

Syllabus for PHIL 101, Winter 2023, Term 1
Introduction to Philosophy

Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal

[Updated June 9, 2023]

1. Course Description

The course offers an overview of Western Philosophy from its beginning to today via a close study of the ground-breaking writings of Descartes and Hume. We will use these writings as a reference point, and will digress into the whole history of philosophy on the basis of what they bring up. We study how the questions Descartes and Hume raise, and the ideas and arguments they offered, have been anticipated by and discussed by generations of philosophers down to the present day. Among questions discussed are: “What can we know?” “What ought we do?” and “What can we hope?” (and a plethora of more detailed questions that can be grouped under these general questions).

2. Lectures *MWF 9:00-10:00 in UBC Life Building 2302.*

3. Instructor *Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)*

4. Instructor Office Hours *TBA*

5. Instructor Email Policy *Instructor will reply to emails weekdays, typically within 48 h.*

6. Teaching Assistant *TBA (TA will be marking exams and papers)*

7. Required Texts

Descartes, R. *Discourse on Method and Meditations*, trans. E. Haldane (Mineola: Dover, 2003). (Or any other edition.)

Hume, D. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (Mineola: Dover, 2004). (Or any other edition.)

*The above books will be available in the UBC bookstore at very affordable prices. They are also accessible online for free.

A PDF with readings (used in our digressions) will be posted on Canvas.

8. Course Requirements

Assignment	Percentage Worth
In-Class Exam (x3)	20% (x3)
Final Exam	40%

In the in-class exams you will be asked to provide answers to questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. If you miss the in-class exam you will automatically be assigned 0 points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for doing a make-up exam (this is to be provided within 1 week of the day of the exam).

The final exam will be held during UBC's final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned a grade point of 0 unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be opportunity for a make-up exam).

9. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course the student will be expected to:

- i. Be familiar with the general trajectory of Western Philosophy from its beginning up to the present day, using Descartes' *Meditations* and Hume's *Enquiry* as a reference point,
- ii. Understand and be able to explain in more detail some specific ideas, arguments, and projects in Descartes' *Meditations* and Hume's *Enquiry*,
- iii. Understand and be able to explain how these ideas, arguments and projects impacted subsequent philosophy up to the present day,
- iv. Be familiar with general methodological approaches and styles of reasoning characteristic of Western Philosophy.

10. Marking Parameters

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors: 1) your performance on the examinable momenta *relative to your peers*, 2) your comprehension of the course material, 3) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

11. Marking Scale

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

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to *aim* at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years, which is in the range 68%-75%, i.e., in the B/B- range. Upwards scaling may be used to this effect.

12. Policy on Review of Marked Work

Marks on exams and papers will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions. Any concerns about the marking of a paper or exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) *via email*, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) *via email*.

13. Plagiarism (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

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

14. UBC Values and Policies (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

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 and cultural 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 here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>).

15. Schedule

The following schedule is unfinished, and will be updated with content closer to term.

September: Descartes's 'Discourse on Method' and 'Meditations' up to Part II, with Digressions

This material will be examined via an in-class exam at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)

October: Descartes's 'Meditations' Parts II-VI and Hume's 'Enquiry' Sections I-III, with Digressions

This material will be examined via an in-class exam at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)

November: Hume's 'Enquiry' Sections VI-XII, with Digressions

This material will be examined via a term paper due at the end of the month. (Exact date TBA)

All class content will be examined on the final exam in December [Exact date TBD].

16. The Nature of this Syllabus

This syllabus sets out the policies according to which this course will proceed. Enrollment in the course involves an acceptance of these policies.