



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo

Department of Philosophy

PHIL 100J - FALL 2020

Introduction to Philosophy

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Professor Nikolaj Zunic
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Phone: 519-884-8111 ext. 28229
Office Hours: By appointment only. Contact the professor to schedule a personal meeting.
Email: nzunic@uwaterloo.ca

The best and most effective way of contacting the professor is by e-mail.

E-mail messages will normally be answered within 24 hours.

Due to the extraordinary circumstances regarding the COVID-19 preventative measures in place at the university, the professor will not have regular access to his office or to his office phone. Therefore, please do not leave messages by phone at the number given above.

All office hours will be conducted remotely by means of Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

COURSE FORMAT

As everyone is undoubtedly aware, the University made the decision to have all courses in the Fall Term 2020 be delivered remotely, rather than in person or face-to-face, because of the risks associated with the COVID-19 virus. This course will, therefore, in accordance with these official regulations, be delivered entirely remotely, that is, by means of the Internet.

We will be relying on LEARN (D2L or Desire to Learn) as the primary means in the delivery of the course. Everything to do with this course will be conducted through LEARN. Therefore, students must have access to LEARN.

The professor will post all relevant course material – e.g. the course outline, assignments, links, announcements – to the LEARN site. However, e-mail will also be a mode of communication between the professor and students.

The course will be divided into four components:

1. **Lectures**
 2. **Readings**
 3. **Discussions**
 4. **Assignments**
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1. *Lectures*

All lectures will be recorded by the professor and posted to LEARN in the **Content** section.

The mode of content delivery in this course will be entirely asynchronous (= there is no set time to listen to and view lectures) instead of synchronous (= when a scheduled time is set for live instruction). All the lectures will be recorded, and students will have the opportunity to listen to the lectures on their own time.

Each recorded lecture will be either an audio recording or a narrated PowerPoint presentation. The video lecture will not be the normal mode of content delivery.

Each lecture will be 20-30 minutes in duration.

There will be two audio or MP4 files posted regularly each week, one on Mondays and the second on Wednesdays, by noon at the latest. If for some reason the professor will be late in posting a lecture on a Monday or Wednesday, he will announce this in LEARN.

The lectures will focus on the important concepts from the prescribed readings and as such will be concise and targeted.

2. *Readings*

Students are required to read the prescribed books/texts/readings in accordance with the schedule contained in this course outline.

The readings for which students are responsible for studying are given in a weekly schedule.

The required books/texts/readings may be purchased at the University of Waterloo Bookstore or through some other seller, such as Amazon. In some cases, online versions of the readings are available in the public domain. The professor will inform students of acceptable online versions of the readings.

The readings play a pivotal part of this course, as all the lectures and assignments will deal with them centrally.

It is advisable that students follow the readings schedule and diligently do the prescribed readings.

3. *Discussions*

Each week forums for discussion on the week's main topics will be open for student engagement on LEARN.

- In LEARN go to **Connect** → **Discussions**.

The professor will participate in the discussions on Friday mornings from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Participation in the discussions is optional and will not constitute any part of the student's final grade.

The purpose of the discussion forums is to allow students to dialogue with each other, to pose and answer questions related to the week's topics, and to facilitate the comprehension of course material. In short, it is an opportunity for students to ask questions and to offer and receive responses.

4. *Assignments*

There are four assignments in this course. The entirety of each student's final grade will be based on these four assignments.

Each assignment will be an argumentative essay.

A very good resource to consult in order to understand how to write an effective philosophy paper is the following website:

https://philosophy.fas.harvard.edu/files/phildept/files/brief_guide_to_writing_philosophy_paper.pdf

**Please read through this document on how to write a philosophy paper before the first essay is assigned.*

Each essay should be 4-5 double-spaced pages (1200-1500 words). The essays will be based on topics corresponding to relevant sections of the course and thus will be specific to the readings

that we are covering.

However, the final essay will be a bit different insofar as it will deal with broad, general topics that span the entire course.

The instructions and topics for each essay assignment will be posted to LEARN approximately 3 weeks before the due date.

All essay assignments must be submitted to LEARN in the Dropbox section.

