

## **Introduction to Philosophy**

*Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal*

### **1. Course Description**

This course offers an overview of the central ideas and arguments of the five most influential philosophers of all time in the Western intellectual tradition: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Kant. We read Plato's *The Republic*, and some excerpts from Aristotle responding to it; then move on to Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, and some excerpts from Hume responding to it; and then conclude with excerpts from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the pivotal text of modern Western philosophy, which responds to all of the preceding thinkers.

Throughout the course we will go on various digressions in which we relate all of the above thinkers to recent developments in Western philosophy.

**2. Lectures.** MWF 9:00-9:50 in BUCH A 104

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

**4. Instructor Office Hours.** TBA

**5. Instructor Email Policy.** Instructor will read and reply to emails weekdays

**6. Teaching Assistant.** TBA. (The TA will be marking exams and papers, and will answer questions about marked work via email.)

### **7. Required Texts.**

—Plato, *The Republic*. (The affordable Dover edition will be in the bookstore, but you can use any edition, some of which are available free online.)

—Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. (The affordable Dover edition will be in the bookstore, but you can use any edition, some of which are available free online.)

—A PDF with some excerpts from Aristotle, Hume and Kant will be uploaded to Canvas.

### **8. Course Requirements**

*In-Class Exam (x3):* 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 these exams you will automatically be assigned 0 points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for make-up exam or transfer of the weight to the final exam.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will be held during UBC's final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned 0p unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be a standing deferred final exam).

### ***9. Learning Outcomes***

At the end of the course the student is expected to i) be familiar with some main ideas and arguments in Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Kant, and some contemporary responses to these thinkers; ii) be able to reflect critically on these ideas and arguments; iii) be able to demonstrate this familiarity and reflection in answers on written exams.

### ***10. Marking Parameters***

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

### ***11. Marking Scale***

**A+** 90-100% / **A** 85-89% / **A-** 80-84% / **B+** 76-79% / **B** 72-75% / **B-** 68-71%

**C+** 64-67% / **C** 60-63% / **C-** 55-59% / **D** 50-54% / **F** 0-49%

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. 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 (more detailed schedule will be published on canvas)***

6/1 Introductory remarks

8/1 Plato's *The Republic*

10/1 Plato's *The Republic*

13/1 Plato's *The Republic*

15/1 Plato's *The Republic*

17/1 Plato's *The Republic*

20/1 Plato's *The Republic*

22/1 Plato's *The Republic*

24/1 Plato's *The Republic*

27/1 Plato's *The Republic* and recent philosophy

29/1 Plato's *The Republic* and recent philosophy

31/1 Plato's *The Republic* and recent philosophy

3/2 Exam1 (worth 20%)

5/2 Aristotle's response to Plato (excerpts)

7/2 Aristotle's response to Plato (excerpts)

10/2 Aristotle's response to Plato (excerpts)

12/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

14/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

17/2 Family Day: no class

19/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

21/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

24/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

26/2 Exam 2 (worth 20%)

28/2 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*

3/3 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and recent philosophy

5/3 Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and recent philosophy

7/3 Exam 3 (worth 20%)

10/3 Hume's response to Descartes (excerpts)

12/3 Hume's response to Descartes (excerpts)

14/3 Hume's response to Descartes (excerpts)

17/3 midterm break: no class

19/3 midterm break: no class

21/3 midterm break: no class

24/3 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts)

26/3 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts)

28/3 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts)

31/3 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts)

2/4 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts) and recent philosophy

4/4 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (excerpts) and recent philosophy

7/4 Course review

April: final exam (worth 40%) (time and date and classrooms TBA)