



# PHIL\*4130 Current Debates in Continental Philosophy

Winter 2021

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 11, 2021

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

Each offering of this course will focus on close study of either one or two figures of contemporary relevance in discussions of Continental European philosophy, or a specific issue or set of related issues that are now being debated in that field.

**Pre-Requisites:** 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level or 12.50 credits

### 1.2 Course Description

This class will be a study of two great works of 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Philosophy: Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943), (which we will supplement with a few selections from *Critique of Dialectical Reason* [1960]), and Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* (1990). Each of these works is a study of the nature of our experience and of the specific ways in which our experience is meaningful. Both works reveal that careful reflection on the nature of meaning calls for a significant re-evaluation of the ways we typically understand ourselves and our world. With Sartre, we will focus on such themes as the body, language, and other people. With Derrida, we will especially focus on the nature of expression—writing, drawing, and so on. Our study will take us through some of the richest and most exciting dimensions of human life.

### 1.3 Timetable

M11:30-2:20. Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

The course will be delivered through recorded lectures (asynchronous) supplemented by discussions (synchronous). Details of meeting times will be determined at the first class

meeting, which will be held on Monday January 11, 1:30 pm, on Teams.

## 1.4 Final Exam

There will be a final, take-home assignment, due in the final exam period (Mon Apr 19).

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

<b>Instructor:</b>	John Russon
<b>Email:</b>	jrusson@uoguelph.ca
<b>Telephone:</b>	+1-519-824-4120 x53553
<b>Office:</b>	MCKN 338
<b>Office Hours:</b>	office hours (electronic) by appointment

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

**Sartre, Being and Nothingness (Textbook)**

translated by Hazel Barnes, (Washington Square Press)

**Derrida, Memoirs of the Blind (Textbook)**

translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, (University of Chicago)

Because this book is out of print, I will make a pdf available to those who cannot buy it.

**Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" (Article)**

This essay is included in Derrida's book *Margins: Of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, (University of Chicago).

I will make a pdf available.

### 3.2 Recommended Resources

**Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, Volume I (Textbook)**

translated by Alan Sheridan-Smith, (Verso)

I will have pdfs of the required readings available, but I recommend that you buy the book

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. *Orally Articulate and Defend* a position on a philosophical topic, either in class discussion or in a formal presentation, that is clear, accurate and well-reasoned.
  2. *Develop* research methods for gathering a wide range of primary and secondary source materials, and synthesize these materials and evaluate their credibility.
  3. *Demonstrate Independence* in articulating an original approach to a significant philosophical topic.
  4. *Write* clearly and cogently on complex problems in philosophy.
  5. *Read* extensively and systematically in a specialized area of philosophical research.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### 5.1 Lecture

Mon, Jan 11 - Mon, Apr 5

**Topics:**

Each week, I will make available one or more video-taped lectures on the assigned reading for that week.

### 5.2 Seminar

Mon, Jan 11 - Mon, Apr 5

**Topics:**

We will meet once each week (on Teams) to discuss the material we are studying.

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## 6 Assessments

### 6.1 Assessment Details

**Assignment 1 on Being and Nothingness (40%)**

**Due:** Fri, Feb 5

You will have to write essay-style answers for two questions. Each answer will be roughly 700 words. Precise details of the assignment will be given out in class.

**Assignment 2 on Critique of Dialectical Reason (40%)****Due:** Fri, Mar 5

You will have to write essay-style answers for two questions. Each answer will be roughly 700 words. Precise details of the assignment will be given out in class.

**Assignment 3 on Memoirs of the Blind (20%)****Due:** Mon, Apr 19

You will have to write an essay-style answers for one question. Your answer will be roughly 700 words. Precise details of the assignment will be given out in class.

## 7 University Statements

### 7.1 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.

### 7.2 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>

### 7.3 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>

## 7.4 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.

## 7.5 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.

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>

## 7.6 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>

## **7.7 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.

## **7.8 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>

## **7.9 Disclaimer**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

## **7.10 Illness**

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.

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