

**PHIL 102 – 003:**  
**Introduction to Philosophy**

**Winter Term 2: Jan 6<sup>th</sup> to Apr 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays 10.00am to 11.00am**

*This course is primarily for students in the Coordinated Arts Program PPE Stream  
(Philosophy, Politics & Economics)*

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<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Matthew Wray Perry ( <a href="mailto:matthew.perry@ubc.ca">matthew.perry@ubc.ca</a> )
<b>Room</b>	E275 Buchanan Building
<b>Office Hours</b>	Mondays and Wednesdays 11am-12pm during term time. Please request an appointment in advance via email and specify whether you would like to meet in person or over zoom.
<b>Email policy</b>	All emails will receive a response within 3 working days (excluding weekends and holidays).
<b>Midterm break</b>	Feb 17 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> (no classes)
<b>Assessment</b>	10% Attendance 10% Participation 20% In-class multiple choice 30% Mid-term critical summary 30% Final exam  (further details on assessment are below)
<b>Midterm deadline</b>	Feb 24 <sup>th</sup> 2025 (this deadline is coordinated to not fall on the same week as any deadlines worth more than 15% for other courses in your CAP stream).
<b>Exam period</b>	Apr 12 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> (No exams from April 18 to April 21 (Good Friday/Easter Monday long weekend)).

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*This course at UBC Vancouver takes place on the traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>əm</sup> (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. These indigenous nations never legally ceded their land.*

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\*This course syllabus is subject to change with sufficient notice\*

## Course overview

We all hold beliefs about the world, our place in it, and what we owe to others. Philosophy asks us to slow down and examines *the reasons why* we hold those beliefs. This can be a useful thing to do for its own sake. For instance, it might help you to better understand why you believe something that you already do. However, it can also be an empowering and constructive way to approach every area of your life – academic, personal and professional.

This is because philosophy is best understood as a skill: the skill of breaking down complicated worldviews into their smaller parts, revealing their foundations, and seeing whether and how those smaller parts fit together into a coherent whole.

Like any skill, the best way to become good at philosophy is to *do* philosophy. As such, we'll examine a range of applied theories with a focus on the philosophy of ethics, politics, and economics. We'll discuss what it means to do right and wrong, the moral status of animals, what political values should regulate our lives, why (and whether!) we should protect democracy, the important role of gender and race, when economic inequality is objectionable, and how the economic market should be limited.

By examining these issues, you will learn what it means to think philosophically, how to critically analyze theories, and what role philosophy might have in the real world. Together, we will break down some fundamental questions and draw on personal experiences to better understand the values and principles that should guide decision-making today.

## Course Schedule

This course is designed around three key blocks that introduce you to a range of themes and topics in philosophy grouped around the philosophy of: Ethics (purple), Politics (blue) and Economics (green).

Block	W/C (Monday)	Topic
	Jan 6 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction & How to do (Analytic) Philosophy
Ethics	Jan 13 <sup>th</sup>	Consequentialism
	Jan 20 <sup>th</sup>	Deontology
	Jan 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Moral Status of Animals
Politics	Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Freedom
	Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	Equality
	Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>*Mid-term Break*</b>
	Feb 24 <sup>th</sup>	Democracy
	Mar 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Gender & Race
Economics	Mar 10 <sup>th</sup>	Distributive Justice
	Mar 17 <sup>th</sup>	The Limits to Markets
	Mar 24 <sup>th</sup>	Domesticated Animal Labour
	Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Revision/Exam prep</b>

## Teaching Objectives

By the end of the course students will be able to do the following:

1. Understand key philosophical techniques.
2. Develop knowledge of some key contemporary theories and debates in philosophy, and especially political, economic and moral philosophy.
3. Explain the basic structure of a philosophical argument – premises and conclusion – and outline arguments in philosophical works.
4. Be able to summarise arguments, and to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those arguments in a clear, concise and respectful way.
5. Apply these skills to begin to form their own arguments and defend their claims.

These are the minimum things students will learn if they turn up to class, do the required prep, and engage with the instructor and one another in good faith.

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## Assessment

- 10% Attendance.
- 10% Participation.
- 20% Short in-class tests (x4 *during a random Friday class*).
- 30% Mid-term critical summary.
- 30% Final exam.

## Detailed Instructions for Assessment

The assessments are designed to encourage you to actively engage with the course, and to help you to build crucial skills that will be useful for your later studies (irrespective of whether you continue to study philosophy, but especially if you do). If you turn up to class, engage with the course material, and try your best, then you should succeed.

