



# PHIL\*4820 Philosophy Research Presentation

Winter 2021

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 08, 2021

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

The focus of this course is mastering the oral presentation of a philosophical argument, and engaging in respectful, intellectually honest discussion with one's audience. Students will develop and present a philosophical claim which they will explain and defend during a question period after the presentation. Students are expected to have topic for their presentation at the beginning of the course.

**Pre-Requisites:** 14.00 credits including 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000-level

**Restrictions:** Restricted to students in Philosophy major.

### 1.2 Course Description

The focus of this course is on mastering the oral presentation of a philosophical argument, as well as engaging in respectful, intellectually honest discussion with one's audience. Over the course of the semester students will develop and present a philosophical argument, working independently, together as a group, and one-on-one with the instructor. We will work on research skills (e.g. finding high-quality philosophical articles relevant to your topic), writing skills (e.g. developing a convincing philosophical argument), and presenting skills (e.g. effective oral communication). By the end of the semester students will be ready to present their work at an end-of-semester conference. Students are expected to have a topic for their presentation at the beginning of the course. It is also expected that once a student has their topic, they will refine their presentations throughout the term, right up until their final presentations.

### 1.3 Timetable

Unless otherwise noted, we will meet virtually, via Teams, in our Monday 2:30-3:50 timeslot. You will receive an email from me, prior to our first class, inviting you to join our PHIL 4280 Team. Our Wednesday time-slot will be dedicated to virtual office hours for student-instructor

consultations.

## 1.4 Final Exam

There is no final exam for this course.

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## 2 Instructional Support

**Instructor:** Peter Eardley

**Email:** peardley@uoguelph.ca

**Office:** Mackinnon 333

**Virtual Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 2:30-3:50

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Texts

There are no assigned texts for this course. Students will choose their own primary and secondary sources as relevant to the topic of their presentation.

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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 Seminar

Topics:

#### Class Schedule

##### **Week 1 (January 11): Introductory Class**

During this first class we will discuss the main goal of this course, which is to help you develop a 20-minute presentation that will be accessible to non-specialists and has a clearly established philosophical interest. Students will come to the first class with their presentation topics, which we'll discuss briefly. We will also discuss the mechanics of the course and sign-up for the following:

- 2 one-on-one meetings with me (to be scheduled for weeks 5 and 11)
- Proposals, each with a respondent;
- First runs, each with a respondent;
- Second runs.

As a first step in your research, I recommend that you consult the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The bibliographies in those resources can be very helpful for getting you started.

Students are also advised to watch the following Youtube video by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor to get some idea of how a professional presents their ideas orally.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI8HB6OG4CK'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI8HB6OG4CK)

**Please Note** that the Taylor presentation will be the first of three talks that we will watch this term delivered by professional philosophers. At some point in the term you will have to turn in a 1-2-page critical response to one of the videos. In your response, you are to evaluate the talk in terms of form and content. Which video you evaluate is up to you.

### **Week 2 (January 18): Library Visit from Karen Nicholson**

Today we'll spend our session with Karen Nicholson, a librarian responsible for supporting library and research education in the College of Arts, including Philosophy. She will be providing an overview of relevant library resources to help you hone your research skills in identifying high-quality philosophical sources.

### **Week 3 (January 25): Brainstorming Session/Group Discussion**

For today's class, students should come prepared to chat about how their topic is progressing, and about the sources they are currently reading. The plan is to take about 10-15 minutes per student where we all brainstorm about each other's topics. Although we'll all be pitching in to give one another suggestions, it is important that each of you comes to class prepared to discuss some preliminary findings on your topic along with some sources. This will probably take the first half of the class. In the second half, we will discuss the two websites below which provide advice for giving philosophy talks. Please read them before class.

<http://www.koksvik.net/talk.php>

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mert2255/teaching/advice/tips-for-presentations.pdf>

#### **Week 4 (February 01): Proposals**

During Tuesday's meeting students will present a short (10-minute) pitch of their idea for their research presentation, which will involve:

- A title
- A description of the topic
- An explanation of the debate to which it contributes
- A preliminary statement of the thesis

Each proposal will receive a brief (approximately 2-minute) oral response by a designated student, who will make sure to listen carefully to the presentation and jot down some ideas for improvement. Responses are meant to be helpful in guiding students to improve their presentations in terms of philosophical interest, clarity, analysis and soundness of argumentation. It is very important that these responses not be overly generous; critical feedback is essential in helping refine the presentation skills of your classmate. Having said that, it is important that such criticism be constructive and encouraging. After class, each respondent will write up their remarks in about a page or so, and submit it to me and to their classmate via email attachment.

#### **Week 5 (February 08): One-on-one meetings with me**

This week we will hold 15-minute scheduled meetings via Teams to discuss your progress. You will sign up for these on the first day of class.

Students are also advised to watch the following

Youtube video by Martha Nussbaum to get another sense of how a professional philosopher presents their ideas orally.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qk8quLEnnbM>

### **Week 6 (February 15): Winter Break**

There will not be any meetings for this week.

### **Week 7 (February 22): First-Run Presentations and Responses**

Two Students will give a first run of their 20-minute presentation.

The designated respondents will:

- Listen to the presentation, not having seen a written version beforehand (so they can judge its success as an oral presentation);
- Take notes, including a structured summary of the presentation;
- Make brief comments (1-2 minutes) in class;
- Afterwards respondents will write a 1-page commentary on their fellow student's presentation, suggesting areas for improvement (e.g. explanation of the philosophical interest, situating the argument in relation to some debate, improving the argument, consideration of possible objections, etc.). Once this has been completed, they will send this type-written response to me and their fellow student via email attachment.

### **Week 8 (March 01): First-Run and Responses cont.**

Two students will give a first run of their 20-minute presentations; 2 respondents will give their responses (see above).

### **Week 9 (March 08): Second-Run Presentation**

This week students will give a second run of their 20-minute-long presentation. For your second-run we will not have designated respondents, but instead all students will offer oral feedback on each presentation. It is expected that this presentation should be significantly more refined than the first run.

### **Week 10 (March 15): Second run**

Second-run presentations will continue this week. As with the presentations in Week 9, there will be no designated respondents; rather, everyone will provide feedback.

### **Week 11 (March 22) One-on one meetings with me**

In addition to our one-on-one meetings, please watch Harvard political philosopher Michael Sandel's TED talk, which can be found at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkgHLK9\\_Zt8&list=PLJ3Nsaoew\\_NCHiw0FPVRa\\_6\\_&index=62](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkgHLK9_Zt8&list=PLJ3Nsaoew_NCHiw0FPVRa_6_&index=62)

### **Week 12 (March 29): Conference Presentations**

This week we will host a virtual conference during our Monday class, which will run for about 2 hours (i.e., 2:30-4:30 PM). The conference will be public, which is to say that all members of the Guelph philosophy community (students and faculty alike) will be invited to attend. At this conference, each of you will give his or

her final, polished 20-minute presentation and will handle questions from the audience for 10 minutes. In my experience, this conference has been a very enjoyable experience for all involved.

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## 6 Assessments

### 6.1 Assessment Details

**Proposal (10%)**

**Response to Proposal (5%)**

**First-Run Presentation (15%)**

**Response to another student's first run (5%)**

**Video Response (pass/fail) (5%)**

**Second-Run Presentation (15%)**

**Conference Presentation (35%)**

**Contribution to Q & A sessions at Conference (10%)**

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## 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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