successful students will keep on top of the readings, look ahead to assignment deadlines, and actively participate in online discussions.

It would be quite easy to be swallowed up in a large online discussion, so we have elected to divide you up into smaller discussion groups. The hope is that, in these smaller groups, you will help each other with the readings and provide a community to help ideas grow.

I am happy to hear any and all feedback you have about the course. For instance, are there certain readings that you particularly enjoyed or didn't like so much? Let me know. I'm always looking for ways to improve.

### **Required Texts:**

Aristotle. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Ed. Richard McKeon Modern Library; New edition (2001) ISBN: 0375757996

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. Ed. Walter Kaufman Vintage; Reissue edition (1989) ISBN: 0679724621

Plato. Four Texts on Socrates. Trans. Thomas G. West. Cornell University Press; 1REV edition (2003) ISBN: 0801485746

## Course Structure

The course will proceed chronologically. We will begin by looking at Plato, then Aristotle, Nietzsche, and a contemporary thinker.

## Units

Unit 1: Introduction and Philosophical Tools .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Assignment for Unit 1 .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Assignment for the Discussion Board .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
How to Read Philosophy .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Philosophical Arguments .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Fallacies .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Criticising an Argument.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 2: Euthyphro.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Discussion Question for the Discussion Board .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 3: Apology .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 4: Crito.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 5: Crito.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 6: Nicomachean Ethics .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Unit 7: Nicomachean Ethics .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Unit 8: Nicomachean Ethics ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Unit 9: On the Genealogy of Morals ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Unit 10: On the Genealogy of Morals ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Unit 11: On the Genealogy of Morals ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Unit 12: What is Philosophy..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Discussion Question for the Discussion Board: ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Unit/Week 1 May 10-20	Introduction	
Unit/Week 2 May 21-27	Euthyphro	
Unit/Week 3 May 28-June 3	Apology	
Unit/Week 4 June 4-10	Crito	
Unit/Week 5 June 11-17	Crito	

Unit/Week 6 June 18-24	Nicomachean Ethics	
Unit/Week 7 June 25-July 1	Nicomachean Ethics	<b>Midterm Exam June 27<sup>th</sup> noon to 28<sup>th</sup> at noon</b>
Unit/Week 8 July 2-8	Nicomachean Ethics	
Unit/Week 9 July 9-15	On the Genealogy of Morals	
Unit/Week 10 July 16-22	On the Genealogy of Morals	<b>Essay Assignment Due by July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm</b>
Unit/Week 11 July 23-29	On the Genealogy of Morals	
Unit/Week 12 July 30-Aug 5	Introduction of What is Philosophy?	
Exam Period Aug 9-Aug 17		<b>TBD</b>

The class will be divided into groups of 5-10 students depending on the enrolment in the course (a higher enrolment will mean more students per group). These groups will be randomly selected and are closed to non-members of the group.

### **Groups**

You will be assigned to a group before the beginning of the course. Create a name for your group, something that reflects your members. This will be used to identify you on your assignments. The purpose of the group is to assign you to a smaller group than the entire class. These groups will allow you to get to know a small section of your classmates in a way that being swallowed up in a group of a hundred students wouldn't permit. Only your group members will be able to see your posts and you will use your group to help edit your papers before you hand them in.

The more that you work with your group, ask questions of your group, and help to answer those questions, the better you will understand the material and the higher mark you will likely

get. I **strongly** encourage you to develop conversations in your group posting area and not just post your answers there once a week.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

Weekly Posts	24%
Essay Assignment	25%
Midterm	25%
Final Exam	26%

For more detail information about weekly posts, essay assignments and the exams see the Assignments tab above.

### **Weekly posts (12 x 2%)**

These are questions from the readings. A minimum of two posts per week is required by each student: one by Friday at midnight and the other one by Sunday at midnight.

The **first post** needs to

1. answer the discussion questions and
2. include a quote from the text and
3. state whether you agree or disagree with the theorist and why.

The **second post** is a response to someone else's post stating that

1. you agree or disagree with what the other person has said and
2. why you agree or disagree.

If your first post has all three components and your second post has both components, then you will receive 2% for that week.

Here are a couple of good resources for creating good discussion posts:

One by our office of open learning:

[http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/online/learning\\_resources/online\\_discuss\\_tips.html](http://www.open.uoguelph.ca/online/learning_resources/online_discuss_tips.html)

One by the Centre for Teaching Excellence at Waterloo:

[http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching\\_resources/tips/online\\_discussions\\_tips\\_for\\_students.html](http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_resources/tips/online_discussions_tips_for_students.html)

**Your first post must be submitted by 11:59pm on the Friday of that week and your second between Friday at midnight and Sunday at 11:59pm of that week. For example, the first discussion post for the first week is due on May 18<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm and the second post must be between May 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and before 11:59pm on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Late posts will not count unless this has been discussed in advance with the instructor.**

### **Assignment (25%)**

Application of a theory to a particular situation. Research a situation and apply a theory to that situation. For instance, you could pick a particular country's uprising in the Arab Spring. The *Crito* reading would be very helpful to examine the nature of justice. Or perhaps you want to look at bullying and how Nietzsche would address this issue. In each case you are to take the theory as the background, define basic concepts, and apply those concepts to the problem.

Assignments will be no more than 1500 words long, double-spaced. More details will be provided during the first week of the course.

Assignments are due on the Sunday of **week 10 by 11:59 pm**. Late assignments will be penalized 2% for the first day and 4% for every following day. Assignments that are late more than seven days will not be accepted.

### **Submitting Assignments**

The case studies for this course will be submitted electronically via the course website through the **Dropbox** tab at the top of the screen. Please save your text documents as Word documents or [Rich Text Format](#) before you submit them.

### **File Name Tip**

Start a new file in your word processor and save it as (the number of the assignment) e.g. #1\_LastName\_FirstName.rtf. Using this system Jane Doe's first assignment would be saved as #1\_Doe\_Jane.rtf.

### **Return of Graded Assignments**

Unofficial assignment marks will be available in the Grade section of the course website. Feedback on assignments will be returned online via the Submit tab or the electronic drop box under the Submit tab (see the menu bar at the top of the page).

### **Midterm (25%) Final Exam (26%)**

The midterm and final exam will be take-home exams. You will have 24hrs to complete the assignment.

The purpose of the midterm and final exams are to test your familiarity with the material and the ability to quickly respond to a contemporary situation. This situation will be pulled from the media. You will be given the situation and asked to respond to that situation. For instance, how would one of the authors respond to the situation in Syria, or the idea that Canada should not be involved with human rights issues in Asia? I will make sure that the questions that you must answer in the midterm and final will have a very clear connection to the readings that we have done throughout the course.

More details will be provided during the first week of the course.

### **Policies**

## **8 Standard Statements of the College of Arts Summer 2012**

### **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 Summer 2012 courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, July 6th. 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>**

**E-mail Communication**  
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph.ca email account regularly - email is the official route of communication between the university and its students. I will endeavor to respond to your emails within 24hrs, but sometimes responses will not come within 48 hours. If more than 48 hours have lapsed and you have not had a response from me, then please email me again.

## **Problems, Questions, Comments**

If any of this is unclear, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address listed above. For technical assistance please contact: Dan insert current contact info for help desk