The assessment will comprise:

- **10% Attendance.** You are allowed one free pass not turning up to a class. After that, your grade will be determined based on the percentage of the classes you attended (excluding any approved absences).
- **10% Participation.** Your participation grade will be based on your engagement with others in class. To get a good grade, you just need to turn up and engage in discussions with the instructor and other students in good faith, whilst also actively listening to others and being sensitive not to crowd out others' voices. This is not an assessment of who can contribute the most, or of the quality of what you say. It is a grade based on your efforts to engage with others respectfully and do your part to participate in interactive classroom activities.
- **20% Short in-class tests.** There will be 4 short tests on 4 random Fridays during the term. You do not need to do anything special to prepare for these beyond required preparation. Two of these will involve a set of multiple-choice questions, and two of them will be a short "four sentence paper" (see below). Again, if you turn up to class, engage in discussions, and complete the required preparation then you should excel at

these. However, you will not know in advance which Friday they will be on, so it is important that you turn up to every class.

- A four-sentence paper is brief writing exercise that emphasizes the consideration of opposing viewpoints and objections—crucial writing skills in philosophy. The form of a four-sentence paper is:
  - 1) \_\_\_ says that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 2) I reply that \_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3) One might object that \_\_\_.
  - 4) I reply that \_\_\_\_\_.
- These will be assessed according to 1. and 2. of the rubric below.
- **30% Mid-term critical summary (due 24<sup>th</sup> Feb by 23.59 PST).** The critical summary will require you to clearly and concisely summarise one of a selection of readings from the first block and critically evaluate its argument. You should arrive at an explicit conclusion either in opposition or in favour of the view that the text defends (do not ‘sit on the fence’). The critical summary should be written in an easily readable 12-point font and be 1400 to 1600 words in length. It should use academic references and contain a bibliographic list of citations. It will be assessed according to the rubric below.
- **30% Final exam.** The final exam builds on the skills you used in the critical summary. It will ask you to pick one question out of a list of 7 (one for each topic in blocks 2 & 3) and write a short essay on that topic. The focus will be on you explaining your view in response to the question and providing good reasons why you hold that view. The essay does not require you to use references, and it is not a creative writing assessment. Instead, you should use clear language and state your argument as directly as possible. The exam will also be assessed according to the rubric below.

### Rubric for Assessments

1. Knowledge and Understanding (25%) (accurate knowledge and understanding of the relevant material, and ability to summarise and describe debates).
2. Argument and Analysis (25%) (evidence of critical evaluation, quality of insights, and development of original perspectives or questions)
3. Structure and Organisation (25%) (logical structure, well-ordered paragraphs, fluid writing and good introduction and conclusion).
4. Quality of Writing (25%) (clarity, spelling, grammar, length, and referencing and bibliography (referencing and bibliography only applies to the critical summary)).

### Required Preparation

You do not need to buy any textbooks for this course. Most of the reading materials can be found on the library website in electronic form. A list of further readings (available through the library, on Canvas, or distributed through fair use provisions) will also be provided.

Required preparation should take you around **2-5 hours** depending on the week. I recommend doing this preparation in between Monday’s and Wednesday’s classes (i.e., you could do it on Monday afternoon, or sometime on Tuesday). The lecture should introduce you to the topic first. You can then study it independently, whilst the ideas are still fresh in your mind.

## Weekly Topics

### 1. Introduction & How to do Philosophy (w/c Jan 6<sup>th</sup>)

**Summary:** This week is a chance for us to introduce ourselves to one another and better understand what philosophy is. Some of the questions we will discuss include: What is philosophy? What is the role of a philosopher, and particularly an ethicist, or a political or economic philosopher? How does philosophy differ from science? Is philosophy just a matter of opinion? How do we do philosophy, and how do we do it well?

**Required prep:** There is **one** reading this week:  
1. G. A. Cohen, “How to do political philosophy”, pp. 225-235 in M. Otsuka ed. *On the currency of egalitarian justice and other essays in political philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 2011).