- In LEARN go to **Submit → Dropbox**.

Each essay will also be submitted to Turnitin, a program that scans essays for academic integrity infractions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is philosophy? It is precisely this question which we will be endeavouring to answer in this course. The origins of philosophy can be traced back to ancient Greek civilization (c. 5th to 3rd centuries B. C.) when a new way of living and thinking was developed. But over time this initial conception of philosophy went through many transformations as each new epoch in human history grappled with the fundamental questions of reality in different ways. Philosophy, therefore, has many voices, but throughout these changes there is nonetheless a line of continuity that joins these myriad manifestations into a discernible tradition.

Our approach to the investigation of the nature of philosophy will be historical, in the sense that we will study the conceptions of philosophy by prominent thinkers in the tradition of Western philosophy. We will cover four main epochs: ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary. This historical approach will enable us to understand how philosophy began more than two millennia ago and to chart the development of philosophy through time leading to the present. This methodological framework will expose the complex nature of philosophy by illustrating how philosophy can change and yet preserve its essential identity, and furthermore, why only an historical perspective can properly grasp what philosophy is.

In the school of ancient philosophy, we will read some early Socratic dialogues by Plato, who is universally considered to be the founder of philosophy. Plato's dialogues are an excellent guide to the ancient world's understanding and practice of philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas will represent medieval philosophy, the period which spans c. 300 – 1400 A.D. What is unique about the Middle Ages is the prominence of Christianity which influenced philosophy tremendously. A new kind of philosophizing was inaugurated with the spread and appropriation of the Christian faith. In this regard we will study some excerpts from Aquinas'

Summa Theologiae in which he discusses topics such as the existence and attributes of God, the human soul, happiness, and the virtues.

Modern philosophy (c. 1500 – 1900 A.D.) marks a break with the past and the beginning of a new phase for philosophy in which pure reason, also called *rationalism*, becomes the foundation. René Descartes' major work *Meditations on First Philosophy* shows us how philosophy underwent a radical alteration in modern times and what the issues were that defined this new era. We will read this entire work since it concisely sums up the spirit of the modern age.

In the last part of the course we will read sections from the contemporary philosopher James V. Schall's book *The Life of the Mind: The Joys and Travails of Thinking* which highlight some key themes in philosophy, such as the need to be exposed to good books, how to preserve one's wisdom in the world, and the need of philosophy.

As we journey through these readings and discussions we will be exposed to the various disciplines of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, God, and human nature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to fulfill the following pedagogical objectives:

- To know the nature and purpose of philosophy.
- To identify the names of significant philosophers and their works.
- To explain prominent philosophical doctrines and theories.
- To classify historical periods in philosophy and to describe their main characteristics.
- To appraise the validity and rectitude of the historical approach to the study of philosophy.
- To develop and to communicate clearly one's own personal understanding of the nature and purpose of philosophy.
- To develop skills in good judgement.
- To apply philosophical thinking to other domains of learning and life.
- To value the importance of philosophy in today's world.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following 4 books are required for this course. They may be purchased at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

Plato, *Five Dialogues*, second edition, translated by G. M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002.

Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, translated by Richard J. Regan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, third edition, translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.

James V. Schall, *The Life of the Mind: The Joys and Travails of Thinking*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2006.

Online Versions:

If desired, students may access the first three texts and the readings contained therein on the internet.

For Plato's dialogues visit the following site:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Plato.html>

For Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* visit the following sites:

<https://www.newadvent.org/summa/>

OR

<https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/TOC-part1.htm>

For René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* visit the following site:

<https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/authors/descartes>

(You can even listen to the Meditations on this site!)

Unfortunately, since the James Schall book is relatively recent, it is not available online. So, you will have to buy it.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

There are four written assignments for this course.

The first three essays will be similar in focus and scope. Each will deal with a specific philosopher studied in this course. So, the first essay will be based on the dialogues of Plato, the second essay on Aquinas, and the third essay on Descartes.

The fourth essay will be different. It will incorporate more than one thinker and will deal with general themes and questions that cover the entire course, rather than only one section of the course. Thus, the scope of this fourth essay will be broader and more comprehensive than the first three essays.

