



## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To gain an understanding of important problems in philosophy.
2. To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the analysis of philosophical topics.
3. To examine individual and social assumptions, values, norms, beliefs, and understandings of phenomena in the world.
4. To gain an understanding of abstract philosophical concepts.
5. To enhance awareness and increase understanding of the nature of the world.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The learning outcomes stressed in this course are Communication Skills, Critical Thinking Skills and Ethical Reasoning.

### 1. Students will use **Communication Skills** in

- Communicating clearly and concisely while employing written and verbal skills appropriate to class assignments and discussion.
- Developing written arguments with strong logical inferences to show support for your claims.
- Demonstrating interpersonal skills by listening effectively, establishing rapport, and monitoring non-verbal signals.
- Expressing awareness of and respect for self and others.
- See section on Philosophical Etiquette for a further description.

### 2. Students will use **Critical Thinking Skills** in

- Learning how to understand and charitably interpret others' arguments and developing the ability to rearticulate arguments in a philosophical form.
- Analyzing theoretical concepts and examining the connections between them.
- Developing written arguments with strong logical inferences to show support for your claims.
- Critically assessing philosophical theories and arguments in support of these theories.

### 3. Students will use **Diverse Reasoning Skills** in

- Applying philosophical reasoning to varied views.
- Recognizing and examining conflicting views on philosophical issues.
- Analyzing and discussing issues from a multitude of perspectives.

## **TRANSFERABILITY:**

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

## **EVALUATIONS:**

Participation	10%	
Comprehension Quizzes x 4 (10% each)	40%	
Critical Analysis Midterm Exam	20%	Due date: March 6
Critical Analysis Final Exam	30%	Due date: TBA

(The last exam is due during the final exam period. Please check the registrar's posting for a schedule of final examinations.)

### Class Participation:

Participation in discussion is a way to help advance the discussion of difficult philosophical concepts and encourage others. More particularly, discussion helps to enhance one's understanding of philosophical concepts, and offers a venue for critical analysis of your own arguments.

### Comprehension Quizzes:

The comprehension quizzes are take-home assignments. The purpose of the quizzes is to give you the opportunity to illustrate your understanding of the course material, which includes course readings, lectures, and in-class discussions.

### Critical Analysis Exams:

The critical analysis exams will be in-class. The purpose of the exams is to give you the opportunity to illustrate your critical thinking skills by developing written arguments in response to the given topics. These are all skills you will develop in class; thus, it is to your advantage to attend and actively participate in every class.

- Alternative arrangements for missed exams are typically made at the discretion of the instructor. Deferrals may only be granted in extenuating circumstances such as extreme illness or other serious circumstances beyond the student's control. Work commitments or holidays are not considered legitimate reasons for missing assigned deadlines.
- Unless previously discussed, late work will be penalized in the absence of a valid excuse. The assignment grade will be reduced by 10% each day it is overdue, including weekends.

### Contesting Grades:

How you do on an assignment has no bearing on how much I respect (or like) you. There should never be any reason for you to feel ashamed or angered by your grade. One of my priorities in this class is to help you learn, and the assignments and my comments on your work are aimed at this goal. I do not expect perfection, and neither should you. I expect you to do your best and to use the assignments to help guide you on how you can improve.

If you wish to contest your grade, please do the following:

1. Double check the assignment instructions and the grading criteria.
2. Thoroughly read all the comments in a charitable manner.
3. Make an appointment to discuss your grade. Please do not ask me to go over your individual assignment in class.
4. Come to the appointment prepared. After looking over the comments and the assignment requirements, you should be able to articulate why you think your answer should have earned more marks.
5. Please remember I can only give you grades for the content represented on the assignment. You may be able to verbally articulate what you meant to say in the meeting, but if that meaning is not clearly illustrated in the assignment content, I cannot give you grades for it.
6. Language is very important. I am happy to listen to your well thought out reasons for adding marks. Please do not approach me in a combative, disrespectful manner. For example, it is better to approach the discussion from the perspective that grades are earned rather than the view that grades are given. This perspective allows us to go through the comments together and to make clear how you earned your grades. This process will better enable you to show me how you think you met the requirements, and if you can do so I will have no problem with changing your grade.

## GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

### Introduction to Philosophy

Rachels & Rachels Appendix, “How to Evaluate Arguments”

Introduction Slides—D2L

### Argumentation Theory

Christopher Gregorio, “Against Epistemic Arrogance”—D2L

Katharina Stevens, “The Virtuous Arguer: One Person, Four Roles” —D2L

### The Existence of God and Theodicy

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 2, “God and the Origin of the Universe”

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 3, “The Problem of Evil”

**Guest Lecture: Paul Viminitz.** Dr. Viminitz will give us an account of some philosophical issues with theodicy.

### Mind, Body, and Personal Identity

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 5, “The Problem of Personal Identity”

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 6, “Body and Mind”

Thomas Nagel, “What is it Like to Be a Bat?”—D2L

Philip Goff, “The Case for Panpsychism”—D2L

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 7, “Could a Machine Think?”

John R. Searle, “Minds, Brains and Programs”—D2L

### Free Will

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 8, “The Case Against Free Will”

Rachels & Rachels Chapter 9, “The Debate Over Free Will”

W.T. Stace, “Compatibilism Defended”—D2L

### Philosophy of War

Michael Walzer, “Terrorism: A Critique of Excuses”—D2L

Paul Viminitz, “A Defence of Terrorism”—D2L

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Please do not be late for class.
2. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class. Do not fall behind in the assigned readings because it is difficult to catch up.
3. If students miss class, it is their responsibility to obtain lecture material and the reading assignment.
4. Policies regarding final exams are governed by institutional policy. Students should consult the Examinations policy in the NWP Calendar. Students should consult the NWP Calendar for any questions regarding deferred exams but note that students are required to be available to write exams during the entire final exam period.

## **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

## **Additional Information:**

### **Philosophical Etiquette**

Contrary to popular belief philosophy is not a blood sport. A philosophical discussion should not be thought of as an opportunity to participate in arguments that are meant to crush one's opponent. Rather it is an opportunity, first and foremost, to gain an understanding of philosophical concepts. Second, it should inspire critical analysis of philosophical concepts. And finally, it should facilitate fruitful discussion. I expect all students to show good philosophical etiquette, which is to exhibit mutual respect for each other's ideas and comments and to not be *purposefully* offensive.

### **Pet Peeves**

- Cell phones that ring during class or use of cell phones during class (this includes texting).
- The sound of binders closing and people packing-up books before I've indicated that the class is over.
- Trying to talk over people who are discussing their weekend plans during class time.
- Use of laptops or other electronic devices that disrupts other students.