



# PHIL\*1050 Ethics, Knowledge, and Reality

Fall 2023

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 01, 2023

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course introduces students to philosophy through the exploration of basic perennial philosophical problems and questions, such as whether there is free will, a God, objective right and wrong, genuine knowledge of the world, and other topics. The readings for the course will consist primarily of 20th century philosophical writing.

### 1.2 Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the fundamental concepts, problems and skills of philosophy. We shall deal with such questions as whether God exists, whether there is a real or objective difference between right and wrong, whether it is possible for us to gain reliable knowledge of the natural world, and whether we have free will. The aim of the course is to help you think clearly and systematically about these sort of problems. You will be expected to read independently from the course text—not all material will be covered in the lectures. Throughout the class our aim will be to develop the ability to *critically discuss* what you have read and heard, rather than merely to report on it. That is, you should try hard to develop and assess *arguments* for and against the positions you will encounter.

### 1.3 Timetable

Please consult WebAdvisor for location details.

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 - 11:20

Seminars:

1. Section 1: Thursday 3:30 - 4:20

2. Section 2: Thursday 4:30 - 5:20
3. Section 3: Friday 1:30 - 2:20
4. Section 4: Friday 2:30 - 3:20
5. Section 5: Friday 3:30 - 4:20
6. Section 6: Friday 4:30 - 5:20

A provisional week-by-week course timetable is available on CourseLink.

## 1.4 Final Exam

This course will have an in-person, Registrar-scheduled Final Exam. Please see WebAdvisor for the time and location (when available).

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

**Instructor:** Please see WebAdvisor  
**Email:** for this information.  
**Telephone:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 1-2 pm, or by appointment (or grab me after class).

To get to my office, come in to the MacKinnon building by the glass doors opposite the Bullring coffeehouse. Go up one flight of stairs and then turn sharp right to the entrance to the COA Dean's offices. MCKN 0007 is in that corridor.

### 2.2 Teaching Assistants

**Teaching Assistant (GTA):** Alexander Griggs-Burr  
**Email:** griggsba@uoguelph.ca

**Teaching Assistant (GTA):** Bryan Richard  
**Email:** bricha09@uoguelph.ca

**Teaching Assistant (GTA):** Leah Williams  
**Email:** lwilli17@uoguelph.ca

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## 3 Learning Resources

The main content for this course—the content that you will be examined on—is the texts and your responses to them. Classes and seminar discussions are intended to assist you in your engagement with the texts, rather than to summarize, supplement or replace them. I will be

assuming that you will be devoting four or five hours a week outside of class time to reading and thinking about the texts (including time spent preparing for exams and writing the short essays).

### 3.1 Required Resources

**The Broadview Introduction to Philosophy, ed. Andrew Bailey (2019), ISBN: 9781554813827 (Textbook)**

<https://broadviewpress.com/product/the-broadview-introduction-to-philosophy>

All required readings will be from the textbook. The readings are often challenging, and you should allow yourself plenty of time to work through them before class.

This book is available at the Campus Bookstore.

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Have the ability to clarify the central assumptions and arguments informing a range of viewpoints, even when dealing with complex issues couched in specialized vocabulary.
  2. Have the ability to clearly and accurately communicate complex issues in writing, and to argue successfully for one's own view.
  3. Have the ability to assess evidential weight and the balance of probabilities in very complex and difficult cases.
  4. Have a sophisticated sense of some central ethical, scientific, and metaphysical issues that are core to the intellectual traditions of the West.
  5. Have the ability to identify and question the often implicit presuppositions that inform various viewpoints, and the confidence to propose novel and creative solutions.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### 5.1 Provisional timetable

A provisional class-by-class breakdown for this course is available on CourseLink.

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## 6 Assessments

There will be four two-page papers (together worth 32%), a mid-term exam (worth 30%), and a final exam (worth 38%). You do not need to pass all of the assignments in order to pass the course, but students who do not sit the final exam and write at least one of the papers will be graded as “Incomplete.”

- For each paper we’ll hand out a topic about a week before the paper is due.
- The papers will be graded out of 30, according to the following scheme:

A+	27	90%
A	26	87%
A-	24	80%
B+	23	77%
B	22	73%
B-	21	70%
C+	20	67%
C	19	63%
C-	18	60%
D+	17	57%
D	16	53%
D-	15	50%
F	0	0%

- Each paper should be no more than about 750 words in length—that is, roughly, between 1½ and 2½ pages. You will need to pay attention to making sure your paper

addresses exactly the question that is asked. In grading the essays, we will take into consideration your ability to use correctly and effectively the language appropriate to the assignment: in particular, you should strive to write grammatically, accurately, clearly, precisely and concisely. More detailed evaluation criteria and advice will be provided with the first essay topics.

- Papers should be handed in to your TA or to me in class. Papers cannot normally be submitted or returned via the department administrative office or through the campus mail system. Papers can be submitted by e-mail only in an emergency or by special arrangement.
- Your TAs or I will be happy to talk with you about what we expect in these papers, and give you advice on preparing them. Assistance with writing essays is also available from the Library: <https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/writing-studying/writing-resources-workshops>.
- The two exams will have the same format: there will be a small number of multiple-choice or yes/no questions, but most of the exam will consist in short-answer essay questions (each marked out of 30 according to the above scheme).
- The exam will not be open book, but **you can bring a 'cheat sheet' to both exams**. On a standard sheet of 8½"x11" paper you can write anything at all that you think might help you, on either or both sides, and you can refer to that sheet (but nothing else) during the exam.
- After the **midterm** exam (but not the Final) you may submit an optional term paper (within about two weeks of the return of the test): the term paper mark will, if higher, replace the mark of the corresponding test, *unless* the test grade was an F (in which case that mark will stand). Come and see me to talk about this if want to take this option: the paper should be about 8 pages long and on a topic that was covered by the test.

## 6.1 Assessment Details

### Short Essay 1 (8%)

**Date:** Week 3, To be submitted in your seminar group

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3

### Short Essay 2 (8%)

**Date:** Week 5, To be submitted in your seminar group

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3

### Midterm Exam (30%)

**Date:** Mon, Oct 23, 10:30 AM - , 11:20 AM, RICH 2520

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

### Short Essay 3 (8%)

**Date:** Week 8, To be submitted in your seminar group

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3

#### **Short Essay 4 (8%)**

**Date:** Week 10, To be submitted in your seminar group

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3

#### **Registrar-scheduled Final Exam (38%)**

**Date:** Wed, Dec 6, 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM, TBA

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

## **7 Course Statements**

### **7.1 Late Penalties**

Unless other arrangements are made, in writing, with the course instructor or TA, late assignments will be penalized by 5% for the first day they are late and then 2% for every subsequent day. (For example, a grade that otherwise would have been 77% will be 68% for an essay that is three days late.) To 'stop the clock' for a late assignment, email it to the TA as soon as it is completed; then hand in a hard copy at your next seminar meeting or the TA's office hours.

## **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 grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### 8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### 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 make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 8.6 Academic Integrity

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 encourages academic integrity. 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.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, 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 that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## 8.9 Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g.. final exam or major assignment).

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