



## DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

### COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2020

#### **PH1600 (A3): Philosophical Analysis of Contemporary Issues - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Tina Strasbourg      **PHONE:** 780-539-2237  
**OFFICE:** C408      **E-MAIL:** tstrasbourg@gprc.ab.ca  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Tue/Thu 2:30 to 3:30, or by appointment

#### **CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

Philosophical analysis of contemporary problems of social concern. Topics may include abortion, sexual equality, our place in the natural environment, censorship, minority and majority rights, war and violence, medical ethics and cultural preservation.

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** None

#### **REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

James Rachels and Stuart Rachels. *Problems from Philosophy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2012.

Resource Materials links posted on Moodle.

**DELIVERY MODE (S):** Lectures and discussions

#### **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, Thinking Skills and Ethical Reasoning.

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

- Communicating clearly and concisely employing written and verbal skills appropriate to class assignments and discussion.
- Demonstrating interpersonal skills by listening effectively, establishing rapport, 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**

- Analyzing theoretical concepts and examining the connections between them.
- Critically assessing philosophical theories and arguments in support of these theories.
- Developing arguments with strong logical inferences between premises and conclusions.

#### 3. Students will use **Philosophical Reasoning**

- Applying philosophical reasoning to practical situations.
- Recognizing and examining multiple perspectives.
- Analyzing and discussing issues from a philosophical perspective.

### **TRANSFERABILITY:**

This course is considered a University Transferable Course; however, the student has the final responsibility for ensuring the transferability of this course to Alberta Colleges and Universities.

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 and transferable grades.**

### **EVALUATIONS:**

Class Participation	10%	
Mid-term Exam	20%	February 25 <sup>th</sup>
Critical Comment Outline	15%	March 19 <sup>th</sup>
Critical Comment Essay	25%	April 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Final Exam	30%	TBA

#### 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.

#### In Class Mid-term Exam:

Students should be prepared to answer questions from material covered in class, which includes lectures, in-class discussion and course readings. It is therefore to students' advantage to attend every class.

Critical Outlines and Essays: See the assignment rubrics posted on Moodle for details.

**It is expected that students will read these documents carefully and fulfill the requirements of the assignments as described in the rubrics.**

#### Final exam:

The registered final exam will have a format similar to the mid-term. Students will have three hours to write the final exam. Please check the registrar's posting for a schedule of final examinations.

Alternative arrangements for writing a missed exam may be 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, holidays or traffic are not considered legitimate reasons for missing an exam.

Note: 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.

## 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:

### Topic

Introduction to Philosophy  
Argumentation Theory  
The Existence of God and Theodicy  
Mind, Body, and Personal Identity  
Free Will  
Theories of Knowledge  
Philosophy of War

### Readings

Moodle Slides  
Moodle Readings  
Rachels, Chapter 2, 3, and Moodle Readings  
Rachels, Chapter 5, 6, 7, and Moodle Readings  
Rachels, Chapter 8, 9, and Moodle Readings  
Rachels, Chapter 10  
Moodle Readings

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Regular attendance and participation in discussion is expected. Participation is a way to help advance the discussion, gain understanding of course material and encourage others.
2. Please do not be late for class.
3. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class. Do not fall behind in the assigned readings because it is difficult to catch up.
4. If students miss class, it is their responsibility to obtain lecture material and the reading assignment.
5. Policies regarding final exams are governed by college-wide policy. Students should consult the Examinations policy in the GPRC Calendar. In particular, student should consult the GPRC 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.

Refer to the College Policy on Student Rights and Responsibilities at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

### **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 section on Plagiarism and Cheating in the College policy titled Student Misconduct: Academic and Non-Academic at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/fetch.php?ID=68>).

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. **Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.**

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

### **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 that people 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.