

# PHIL 375: Philosophy and Literature

Winter 2020, Term 1 (Sect. 901)

Meets: T 18:00-19:30 and R 18:00-19:30 BUCH A-103 (online delivery due to COVID-19)

## Instructor:

Stefan Lukits  
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## TA:

Bianca Crewe  
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It is helpful if every time you write an email to either the instructor or the TA the subject line of your email contains the phrase "PHIL 375". You can use my public pgp key chahtazi-public.asc (available on Canvas) to encrypt emails sent to me. If you do this, I will reply to you using your public encryption key.

## Office Hours:

- Stefan: by appointment
- TBD: by appointment
- TBD: by appointment

## Online Delivery

The instructor will provide asynchronous lecture material for each reading. Students will be assessed about these materials in the assessment quizzes. Furthermore, once a week there will be a synchronous tutorial session online, which you can either attend or for which you can submit an audio question asynchronously. Attendance at the tutorial OR submission of an audio question count towards your attendance grade. The tutorials are not meant for new lecture material, but for question and answer sessions with the instructor.

This course is designed to accommodate students who cannot attend online meetings. The tutorials, which are online meetings, do not require attendance as they will be recorded and audio questions can be submitted in lieu of attendance. All lecture materials will be provided so students can access them at their convenience. However,

students must have the capability for a few online meetings: the introductory sessions during the first week of class and the final exam interview with the instructor.

Synchronous introductory meetings in the first week of September and weekly tutorials on Tuesday at 6pm will be held using Collaborate Ultra on Canvas. The final exam interview will be on a similar platform to be announced later in the course.

## **Acknowledgement**

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (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 their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

## **Description**

PHIL 375 "Philosophy and Literature" addresses philosophical issues in works of literature or arising from theories of literary interpretation. Topics include issues relating to relativism, the nature of morality, free will, personal identity, the nature of the emotions. This course in particular will be about the question what the interpretation of texts and the methods associated with interpretation (hermeneutics) can teach us about more general philosophical questions such as metaphysics, scientific method, moral responsibility, and personal identity.

## **Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

1. Outline a complex argument in an assigned text, stating premises and conclusion.
2. Assess the strength of arguments in assigned texts and in their own writing.
3. Complete an essay that discusses and evaluates arguments with a clear structure and well-supported arguments.
4. Discuss and defend one's own view of a particular issue in the history of the hermeneutic tradition.

## **Course Website**

We have a site on the UBC course website system called "Canvas." We will use the Canvas site for several purposes, but grades will be in an instructor spreadsheet, not on the UBC Canvas site. I will provide access to the instructor spreadsheet using a

special set of login credentials. To access the Canvas site, go to this site and log in with your Campus Wide Login and password: <http://canvas.ubc.ca>

## **Evaluation/Assignments**

### **25% Reading Assessments**

There is a fair bit of reading to do for this course. There will be online quiz style assessments to ensure that students read these texts carefully and listen to or view the asynchronous lecture material. These assessments will be conducted on Canvas and an academic platform called acadly (the registration code of this course for acadly is TBD; however, do not sign up on acadly before you have received more detailed instructions provided separately). Attendance is part of these reading assessments. Synchronous attendance is not mandatory, as audio questions can be submitted instead of tutorial attendance (see below). There are also discussion forums for each reading. Submitting a minimum number of contributions to each discussion forum is part of the reading assessment. Again, you have an alternative: submitting your name for a small group discussion with your colleagues. A recording of this discussion counts in the same way as online discussion forum participation.

### **50% Essays**

#### **Essay #1**

The first essay assignment (Essay #1) is an assignment that you submit on Canvas before Thursday, September 24, 2020, at 3pm. It is freestyle, which means that you have a fair amount of artistic licence.

The idea is to write a literary text based on the idea that your life and the narrative associated with it provides a "text" for interpretation. If you put recognizable effort into this project, you will receive 85%–100%. Some questions to pursue are whether there are overall meanings or intentions in your life; what the role of contingency and randomness is; whether there is some kind of narrative with a beginning, an ending, and a middle that holds your life together; and what the continuity of personal identity is throughout the history or story of your life. There is no length requirement. However, the submission must be two pages in pdf format. Do not put your name or student number on Essay #1. There will be an attempt to anonymize your submission (only six digit codes on printed page); details will be provided separately. You are encouraged for this essay to write specifically about you and your life/story—the more particular and personal the better (as opposed to an academic, third-person paper such as Essay #2). (25%)

