

**Syllabus PHIL 491**  
**Seminar for Philosophy Majors**  
**Wednesday 2 to 5PM Winter 2024**  
**Buchanan B 310**

Professor Margaret Schabas, Buchanan E358  
Office Hours Thursday 1 to 3PM or by Appointment

**Course Description:** The theme of this seminar is Objectivity. We will read three core works on the subject. Purchase these books at the UBC Book Store, or order used versions online. I have also placed them on a 2-hour reserve at Koerner Library. For the last two classes, we will read some articles (TBA, posted online) that cover topics that interest you, so I encourage your input before I make these assignments. You will also present a draft of your research essay.

**Texts:** Thomas, Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*  
John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*  
Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity*

<b>Grading:</b>	Participation	20 (Weekly)
	Three Short Essays	30 (February 7; March 6; April 3)
	Research Essay Outline	5 (March 15)
	Research Essay	<u>45</u> (April 12)
		100%

**Caveat:** Unless granted a concession, late assignments are penalized at 5% per day. For this course, no AI tools or other online writing services are permitted. See the policies below.

**Logistics:** Instructions on the essays will be posted separately. The three short essays are each 500 words in length (2 pages) on an assigned passage from the book. They require no research. The long research essay is on a topic of your choosing, pertaining to the theme of the course. It should be about 4,000 words in length and include a bibliography using about five articles or books.

Attendance is mandatory; you are allowed to miss one class without an explanation but any more need to be cleared as a formal concession. Grades are based on your comprehension of the material and the cogency of your written arguments. Clear writing and clear thinking go hand in hand.

## **Class Schedule**

January 10	Preliminaries
January 17	Nagel, Chs. 1-4
January 24	Nagel, Chs. 5-8
January 31	Nagel, Chs. 9-11
February 7	Searle, Chs. 1-3. First Short Essay Due
February 14	Searle, Chs. 4-6
February 21	Midterm Break
February 28	Searle Chs. 7-9
March 6	Daston & Galison, Chs. 1-2; Second Short Essay Due
March 13	Daston & Galison, Ch. 3;
March 15	Essay Outline Due (online 10PM)
March 20	Daston & Galison, Chs. 4-5
March 27	Daston & Galison, Chs. 6-7
April 3	TBA. Third Short Essay Due Presentations
April 10	TBA Presentations
April 12	Research Essay Due (paper and online 2PM)

## **POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs when 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.

### **Policy on academic honesty**

All violations of UBC's standards for academic integrity will be reported to the office of the Dean of Arts. All violations of academic integrity standards will result in a grade of zero on the relevant assessment (exam, paper, assignment etc.). Students who do not have a previous offence may have the option to enter into a diversionary process with the Dean of Arts to resolve their misconduct (<https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/diversionary-process/>). Any student who has a previous academic offence will be referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline (PACSD) (<https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/homepage/guides-and-resources/discipline/>). PACSD may impose additional penalties including: a transcript notation indicating that the student has committed an academic offence, zero in the course, and/or suspension or expulsion from the University. You are personally responsible for understanding and following the UBC's policies for academic integrity: <https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/academic-honesty-and-standards>.

### **Policy on academic concessions**

There are only three acceptable grounds for academic concessions at UBC: unexpected changes in personal responsibilities that create a schedule conflict; medical circumstances; and compassionate grounds when the student experiences a traumatic event, sexual assault, or death in the family or of a close friend. Academic concessions for graded work and exams are granted for work that will be missed due to unexpected situations or circumstances. Situations that are expected (such as time constraints due to workload in other courses) or are predictable (such as being scheduled for paid work) are not grounds for academic concession. Requests for academic concessions should be made before the due date for that

graded work and/or the writing of the exam. UBC policy does not allow for concessions to students who have missed work because they have registered for a course after the due date for that work. You can read more about the rules for academic concessions here: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources/academic-concessions>. Students in the Faculty of Arts who require a concession can apply for concessions using this form here: <https://students.air.arts.ubc.ca/academic-concession-form/>. Students in other Faculties should consult their faculty website on academic concessions. Please note that the role of the faculty advising office is to review the evidence and to either support or not support concession requests. The final decision to grant the request always rests with your instructor.

### **Policy on the use of AI learning tools**

The specific rules for the use of AI tools are at the discretion of the course instructor. Those rules might change over the course of the term as new technologies become available. Changes to those rules might change the content of assessments and the way that your work is evaluated. If no written instructions on the use of AI tools have been provided by the instructor, the use of all AI tools is strictly prohibited in the course. Where the written instructions permit the use of AI tools, that usage must be documented and attributed within your assessment(s). Students are responsible for all factual inaccuracies that are created by the use of AI tools. Please speak to your instructor if you have further questions about the ways in which AI technology use is permitted in this course.

### **Student success**

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, spiritual 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/policies-resources-support-student-success/>.

### **Policy on sharing course materials**

All the materials provided to you as part of this course are protected by copyright. All assignment instructions, quiz questions and answers, discussion questions, announcements, lecture slides, audio/video recordings, Canvas modules, and any other materials provided to you by your instructor or in the textbook are for use only by students enrolled in this course this term. Sharing any of these materials beyond this course, including by posting on file-sharing websites (e.g., CourseHero, Google Docs) is a violation of copyright law and an academic offence. Copying and pasting sentences from the lecture notes or the textbook (e.g., definitions) into for-profit software (e.g., Quizlet) is likewise a violation of copyright law, and an academic offence. Violations of this policy will be treated according to the provisos of the Code of Student Conduct. For further information about copyright law, please refer to <https://copyright.ubc.ca/students/>.