

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Course Title, Time and Location	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Introduction to Continental Philosophy Mon, Wed, Fri 15:00-16:00 Web Based Course	PHIL 348 001	3 credits

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Willow Verkerk	willow.verkerk@ubc.ca	Online	By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces key texts and ideas from major European philosophers from the 18th century onward. The discussion commences with Kant's answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" and follows with texts by Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. Enlightenment thinking is further challenged by philosophy in the 20th century, by the question of technology by Heidegger, and by Horkheimer and Adorno, who critique instrumentalized rationality. We then turn to Hannah Arendt's analysis of terror and ideology and the conditions that allow for totalitarianism to emerge. We study Franz Fanon's attack on colonialism, Christine Delphy's analysis of the oppression of women, and Judith Butler's examination of heterosexist power. Simon de Beauvoir provides an important reflection on freedom, ethics, and the human condition. We revisit the question, "What is Enlightenment?" with Michel Foucault to complete the course.

Together, we will examine the relationships between knowledge, freedom, and progress in order to understand the concepts of humanism and enlightenment from continental perspectives. In addition, we explore problems thought to be particular to the loss of meaning and value occurring after the death of God and the rise of consumer culture, such as nihilism and alienation. During the course, the relationship between power and truth will be under discussion. Consideration will be given to the roles that rationality, desire, and politics have in the constitution of the subject (and their capacity for freedom).

This is a lecture style course with class discussion. While this course is restricted to upper-level students, those in their first or second year who are interested in taking the course may contact me.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students are expected to read the materials before class and come prepared to take part in online class discussion. Class time on Mondays is reserved for students to independently

complete the readings and prepare answers for at least one of the questions provided. Videos will occasionally be assigned for viewing on Mondays. Each Wednesday and Friday, there will be real time lectures on Collaborate Ultra with discussion encouraged.

The schedule includes all of the readings which can be found on LOCR or online.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Take Home Exam (1500 words) 30% due October 30.

Final Essay (3000-3500 words) 60% due December 6.

Participation 10%: based on attendance and participation in class discussion on Wednesdays and Fridays.

All assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: MON, WED, FRI 15:00-16:00

September 9: Introduction: What is Continental Philosophy?

QUESTIONS:

1. How do you understand continental philosophy?
2. How does it differ from analytic philosophy?

September 11: On Enlightenment and Thinking for Oneself

READ: Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to think for oneself according to Kant?
2. Is there a tension between fulfilling one's duties as a citizen and speaking one's mind freely?

September 14-18: Critical Thinking and Abstract Thought

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: : Hegel, "Who Thinks Abstractly"

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/se/abstract.htm>

And

Schopenhauer, "On Thinking for Yourself" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Hegel mean by abstract thinking?
2. Do you agree with Schopenhauer's account on the importance of thinking for yourself?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion on Hegel and Schopenhauer

September 21-25: Alienation

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Marx, "Estranged Labour" in *Economic and Political Manuscripts*

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

QUESTIONS:

1. In which four ways does alienation occur according to Marx?

2. Do you think Marx's analysis of labour is still relevant today? Why or why not?
3. How does the process of alienation impact upon one's ability to think?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion on Marx

September 28-October 2: Class and the Human Being as a Commodity

MON: Prepare for FRI and WED lectures

READ: Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat, I: The Phenomenon of Reification"

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/hcc05.htm>

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Lukács explain the process of reification?
2. How does reification change human experience?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion on Lukács

October 5-9: Truth/Untruth and the Will to Power

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Nietzsche, "Preface" and "Part One: On the Prejudices of Philosophers," in *Beyond Good and Evil* (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain Nietzsche's analogy between 'woman' and 'truth'. What do you think he is trying to teach us about these concepts?
2. How does Nietzsche explain his notion of the will to power?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Nietzsche

October 12-15: Freud's Drives and the Interjections of Desire

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Freud describe the pleasure principle?
2. What is the 'beyond' that Freud is discussing in this text?
3. How does Freud's notion of the drive differ from that of Nietzsche's?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Freud

October 19-23: On Being and Technology

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. What does Heidegger mean by Enframing? Give an example of Enframing from the text.
2. Is there a problem with being on "standing reserve" according to Heidegger? If so, what is it?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Heidegger

Take Home Exam posted on Friday October 23

* Take Home Exam Due October 30*

October 26-30: Critical Theory: Between Power and Truth

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Horkheimer & Adorno, "The Concept of Enlightenment," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. How has reason been instrumentalized according to Adorno and Horkheimer?
2. Do you agree with their critique of reason? Why or why not?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion on Adorno and Horkheimer

November 2-6: The Dangers of Totalitarianism

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Hannah Arendt, "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the conditions that allow for totalitarianism to emerge?
2. What is the role of ideology in the move towards totalitarian rule?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Arendt

Final Essay Questions and Essay Writing Guidelines posted November 6

November 9-13: Freedom and the Anti-colonial Struggle

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence," pages vii-52 (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. How does Fanon describe the relationship between the colonist and the colonized?
2. Why does Fanon argue that decolonization is a violent event?

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Fanon

November 16-20: On Freedom

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI Lectures

READ: Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/ambiguity/index.htm>

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the tragic ambiguity of the human condition that Beauvoir outlines?
2. Describe the notion of freedom that Beauvoir articulates.

WED and FRI: Lectures and discussion of Beauvoir

November 23-27: Capitalistic, Patriarchal, and Heterosexual Power

MON: Prepare for WED and FRI lectures

READ: Delphy, "The Main Enemy" (LOCR)

And Butler, *Gender Trouble*, "1: Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the source of the oppression of women according to Delphy?

2. How is Butler critiquing the relationship between sex, gender, and desire? What do these terms mean for her?

WED: Lecture and discussion of Delphy

FRI: Lecture and discussion of Butler

November 30-December 2: Knowledge, Power, and the Subject

MON: Prepare for WED lecture

READ: Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" (LOCR)

QUESTIONS:

1. How is Foucault critiquing humanism in this essay?
2. How would you describe Foucault's positive view of Enlightenment?

WED: Lecture and discussion on Foucault

December 6 Final Essay due

LEARNING OUTCOMES

During the course, students will learn concepts central to the history of European philosophy. They will practice talking and thinking critically about the arguments and ideas. The take home exam provides an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the key concepts studied to date. The final paper is an exercise in critical thinking to explore and deepen understanding of one or more of the thinkers studied during the course. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with key figures and themes in the continental tradition.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SUPPORT

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [**the UBC Senate website**](#).

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