### 2. Ethics: Consequentialism (w/c Jan 13th)

\*Important note \*

*There are no in person classes this week, since I am away for an important workshop in Germany. Instead, I have planned for 1 pre-recorded lecture and 1 zoom discussion session (on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> at 10am PST). We will dedicate some time to recapping some of the material in week 3 & 4. I will also hold extended group office hours during week 3.*

**Summary:** Consequences tend to matter. But why do they matter? And should they strictly determine the ethical, i.e. what is right and wrong? According to the influential theory of *utilitarianism*, ethics boils down to a single idea: that we should promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This week, we consider this theory and some of the main objections to it.

**Required prep:** There are **three short** readings this week:  
1. Jeremy Bentham (1781), *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. (Selected sections).  
2. Ursula Le Guin, ‘The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas’, in *The Wind’s Twelve Quarters*, (pp. 254-62. (Available online at <https://www.utilitarianism.com/nu/omelas.pdf>).  
3. Nozick, “The Experience Machine” in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*.

### 3. Ethics: Deontology (w/c Jan 20th)

**Summary:** The main alternative approach to consequentialism focuses on actions rather than outcomes. According to the influential theorist Immanuel Kant, ethics requires us to follow a set of rules (or ‘maxims’). As long as we do not violate these rules, we do the right thing. But is this always true? How are the rules justified? Can all rules apply in all contexts? How should we understand the rule(s)? And what do we do if the rules conflict with one another?

Required prep: There is **one** reading this week, and **one** podcast episode:  
 1. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (selected sections)  
 2. Philosophize This! Episode #058 ...Kant pt.3 0 Deontology vs Consequentialism.  
<https://www.philosophizethis.org/podcast/deontology-vs-consequentialism> (also on spotify and youtube)

4. Ethics: The Moral Status of Animals (w/c Jan 27th)

Summary: This week we see the two theories above in action. Most of us tend to think that animals are owed some moral consideration – but why are they? Are animals fundamentally morally different from humans? *How much* consideration are they owed? And what *kind* of consideration? This week we examine these questions and try to determine how to coherently include animals in ethics.

Required prep: There are **two** readings this week:  
 1. Singer, Peter (1971), *Animal Liberation* (selected sections)  
 2. Nussbaum, Martha C. (2006), *The Moral Status of Animals*

5. Politics: Freedom (w/c Feb 3rd)

Summary: This week we turn to Political Philosophy. We will start by exploring the idea of freedom to better understand what a claim to freedom is a claim *to* exactly. Wars have been fought in the name of this value, and many civil rights movements focus on protecting and promoting the freedoms of oppressed groups. We'll examine three different theories and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Required prep: There are **two** readings this week (please do them in this order):  
 1. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"  
 2. List, C. (2006). Republican freedom and the rule of law. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, 5(2), 201-220.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X06064222>

6. Politics: Equality (w/c Feb 10th)

Summary: If any value goes almost unquestioned in liberal societies, it is the idea that humans are one another's *equals*. None of us has any more value than the other – or so the thought goes. This week, we examine this basic value and we analyse some theories of what it practically requires. In other words, what does equality look like? Does it require us relate to one another as social equals? Or does it require us to simply have equal opportunities in life,?

Required prep: There are **two** readings this week:  
 1. Nath R. Relational egalitarianism. *Philosophy Compass*. 2020; 15:e12686. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12686>  
 2. Miller, D. (1997), Equality and Justice. *Ratio*, 10: 222-237.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9329.00042>

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7. Mid term break (w/c Feb 17th)

**\* Mid-term critical summary due on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> \***

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8. Politics: Democracy (w/c Feb 24th)

**Summary:** Why is democracy valuable? There may be two dimensions: instrumentally, i.e. for the things it can do such as providing stability, or effective rule of law; or intrinsically, by reference to qualities that are inherent in the method, for example that democracy reflects the idea that each individual has a say in the policies and laws that govern them. We'll test these ideas by comparing them to a proposal first made by Plato: that we should instead be ruled by experts.

**Required prep:** There are **two** readings this week:

1. Anderson, Elizabeth, *Democracy: Instrumental vs Non-Instrumental Value*
2. Brennan, J. (2009). *Polluting The Polls: When Citizens Should Not Vote. Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 87(4), 535–549.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00048400802587309>

9. Politics: Gender and Race (w/c Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>)

**Summary:** Gender and racial identities shape how we perceive, understand and treat one another, perhaps even in ways we may not be aware of. This week, we explore their social construction and some of the political and ethical questions they give rise to. In doing so, we'll reveal some of the ways that they can contribute to systems of oppression and begin to ask what should be done about this.

