

PHIL 102 001 Introduction to Philosophy II (Web-Oriented Course) (Tentative Syllabus)

Summer Session, Term 1, 2021

Instructor: Katherine Cheng

Email: katherine.cheng@ubc.ca

Online Lectures and Discussions: Tue, Thur, 10:30am-12:00pm (via Zoom on Canvas)

Office Hours: Fri, 12:00-12:50pm, and by appointment (via Zoom on Canvas)

Course Overview

Course Description

This course will introduce you to some of the central philosophical questions in ethics, moral theories, and social and political philosophy, including questions about happiness, morality, personal identity, and civil disobedience. We will explore the following four sets of questions:

1. How to live a happy life? What is happiness, exactly? Is unhappiness important for achieving happiness? What is the relation between happiness and the meaning of life?
2. What makes someone one and the same person over time? Is there a deep distinction between oneself and others? How does thinking about the distinction between oneself and others imply for thinking about happiness?
3. How to act morally? How do we utilize moral theories in philosophy to think about practical issues in the world?
4. Is it the case there are certain “capabilities” that everyone should be able to develop? If so, what are they? How does thinking about capabilities imply for thinking about issues such as oppression?

Course Structure

Weekly meetings (Synchronous): We meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30am-12:00pm via Zoom on Canvas. During the meetings, there will be lectures and small group discussions. Lectures will be recorded, but the discussions will not. You are expected to do each day’s reading before class, attend each lecture, and participate in the small group discussions.

Canvas discussion board participation (Asynchronous):

You are expected and encouraged to participate in the discussion boards on Canvas, by making posts or commenting on other people’s posts. This is to help you reflect on the philosophical ideas we discuss in class, and to encourage you to exchange thoughts with your peers as well as to learn from one another.

(More details see “Evaluation/Assignments” below.)

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

This course will involve a small-scale Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) pilot project, with the goal of improving student learning. The project is a part of the requirement for the UBC Certificate Program in Advanced Teaching and Learning, in which I participate. The project will be implemented in two of the class meetings, with the consent form provided to the students beforehand. Students can freely choose to participate in the research project or not. Whether or not a student chooses to participate in the project will not affect the grade of the student, and no identifiable information will be collected during the research process.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend the class meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30am-12:00pm *synchronously*. You are *not* required to attend my office hours on Friday from 12:00-12:50pm, but you are more than welcome to drop by. (Details about office hours see “Office Hours” below)

Virtual Etiquette

Try to find a reasonably quiet area in your home that allows you to concentrate on lectures and participate in discussions during the class meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Silence your phone. Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. When asking questions or participating in group discussions, you are encouraged to turn on your microphone and even webcam, but you can also use the chat-like messages on Zoom.

Course Readings

All readings will be accessible through the course website on Canvas.

Canvas Website

The website for this course is on Canvas: <https://canvas.ubc.ca>. All class meetings and office hours will be held by using Zoom on Canvas. I will post announcements, class readings, and assignments on Canvas. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly and advised to turn on email notification in their settings. It is your responsibility to remain informed throughout the term.

Office Hours

I will hold virtual office hours twice a week on Friday from 12:00-12:50pm. You can also make appointments with me if you cannot make the office hours. In general, everyone is welcome to drop by the office hours to ask questions, explore points of interest, or discuss how I can help you learn effectively in this class.

Course Evaluation

Evaluation/Assignments

- Discussion board participation: 18%
- In-class participation: 5%
- First essay: 20%
- Second essay: 25%
- Final paper: 32%

Further Explanations of Assignments

Discussion board participation

- You are expected to make 3 posts and 3 comments on Canvas discussion boards throughout the term. Each post or comment should be at least 200 words. You cannot make more than 1 post under the same discussion topic. You cannot make more than 1 comment under the same discussion topic, either. But you can make 1 post and 1 comment under the same discussion topic.
- The discussion posts would involve your own critical reflection on particular course materials. You may consider the following questions when writing your discussion posts: What is the main point of the article of interest? Do you agree or disagree with it, and why? Does the article change your perspective in some ways? How does the article change your perspective? You can draw upon in-class discussions to answer some of those questions, but make sure that the posts are not just summaries of what we have discussed in class—the posts should involve your own ideas and contribution.
- The discussion comments should involve thoughtful responses to other people's posts or comments. You may consider the following questions when commenting on other people's posts or comments: What is the person trying to convey in their post or comment? Do you agree or disagree, and why? Could you expand on their idea by offering examples from your personal experiences or public discourses?
- Deadline: All posts and comments need to be submitted by June 24 at 11:59pm (midnight). I encourage you to post something every week, and do not leave the work until the last minute.
- Grading: Each post or comment counts towards 3% of your grade. Comments and posts will be marked mostly by completion, unless there is a lack of engagement with the course materials, in which case points will be deducted.
- Late policy: Late submissions will not be accepted.