The first paper is freestyle in the extreme and meant to be personal -- about YOU, meaning that there are really no limits as to what you can do -- EXCEPT write an academic or argumentative paper. I want it to be more like a journal entry or a letter to a personal friend. You do not need to address the questions suggested in the previous paragraph, they are only meant to help you think about this project. You will submit the paper anonymously with no name or student number on the paper, only your six digit code. I will download all papers as a single zip file without identifying information. The idea is to connect "story" with your life—is there some coherence in your life ... what is the underlying meaning of the events in your life ... keep it personal and talk about your life, not life in the abstract. The essay must be exactly two letter-sized pdf pages (no title page!), but the formatting can be anything you like.

### **Essay #2**

The second essay assignment (Essay #2) is an assignment that you submit on Canvas before Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 3pm. Essay #2 is very different from Essay #1. It is an academic paper in which you address a philosophical question or a question of literary criticism based on the readings. Your audience is an intelligent undergraduate student who has attended our course and done our readings. The essay will be marked on content (clarity of presentation, strength of argument, relevance of thesis) and form (spelling, grammar, presentation in print). This paper will be six pages in length, where "six pages" means that the length of the paper must be at least six pages and at most seven pages. Use 1.5 line spacing and a font between 11pt and 12pt. Submit in pdf format. (25%)

### **25% Final Exam**

The final exam will be held during the exam period for Term 1, which is December 7–22, 2020. It includes a one-on-one interview with the instructor and an online short answer/multiple choice section which tests your knowledge and comprehension of the readings. To prepare for it, do all the readings required for the class and take some notes that you can review before the final exam. No extensive studying before the exam should be necessary. If you have attended class, read the material, and reminded yourself of the main ideas of the readings and their authors, you should comfortably pass this requirement.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Class Etiquette and Rules**

I don't encourage the use of computers during class time, although you may do so if you are taking notes. Use the computer as you would on an airplane, i.e. off-line.

Often it's best to raise your hand if you want to speak, but I'm also happy to have free-form discussions in class where people don't raise their hands as long as everyone is respectful of others (avoid cutting others off, interrupting them when they're in the middle of saying something).

The last paragraph serves as a reminder that this course was originally designed to be delivered in person. Due to the current pandemic, however, this course will be held online.

Basic rules of respectful dialogue will be enforced. Disrespectful speech such as name-calling, stereotyping, and derogatory remarks about ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and sexual/gender identity should be avoided and may constitute harassing speech.

Harassing speech will not be tolerated. The UBC Equity office defines harassment as follows: "Harassment, a form of discrimination, is a comment, conduct or behaviour that humiliates, intimidates, excludes and isolates an individual or group based on the BC Human Rights Code's thirteen grounds of prohibited discrimination." The thirteen grounds of prohibited discrimination are: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical and mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex (including gender and pregnancy), sexual orientation, unrelated criminal conviction. Examples of harassment include "repeated derogatory comments or jokes based on one of the prohibited grounds," and "discussing the culture of other classmates, co-workers, or colleagues in a disrespectful or ridiculing manner."

General information on assignments: Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments and should also retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. A final examination becomes the property of the University and must remain in the possession of the University for one year from the date of the examination, after which it should be destroyed or otherwise disposed of in accordance with UBC policy.

### **Policies on Late or Missed Assessments**

All essays are due on the day noted on this syllabus and on the assignment instructions. Late essays are subject to a 5% per weekday reduction in points (starting after the beginning of class time on the due date). The first late day carries an extra penalty of 5%. Arts Students must contact Arts Advising as soon as you are aware you may need an in-term concession. Please review their website for concession criteria as well as process to follow. Students in other Faculties should contact their Faculty advising office for direction. As instructors are no longer able to assess documentation

other than the Student Self-Declaration Form, I will not be handling any in-term or final exam concessions. Go [here](#) instead.

## **Grading Standards**

The following provide general guidelines that apply to all courses in the Faculty of Arts, including this one.

The following guidelines offer a broad-brush characterization of the type of work that might be associated with various ranges of grades. The intent here is to encourage general consistency across the Faculty of Arts rather than to provide precise specifications.

- 80% to 100% (A- to A+) Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
- 68% to 79% (B- to B+) Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
- 50% to 67% (D to C+) Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.
- 0% to 49% (F) Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

Marks in this course may be scaled (see Calendar, under Grading Practices).

