



FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 399.9 L01
“Topics in Philosophy—Philosophy at the Movies”
Fall Term 2017

Course Outline

Lectures: T/W/Th/Fr/Sat 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Room: ST 131

Instructor: Jeremy Fantl
Office: SS 1238
Phone: 403-220-5022
Email: jfantl@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: W, 10-11:30

Course Description

Philosophical problems and ideas are often motivated with hypothetical scenarios. Because philosophical writing often leaves those scenarios underdescribed, it can sometimes be hard to relate to those problems or understand why they're philosophically important. Films can help remedy this difficulty by presenting philosophically rich scenarios in vivid and compelling detail. In this course we will look at a selection of films (and a couple of television episodes) that dramatize philosophical problems. In particular, we will focus on issues in the philosophy of evidence and knowledge (epistemology), the nature of right and wrong (ethics), how punishment is justified, and what it is to lead a good life.

Prerequisites: N/A

Course Learning Outcomes

- Introductory knowledge of selected philosophical issues, problems, and views;
- Ability to critically digest, interpret, and analyze complex sources;
- Ability to write a convincing argument that takes adequate account of alternative positions;
- Ability to draw philosophical lessons from vividly presented scenarios.

Required Texts

Coursepack, available from the University Bookstore.

Evaluation

- One ***term paper***, 4-6 pages long (worth 40%), due on September 25th.
- A take-home ***final exam*** (worth 40%), to be completed online prior to September 18th.
- One short ***response piece*** (worth 20%), 1 page long (single spaced) MAX, due at any point during Block Week itself.

Letter Grade Conversion Table

A+: 98.33	B+: 88.33	C+: 78.33	D+: 68.33	F: 55
A+/A: 96.67	B+/B: 86.67	C+/C: 76.67	D+/D: 66.67	
A: 95	B: 85	C: 75	D: 65	
A/A-: 93.33	B/B-: 83.33	C/C-: 73.33	D/D-: 63.33	
A-: 91.67	B-: 81.67	C-: 71.67	D-: 61.67	
A-/B+: 90	B-/C+: 80	C-/D+: 70		

Final Grades are computed by rounding to the nearest recognized letter grade.

Policy on Late Assignments

You get a no-questions-asked extension on one and only one take-home assignment, as long as you clear it with me at least a day in advance of the due date. **All unexcused late assignments lose the equivalent of 1/3 full letter grade for each day the assignment is late, to a maximum of the equivalent of 4 full letter grades. Missing assignments receive a zero.**

Syllabus

All readings are in the coursepack.

9/5, Tues: Mind and World	Television program: <i>Lost</i> , season 2, episode 3: "Orientation" Television program: <i>Please Like Me</i> , season 4, episode 2, opening scene William Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" Film: <i>The Matrix</i> Harriet Baber, "The Experience Machine Deconstructed" Rene Descartes, <i>Meditation I</i>
9/6, Wed: Two Kinds of Relativism	Film: <i>Arrival</i> John McWhorter, <i>The Language Hoax</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1 Film: <i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i> James Rachels, "The Challenge of Cultural Relativism" Alison Hills, "Standard Egoism," Chapter 2 of <i>The Beloved Self</i> , selection.
9/7, Thurs: Moral Choices and Moral Luck	Film: <i>Sophie's Choice</i> Patricia Greenspan, "Moral Dilemmas and Guilt" Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , selection Film: <i>Manchester by the Sea</i> Thomas Nagel, "Moral Luck"
9/8, Fri: Desert and Punishment	Television Episode: <i>Law and Order: Pro Se</i> Daniel M'Naghten's Case The American Law Institute, "Responsibility" Film Clip: <i>Titus</i> Film: <i>Dead Man Walking</i> Elizabeth Wolgast, <i>The Grammar of Punishment</i> , Chapter 7
9/9, Sat: Virtues and the Self	Film: <i>Unforgiven</i> Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints" Film: <i>Babette's Feast</i> Connie Rosati, "Self-Interest and Self-Sacrifice"
9/18, Mon:	Final Exam due
9/25, Mon:	Term Paper due

IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Academic Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

D2L Help

Desire2Learn is UCalgary's online learning management system. Important information and communications about this course may be posted on D2L. Go to <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it> for help.

General Academic Concerns and Program Planning

Have a question but not sure where to start? The Arts Students Centre is your information resource for everything in the Faculty of Arts. Drop in at SS102, call 403-220-3580, or email ascarts@ucalgary.ca. Advisors in the ASC can also provide assistance and advice in planning your program through to graduation. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> for detailed information on common academic concerns

Advice on Philosophy Courses

You may find answers to your more specific questions about a philosophy degree on the Department of Philosophy's website <http://phil.ucalgary.ca>, or contact one of Philosophy's Undergraduate Advisors. Jeremy Fantl (jfantl@ucalgary.ca), Allen Habib (anhabib@ucalgary.ca), Megan Delehanty (mdelehan@ucalgary.ca).

Registration Overload/Pre-req Waivers

If you are seeking to register in a Philosophy course that is full or to get permission to waive the prereqs for a course, email the Department Manager, Tram Nguyen (tram.nguyen1@ucalgary.ca). Include the specific course information and your UCID number in your request.

Writing

This course will include written assignments. Faculty policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services and other Student Success Centre Services, located on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library. Writing Support Services assist with a variety of assignments, from essays to lab reports. Students can book 30-minute one-on-one appointments online, sign up for 15-minute drop-in appointments, and register for a variety of writing workshops. For more information on this and other Student Success Centre services, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ssc.

Protection of Privacy

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor or teaching assistant.

Internet and Electronic Communication Devices

The instructor reserves the right to establish course policies regarding the use of devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartbooks. If allowed, these devices must be used exclusively for instructional purposes and must not cause disruption to the instructor or to fellow students. Cell phones and paging devices should be set to silent mode during lectures. Audio or video recording of lectures is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy

Emergency Evacuation:

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>. Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Other Helpful Contacts

- Safewalk and Campus Security: 403-220-5333.
- Faculty of Arts Student Representatives: 403-220-6552, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.
- Student Ombudsman: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>