In-class participation

- You are expected to attend the lectures and participate in in-class activities. Attendance will be taken in each class. As long as you attend 10 class meetings or more (we have 12 meetings in total), you will receive a full score for your in-class participation.
- I understand that some of you may be in different time zones, which may make attending synchronous lectures difficult. If that is the case, you can choose to write additional 3 posts (sent directly to me, with 3 posts in one single document, by June 24 at 11:59pm (midnight) to earn your in-class participation score.

Writing assignments:

- You are required to write three essays for this course. The first essay will be a short paper (roughly 1-2 page), just to get you to practice writing for philosophy. The second essay will require you to summarize one philosopher's view and then raise objections in response (roughly 2-3 pages). The final paper will require you to develop your own argument, by applying philosophical ideas to real-life examples (roughly 3-5 pages). Further details will be given later in class.
- Deadlines:
 - First essay: due in the second week of class, by May 23 at 11:59pm (midnight)

- Second essay: due in the fourth week of class, by June 6 at 11:59pm (midnight)
- Final paper: due by June 24 at 11:59pm (midnight)
- **Grading:** All writing assignments will receive a percentage grade (see the UBC grading scale below).
- **Late policy:** Late writing assignments are subject to a 5% per day deduction in points (starting after the due date/time), unless extensions are granted beforehand. Assignments that are late for more than 5 days will not be accepted.

Grading Scale: [UBC academic calendar 2020/2021]

Percentage (%)	Letter Grade
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
76-79	B+
72-75	B
68-71	B-
64-67	C+
60-63	C
55-59	C-
50-54	D
0-49	F (Fail)

Academic Honesty, Equity, and Special Arrangements

Academic Honesty

I take academic honesty very seriously. If you are unclear on what counts as honest or dishonest methods, please read the Faculty of Arts' pamphlet on plagiarism (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/>). Here are some tips for avoiding plagiarism (from the Faculty of Arts' pamphlet on plagiarism):

- **Acknowledge ALL Sources** from which you use ideas. This includes books, journal articles, websites, e-mail communication(s), listserv, film(s), videos, audio recordings, etc.
- **Always cite:**
 - Direct quotations taken from sources - place quotation marks "" around direct quotes as you write them down, to remember which are direct quotes and which are not.
 - Paraphrased ideas and opinions taken from someone else's work.
 - Summaries of ideas taken from someone else's work.
 - Factual information, including statistics or other data – with the exception of anything that is considered common knowledge (i.e. well known, inarguable facts like "British Columbia is a province in Canada").
- **When reviewing your paper, ask yourself:**
 - Is the idea or argument presented mine?
 - Are the words my own?
 - Can my work be clearly distinguished from the work of others?

Also, here is the link to the University's policy on academic misconduct:
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,54,111,959>.

Equity and Special Arrangements

I will do my best to make sure that all students have equal and full opportunities to participate and learn in this course. If you need accommodations due to disabilities, please contact [Centre for Accessibility](#), if you haven't already. If you need special arrangements due to religious obligations, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably in the first week of class. Other special needs that do not fall under official accommodations by the university may still be accommodated, but please let me know at your earliest opportunity.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Date	Readings	Essay assignments
Introduction and Happiness		
May 11	No readings; familiarize yourself with the syllabus and the Canvas course website.	
May 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (selections) • Skill: Pryor, “Guidelines on Reading Philosophy” (http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html) 	
May 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shafer-Landau, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>, Ch. 1 Hedonism • Nozick, “Happiness” 	
May 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitrano, “The Value of Unhappiness” • Wolf, “Happiness and Meaning” 	1 st essay due: May 23 at 11:59pm (midnight)
Moral theories		
May 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> (selections) • Skill: Pryor, “Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper” (http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html) 	
May 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shafer-Landau, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Ch. 11 The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice • Shafer-Landau, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i> Ch. 12 The Kantian Perspective: Autonomy and Respect 	
June 1	Workshop: how to write a philosophy essay	
June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singer, “Famine, Affluence and Morality” • O’Neill, “Rights, Obligations and World Hunger” 	2 nd essay due: June 6 at 11:59pm (midnight)
Social and Political Engagement		
June 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindemann, <i>Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair</i> Ch. 1 Narrative Repair: Reclaiming Moral Agency 	
June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nussbaum, “Capabilities and Human Rights,” p. 280-292 • TBA 	
June 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	
Wrap-up		
June 17	Wrap-up Course evaluation	Final paper due: June 25 at 11:59pm (midnight)