## **University Policies**

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.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

		Mandatory	Optional
<b>Fortnight 1</b>	<i>Introduction</i>		
synchronous	September 8	RSA	
synchronous	September 10	KVH	HOD
tutorial	September 15	EKS	
	September 17	GSA	GSB
<b>Fortnight 2</b>	<i>Narrative and Personal Identity</i>		
tutorial	September 22	MSN	RKY
DUE: Essay 1	September 24	JPS	JAS
tutorial	September 29	CTA	
	October 1	PAR	HUM
<b>Fortnight 3</b>	<i>Hermeneutic Tradition Versus Scientific Tradition I</i>		
tutorial	October 6	EAG	WID
	October 8	HOL	HEI
tutorial	October 13	JSM	
	October 15	DOS	NTZ
<b>Fortnight 4</b>	<i>Hermeneutic Tradition Versus Scientific Tradition II</i>		
tutorial	October 20	HGG	
	October 22	JHH	JHC
tutorial	October 27	MAD	CAR
	October 29	POP	
<b>Fortnight 5</b>	<i>Post-Structuralism</i>		
tutorial	November 3	MFB	MFA
	November 5	CTC	MFC
tutorial	November 10	MFD	VGL
	November 12	BUT	
<b>Fortnight 6</b>	<i>Skepticism</i>		
tutorial	November 17	LYO	DRD
	November 19	BAR	
tutorial	November 24	OMA	OCC
	November 26	OMB	
tutorial	December 1	KOL	
DUE: Essay 2	December 3	RSB	

## Readings

Acronym	Author	Title	Pages
BAR	Roland Barthes	The Death of the Author	2--6
BUT	Judith Butler	Identity, Sex, and the Metaphysics of Substance	22--34
CAR	Rudolf Carnap	The Logic of Science is Syntax	331--333
CTA	Charles Taylor	What Is Human Agency?	15--44
CTC	Charles Taylor	Foucault on Freedom and Truth	69--102
DOS	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	Underground	1--54
DRD	Jacques Derrida	The Theory of Writing	293--344
EAG	Terry Eagleton	The Rise of English and PHRT	22--30,54--73
EKS	Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick	Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading	1--37
GSA	Galen Strawson	Against Narrativity	428--450
GSB	Galen Strawson	Why I Have No Future	21--26
HEI	Martin Heidegger	Being and Time	Sections 60 62 72 74
HGG	Hans-Georg Gadamer	Elements of a Theory of Hermeneutic Experience	265--285, 291--300
HOD	Charles Hodge	On Method	20--31
HOL	Robert Holub	On Ideology and Interpretation	32--50
HUM	David Hume	Of Personal Identity	164--178
JAS	Karl Jaspers	The Tension Between Technical Mass-Order and Human Life	44--69
JHC	Jürgen Habermas	The Conflict of Beliefs	30--45
JHH	Jürgen Habermas	The Hermeneutic Approach	143--170
JPS	Jean-Paul Sartre	Existentialism Is a Humanism	287--311
JSM	John Stuart Mill	On the Logic of the Moral Sciences	chapters III and XII
KOL	Leszek Kolakowski	Fabula Mundi and Cleopatra's Nose	242--248
KVH	Kevin Vanhoozer	Faith Seeking Textual Understanding	16--35
LYO	Jean-François Lyotard	The Postmodern Condition	chapters 10--12



MAD	Penelope Maddy	Carnap's Rational Reconstruction	65--82
MFA	Michel Foucault	Nietzsche, Genealogy, History	139--164
MFB	Michel Foucault	The Incitement to Discourse	17--35
MFC	Michel Foucault	Nietzsche, Freud, Marx	59--68
MFD	Michel Foucault	The Body of the Condemned	3--31
MSN	Marya Schechtman	The Narrative Self-Constitution View	93--135
NTZ	Friedrich Nietzsche	Interpretation	43--58
OCC	Karl Popper	Of Clouds and Clocks	TBA
OMA	Odo Marquard	In Defense of the Accidental	109--129
OMB	Odo Marquard	In Praise of Polytheism	87--110
PAR	Derek Parfit	Why Our Identity Is Not What Matters	266--282
POP	Karl Popper	The Logic of Scientific Discovery	3--26, 276--281
RKY	Richard Kearney	Narrative and Ethics	29--45
RSA	Rebecca Solnit	Apricots I	1--16
RSB	Rebecca Solnit	Apricots II	237--254
VGL	Candace Vogler	Sex and Talk	328--365
WID	Wilhelm Dilthey	The Rise of Hermeneutics	101--114

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