



# **PHIL\*1010 Introductory Philosophy: Social and Political Issues**

Fall 2018

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 3.00 - September 20, 2018

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## **1 Course Details**

### **1.1 Calendar Description**

This course introduces philosophy through an examination of important issues in politics and society, such as punishment, animal rights, discrimination, war and violence, equality and property. These issues may be introduced through contemporary or historical philosophical writings.

### **1.2 Course Description**

This course is a philosophical introduction to current social and political issues. Public discourse is in a sorry state: partisanship is rampant; the left is becoming alarmingly authoritarian; the right is becoming increasingly transgressive. Fortunately, philosophy provides us with the tools necessary to navigate, examine, and evaluate positions in a clear and systematic manner. In this course, we will consider many of the most important problems of modern times. It will directly deal with current events and seek to understand their causes and effects. Topics of discussion will include but are not limited to: the state of nature; free speech; the legislation of force; racism; affirmative action; privilege; rights; the redistribution of wealth; and, the permissibility of violent rebellion.

### **1.3 Timetable**

Lectures are held from 2:30 PM to 3:20 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays in Rozanski Hall (ROZH), room 101.

Please see CourseLink for the ever-changing reading schedule.

### **1.4 Final Exam**

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructor(s)

**Kyle Bromhall**

**Email:** kbromhal@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 335

**Office Hours:** M 1:30-2:20

### 2.2 Teaching Assistant(s)

**Teaching Assistant:** Shadi Heidarifar

**Email:** heidaris@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 362

**Office Hours:** W 1:00-2:00

TA for Seminars 01 and 02.

**Teaching Assistant:** Thomas Campbell

**Email:** tcampb07@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 361

**Office Hours:** Th 12:00-1:00

TA for Seminars 03 and 04.

**Teaching Assistant:** Rachel Elliott

**Email:** rellio02@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 369

**Office Hours:** Th 1:30-2:30

TA for Seminars 05 and 06.

**Teaching Assistant:** Brenton Ables

**Email:** bables@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 325

**Office Hours:** Th 3:30-4:30

TA for Seminars 07, 08, and 15.

**Teaching Assistant:** Mahdi Dadgariamdari

**Email:** mdadgari@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 336

**Office Hours:** Th 2:00-3:00

TA for Seminars 09 and 10.

**Teaching Assistant:** Maria Storfa

**Email:** mstorfa@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** MCKN 367

**Office Hours:** W 12:00-2:00

TA for Seminars 11, 12, 13, and 14.

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resource(s)

**An Introduction to Political Philosophy (Textbook)**

Wolff, Jonathan. 3rd Ed. Available at the campus bookstore.

**Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction (Textbook)**

Warburton, Nigel. Available at the campus bookstore.

**Various Articles (Article)**

See CourseLink; all will be available through Ares.

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. identify and critically evaluate the practical and cultural significance of central issues in social and political philosophy. (Knowledge)
  2. prepare a sustained piece of academic philosophical writing in which: a topic is articulated clearly; a stance on that topic is supported by appropriate and well thought-through reasons; and, the paper is prepared efficiently and clearly. (Skills)
  3. contribute to and participate in civic life; appreciate the role that viewpoint plays discourse; and, how to accommodate the viewpoints of others without abandoning their own. (Values)
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Unit One: "Liberalism: Not What You Think It Is" encompasses weeks two through five.

Unit Two: "The Past is Now!" encompasses weeks six through nine.

Unit Three: "Democracy: The Worst Form of Government" encompasses weeks ten through thirteen.

This schedule is subject to change with notice.

Readings for all weeks will be posted on CourseLink and are subject to change with notice.

### 5.1 Lecture

**Week 1**

**Topic(s):** No lectures or seminars on 07 or 08 September.

**Week 2**

**Topic(s):** Welcome; Standpoints

**Week 3**

**Topic(s):** The State of Nature

**Week 4**

**Topic(s):** The Social Contract

#### **Week 5**

**Topic(s):** The Social Contract (Mon); Free Speech I (Wed)

#### **Week 6**

**Topic(s):** Thanksgiving (Mon); Canada's Shameful Legacy (Wed)

#### **Week 7**

**Topic(s):** Racism and Oppression

#### **Week 8**

**Topic(s):** Male Privilege: What It Is & Isn't

#### **Week 9**

**Topic(s):** Equality & Equity (Mon); Free Speech II (Wed)

#### **Week 10**

**Topic(s):** The Lie of *Vox Populi*

#### **Week 11**

**Topic(s):** The Lie of *Vox Populi* (Mon); Democracy versus democracy (Wed)

#### **Week 12**

**Topic(s):** Democracy versus democracy (Mon); Civil Disobedience (Wed)

#### **Week 13**

**Topic(s):** Civil Disobedience (Mon); Free Speech III (Weds); Review (Fri)

## **5.2 Seminar**

### **Weekly**

**Topic(s):** Seminars will take place every week starting in **Week 02**. Consult WebAdvisor for the time and place of your seminar.

