

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	PHIL 348 W1 2021	3 credits

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

#### OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

TBA

#### 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. The notion of enlightenment is further questioned by Heidegger's text on technology. 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. 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 class discussion.

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

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

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Take Home Exam (1500 words) 30% due November 5.

Final Essay (3000 words) 60% due December 8.

Participation 10%: based on attendance and participation in class discussion and on online discussion forum.

All assignments are submitted on Canvas.

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

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**Wednesday September 8: Introduction: What is Continental Philosophy?**

QUESTIONS:

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

**Friday September 10: On Enlightenment and Thinking for Oneself**

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

Recommended reading: Tsenay Serequeberhan, "The Critique of Eurocentricism and the Practice of African Philosophy" (Modules)

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 13-17: Critical Thinking and Abstract Thought**

**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?

**September 20-24: Alienation**

**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?

**September 27-October 1: Class and the Human Being as a Commodity**

**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?

**October 4-8: Truth/Untruth and the Will to Power**

**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?

Holiday October 11- Thanksgiving Day

**October 13-15: The Free Spirit and Truth**

**READ:** Nietzsche, "The Free Spirit" in *Beyond Good and Evil* (LOCR)

## QUESTION:

1. How does Nietzsche describe the free spirit?
2. What is the relationship between the free spirit and truth?

**October 18-22: Freud's Drives and the Interjections of Desire**

**READ:** *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (LOCR)

## QUESTIONS:

1. How does Freud describe the pleasure principle?
2. How does Freud's notion of the drive differ from that of Nietzsche's?

**October 25-29: Freud on Repetition and the Death Drive**

**READ:** *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (LOCR)

## QUESTIONS:

1. How does Freud use the concept of repetition in this text?
2. What is the 'beyond' that Freud is discussing?

*Take Home Exam posted on Friday October 29*

*\* Take Home Exam Due November 5\**

**November 1-5: On Being and Technology**

**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?

**November 8: Discussion Day and Final Essay Topics Posted**

*Midterm break November 10-12*

**November 15-19: The Dangers of Totalitarianism**

**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?

**November 22-26: Freedom and the Anti-colonial Struggle**

**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?

**November 29-December 3: Capitalistic, Patriarchal, and Heterosexist Power**

**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 them?

**December 6: Knowledge, Power, and the Subject**

**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?

*\*December 8 Final Essay due\**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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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**

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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](#).

#### International Students:

During this pandemic, the shift to online learning has greatly altered teaching and studying at UBC, including changes to health and safety considerations. Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <http://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>

#### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

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