**Required Preps:** There are **two** readings and **two** videos this week:

1. Manne, K. (2018), *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Penguin Books. (selected sections).
2. Mills, C.W. (2023), "Theorizing White Racial Domination and Racial Justice: A Reply to Christopher Lebron." *J Soc Philos*, 54: 292-315. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12296>
3. Philosophy Tube, "Social Constructs (or, 'What is A Woman, Really?')": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koud7hgGyQ8>
4. hooks, bell "Interlocking Systems of Domination": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUpY8PZlgV8>

10. Economics: Distributive Justice (w/c Mar 10th)

**Summary:** What value should regulate the distribution of economic resources? In weeks 5 and 6 we analysed the political concepts of freedom and equality. However, these ideas are also central to the question of economic regulations. How, if at all, should our economic systems

seek to realise them? If freedom is important, then are taxes theft? Does equality of resources matter, or is it something else that drives our objections to vastly unequal distributions?

Required prep: There are **two** readings:  
 1. Frankfurt, H. (1987), "Equality as a Moral Ideal" 1136-1143  
 2. Nozick, R. (1978), *Anarchy State and Utopia*, 149-174

11. Economics: The Moral Limits to Markets (w/c Mar 17th)

Summary: Most people tend to have a strong belief that some things should not be bought and sold. But which commodities or activities fall into this category and why? What, if any, features do they share? Additionally, what should drive market exchange, other than profit? And how should *ecological* limits influence market exchange? This week we look at several cases and explore some of the arguments for imposing limits on the market, and what shape those limits should take.

Required prep: There is **one** reading, and **one** podcast episode this week.  
 1. Debra Satz, XIV—The Moral Limits of Markets: The Case of Human Kidneys, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Volume 108, Issue 1\_pt\_3, 1 October 2008, Pages 269–288, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9264.2008.00246.x>  
 2. Podcast episode: 'The Reith Lectures – Michael Sandel Markets and Morals' (BBC Sounds) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b00kt7sh>

12. Economics: Domesticated Animal Labour (w/c Mar 24th)

Summary: Our last topic takes many of the themes discussed in previous weeks and applies them to a real-world philosophical problem: how should we relate to domesticated animals, and especially those we use for economic purposes (including farm animals, companion animals, assistance animals, etc.)? Should our practices involving these animals come to an end? Are some morally justified? Does animal's freedom or political choices matter?

Required prep: There is **one** reading and **one** video:  
 1. Youtube video: Will Kymlicka: "Membership Rights for Animals" - Royal Institute of Philosophy (whole video, but if you are short on time listen just to minutes 23:45 to 40:40). [https://youtu.be/dwmXkV3Wa4s?si=F2EJ\\_-BFr6pzIoz3](https://youtu.be/dwmXkV3Wa4s?si=F2EJ_-BFr6pzIoz3)  
 2. Blattner, Charlotte (2019) "5: Animal Labour: Toward a Prohibition of Forced Labour and a Right to Freely Choose One's Work" in *Animal Labour: A New Frontier of Interspecies Justice?* Pages 91–115



### 13. Revision & Exam Preparation (w/c March 31st)

Summary: We'll recap some key things from the course, discuss the exam, and consolidate some of the skills we've studied. There will be plenty of time for questions.

Required prep: \*no required reading\* Instead, please arrive with an idea of which topics you want to focus on and what position to argue for.

**\*Important note on academic concessions and accommodations\***

I am committed to ensuring fair opportunity for success and participation for every one of you. Please let me know in advance, preferably as soon as possible, if you require an approved absence for varsity athletics, family obligations, or personal circumstances. These may not necessarily fall under official accommodations.

#### **Statement of UBC values and policies:**

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

#### **Academic Concession**

UBC's academic concession policy "articulates the University's commitment to support students in their academic pursuits through the application of academic concessions in the event that students experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with their ability to accomplish academic work." An academic concession may be granted for a student when an unexpected situation or circumstance prevents them from completing graded work or exams.

Students may request an academic concession for the following three reasons:

- Unanticipated changes in personal responsibilities that create a conflict
- Medical circumstances
- Compassionate grounds

If students have a disability or ongoing medical condition that affects their studies for more than one term, they may request an academic accommodation.

Requests should be made as early as reasonably possible. Depending on the situation, either the academic advising office or course instructor will manage student's request.

## **Academic Integrity**

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found under *Discipline for Academic Misconduct* in the Academic Calendar.

## **Resources to Support Student Success**

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Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>