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## **6 Assessments**

## 6.1 Marking Schemes & Distributions

All assignments will be distributed through CourseLink.

## 6.2 Assessment Details

### Seminar Engagement (15%)

**Date:** Ongoing, In Seminar

This course requirement has two components: near-weekly reflections and seminar participation.

The reflections will be short (250-word) responses to questions related to the week's reading(s). Each reflection will receive one of three grades: **Unsatisfactory** (1 point); **Satisfactory** (2 points); or, **Excellent** (3 points). They are due every week except 01, 06, 10, and 13.

Participation will be assessed by your Teaching Assistant on a weekly basis. If you make a meaningful contribution to your seminar, you will receive a bonus point on your reflection for that week. If you do not, you will not. *You must submit a reflection to receive a bonus point on it.*

Once you have received twenty points for this component of the course, you are no longer required to submit further reflections. If you have not received twenty points by the end of the term, you will receive a grade equal to  $((x/20)*15)$ , where x is the number of points you earned.

### Response Paper 1 (25%)

**Due:** Sun, Oct 14, 11:00 PM

The first paper is a short (1000-word) essay on the material from the unit "Liberalism: Not What You Think It Is" on a topic assigned by the Instructor. Submissions close at **2300** (11:00 PM) on **14 October**. This essay is worth **25%** of your final grade.

While these essays will be guided and shaped by the questions at hand, these papers are *formal essays* and ought to be treated as such; that is, they have an introduction, a thesis statement, a conclusion, and formal language throughout.

### Response Paper 2 (30%)

**Due:** Sun, Nov 11, 11:00 PM

The second paper is a shortish (1250-word) essay on the material from the unit "The Past is Now!" on a topic assigned by the Instructor. Submissions close at **2300** (11:00 PM) on **11**

**November.** This essay is worth **30%** of your final grade.

While these essays will be guided and shaped by the questions at hand, these papers are *formal essays* and ought to be treated as such; that is, they have an introduction, a thesis statement, a conclusion, and formal language throughout.

### **Final Examination (30%)**

Who doesn't love an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency with the material under time constraints? Love it or hate it, your final examination for this course will be held on **12 December 2018** from **2:30 to 4:30 PM** at a location to be determined by the helpful folks at the Registrar. Check for the latest updates on WebAdvisor. If there is a discrepancy between this syllabus and WebAdvisor, *WebAdvisor will be taken as correct*. Anyway, you should expect standard fare: multiple choice, short answer, and the like. And yes, it is cumulative to the beginning of the course.

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## **7 Course Statements**

### **7.1 Course Requirements: Due Dates & Late Penalties**

The due dates for all assignments are found in this syllabus. With the obvious exception of the near-weekly reflections, you will have at least two weeks—and usually longer—from the time that the assignment is distributed to when the assignment is due. I reserve the right to modify due dates at my discretion; however, they will never be earlier than what is indicated in this syllabus. Check CourseLink for the latest announcements.

All deadlines are firm, and lateness is penalized harshly. All assignments are date-stamped automatically by the online submission system; your *latest* date stamp will be taken as your submission date. **Late assignments are not accepted.** The only exceptions shall be for medical or compassionate reasons, provided that you have the necessary evidence. There are no make-up assignments or extra credit.

TL;DR: if you foresee a problem, talk to us ASAP, and bring evidence.

### **7.2 Course Requirements: Submitting Assignments**

The near-weekly reflections must be submitted both physically and electronically to count as complete. You must submit a physical copy to your Teaching Assistant at the **end of your seminar**. You must submit an electronic copy through the dropbox function of CourseLink by the **start of your seminar**. We will not consider the assignment to have been submitted until

both of these conditions are met.

The response papers are to be submitted through the dropbox function of CourseLink by the time indicated on the assignment or as amended. Only this electronic copy is required.

You may not submit electronic assignments through email.

You must submit all assignments in either \*.docx or \*.doc format. You have access to Office 365 **for free through the university**; Microsoft has a free online version of Word that you can use if for some reason you don't. I will post the link on the course website.