The nature of each essay will be argumentative. What this means is that the professor will provide a selection of questions or topics to choose from and students will have to argue or defend a position by using logical reasoning and evidence from the texts and lectures. It is crucial that students learn philosophy by learning how to reason and argue their positions. Therefore, the essay assignments will aim to foster such argumentative and logical reasoning skills.

The detailed instructions for each assignment as well as the essay topics will be posted to LEARN approximately 3 weeks before the due date.

This course uses the Turnitin software, so all essays will be checked for plagiarism.

There is no final exam in this course.

The breakdown of the assignments with their corresponding due dates and weightings is given in the table below:

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	VALUE
1. Essay #1 - Plato	October 7 at 9:00 pm	25%
2. Essay #2 - Aquinas	November 4 at 9:00 pm	25%
3. Essay #3 - Descartes	November 25 at 9:00 pm	25%
4. Essay #4 - Comprehensive	December 11 at 9:00 pm	25%

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a weekly schedule for this course. It lists the readings that students are responsible to study each week. The lectures, which will be posted to LEARN, will relate to the readings as they are listed in this schedule.

Please consult this schedule throughout the fall term.

WEEK 1: September 8-11

Introduction to the course

WEEK 2: September 14-18

Plato, *Meno*, pp. 58-92
Topics: Virtue and education

WEEK 3: September 21-25

Plato, *Euthyphro*, pp. 1-20
Plato, *Apology*, pp. 21-44
Topics: Piety and self-knowledge

WEEK 4: September 28-October 2

Plato, *Crito*, pp. 45-57
Plato, *Phaedo*, pp. 93-106
Topics: Law, justice, life and death

WEEK 5: October 5-9

Plato, *Phaedo*, pp. 106-154
Topic: The immortality of the soul

ESSAY #1 is due on Wednesday, October 7 at 9:00 pm.

WEEK 6: October 12-16

READING WEEK

**There is no course activity from October 10 to October 18.*

WEEK 7: October 19-23

Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, pp. 1-6

Topic: The existence of God

WEEK 8: October 26-30

Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, pp. 6-19

Topics: The attributes of God and the knowledge of God

WEEK 9: November 2-6

Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, pp. 46-69 and 105-112

Topics: Creation and governance; the soul; happiness

ESSAY #2 is due on Wednesday, November 4 at 9:00 pm.

WEEK 10: November 9-13

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 1-24

Topics: Letter of Dedication, Preface and Synopsis, Meditations 1 and 2

WEEK 11: November 16-20

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 24-41

Topics: Meditations 3 and 4

WEEK 12: November 23-27

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 42-59

Topics: Meditations 5 and 6

Essay #3 is due on Wednesday, November 25 at 9:00 pm.

WEEK 13: November 30 – December 4

James V. Schall, *The Life of the Mind*, Chapters I-VI (pp. 1-89) and IX-X (pp. 121-151)

Topics: The value of books, the nature of wisdom, the intellectual life

The last day of lectures for the fall term is December 7.

Essay #4 is due on Friday, December 11 at 9:00 pm.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

September 8: Beginning of classes

October 10-18: Reading Week: No lectures or course activity

December 7: End of classes

December 9-23: Exam period [Please note that this course does not have a final exam]

COURSE POLICIES

Lateness Penalty: The penalty for late assignments is 3% deducted from the grade of the paper for each day that the paper is late.

Absolute Deadline: The maximum allowable amount of time for submitting essays beyond the due date is one week.

Illness: If a student is unable to participate in the course because of an illness, the student must complete a Verification of Illness form and report the illness to the instructor so that appropriate measures or accommodations made be made. For more information, please visit the following webpage: <https://uwaterloo.ca/registrar/current-students/accommodation-due-to-illness>

CORRESPONDENCE

As indicated at the beginning of this document, the best way to contact the professor is by e-mail at nzunic@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course feel free to contact the professor.

When you write to the professor please be sure to indicate your name and the course that you are enrolled in.

Use formal language and proper grammar in your correspondence.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for

an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSApproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.