*NB. Under no circumstances are you to submit work in \*.odt (OpenOffice) or \*.pages (Apple Pages) format, as both CourseLink and Turnitin have difficulties processing those file types. Don't do it.*

## 7.3 Course Requirements: Style and Formatting

Formatting plays a subtle but crucial role in the development of your papers. Clean, consistent formatting ensures that your reader's energies are focused where they should be—on your content—instead having to overcome technical inefficiencies. Each assignment will have formatting requirements, **including citation style**, that you are required to follow. Failure to follow the requirements will be penalized.

## 7.4 Technology: CourseLink

I will use CourseLink extensively. There you will find news items, errata, grades, minor announcements, the course FAQ, assignments, the assignment dropbox, and so on. It is your responsibility to check the course website on a regular basis. If you have a question, you should check there (especially the FAQ) first.

## 7.5 Technology: Turnitin

This university has adopted Turnitin to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the university.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

## 7.6 Technology: Document Distribution

All non-textbook readings are on electronic reserve through the library. The library will determine the format in which they are available and which functions are enabled.

All lectures will be posted in Portable Document Format (PDF) on CourseLink for online viewing. You will need a program like Adobe Reader, Nitro Reader, or Microsoft Word to open these files. Note that printing has been disabled.

All assignments will be posted in PDF on the course website with printing enabled.

## **7.7 Technology: Laptop and Smartphone Use**

You should be aware that there is a battle waging in pedagogical circles about whether laptops (which includes tablets and the like) should be allowed in classrooms, or whether they should be banned outright. Here is the problem: Study after study have shown that laptops have a negative effect not only on *your* ability to retain and process information, but also on that of *everyone else*. That said, they can serve a benefit if and only if they are used properly and are a fixture in an accessible classroom.

So here is my compromise: Laptops are allowed in lecture just as long as they are being used for course-related purposes. If I deem that they are causing a nuisance, I will take measures such as requiring laptop users to all sit together in the back of the room or banning them. Your Teaching Assistant has the authority, within the constraints of accessibility and inclusivity, to decide how s/he will handle laptops in seminars.

Smartphones have no place in the classroom. Refrain from using them. If it is difficult for you to go through the entire class without interacting with your phone, you should seek help. I may ask you to leave the room to go get said help if I catch you using your phone during lecture.

## **7.8 Technology: Recording Lectures**

You do not have my permission to record lectures.

## **7.9 Governance: Contacting the Instructor**

Email is my preferred method of communication outside of class or office hours. I will try my best to respond to your email within a few hours of receiving it, although please understand that circumstances may not always permit this. I am also available to talk via Skype by appointment only.

Note that you should be directing inquiries to your Teaching Assistant first. They will have their



own policies for contacting them, but they will all hold office hours and they will all respond to email.

## **7.10 Governance: Classroom Etiquette**

Be aware of actions that others may find distracting. Talking, accessing social media, texting and so on not only all have a *scientifically-demonstrated* negative effect on your grade, but also on those around you. It is also extremely disrespectful. Therefore, please refrain from doing anything that would distract others. If any of these things start to be a problem, I may impose limitations on the class and/or ask the offenders to leave the room.

More so than in many other disciplines, philosophy asks you to vigorously and precisely defend your own position and to attack those of others. This does not mean that at any time you should ever show any sort of disrespect towards another student or use abusive language. As philosophers, we exhibit significant tolerance for differences of view, and it is expected that you demonstrate this tolerance. Offense is one thing; abuse is another.

## **7.11 Governance: Accessibility**

I am passionate about making my classrooms as accessible as possible. If any of my policies or classroom management strategies are making the course difficult for you, please do not hesitate to contact me about it. I will do everything within my power to ensure everyone has full access to the course.

## **7.12 Governance: Seminar Management**

Your Teaching Assistant has the authority to run the seminar as s/he would like, as long as policies do not conflict with departmental or institutional policy. Unless your Teaching Assistant explicitly specifies otherwise, you should expect that seminar sections will follow the same policies as lectures.

## **7.13 Territorial Acknowledgement**

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

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# **8 University Statements**

## **8.1 Email Communication**

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

## **8.2 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. The regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#) are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### **8.3 Drop Date**

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for [Dropping Courses](#) are available in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### **8.4 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.

### **8.5 Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance, and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information: [www.uoguelph.ca/sas](http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas)

### **8.6 Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of 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. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### **8.7 Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## **8.8 Resources**

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

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