



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**Philosophy Department**  
**Introduction to Philosophy: Values and Society**  
**PHIL 101 A1-E1**  
**Spring 2023**

Instructor: Thomas Oberle

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Office Hours: online by appointment via Google Meet. See eClass for instructions.

Course Location, Days & Time: HC L1-L4, MTWTh 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

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The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

### **Course Information**

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

#### **Course Description:**

The major theme of this course concerns what the limits of our obedience to government are, or conversely, what limits there are to governmental authority and power. We'll examine this theme through several different philosophical issues. We'll begin by reading Plato's *Apology* where Socrates gives priority to the dictates of his own conscience or religious conviction over the political authority of the city-state. We'll read Thomas Hobbes' and John Locke's views on whether political revolution is ever justified. We'll discuss the issue of free speech and whether governments should limit peoples' expression. And we'll explicitly look at arguments for and against paternalism, the view that governments can justifiably violate the autonomy of individuals if it is in those individuals' best interest.

Along the way we'll also examine several related issues in moral philosophy, such as what makes an action right or wrong, what it means to live a good life, and whether studying philosophy can make us happy. We'll examine what philosophers have had to say about these questions from both historical and contemporary perspectives. In addition to learning about these fascinating issues, you will also have the opportunity to apply philosophical theory to current events and real-world issues, thus gaining an appreciation for the value of philosophical inquiry and acquiring analytic and communication skills that will aid you in your future studies and careers.

#### **Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. **Accurately explain** key aspects of philosophical theories and arguments by completing short writing assignments,
2. **Identify** key features and ideas of philosophical texts by completing multiple choice questions and short-answer questions,
3. **Read** and **comprehend** classical and contemporary philosophical texts,
4. **Analyze, evaluate,** and **compare** philosophical theories and arguments by writing short and long-answer questions, and
5. **Write** a well-organized, well-argued, and clearly articulated essay.

**Course Format:** This course will be taught in person. You will learn by attending lectures, doing weekly readings both in and out of class, and participating in class activities and discussions.

**Textbooks:** There are no required texts. All readings are posted to eClass.

**Additional Course Fees:** None.

**Important Dates:**

First Day of Class: May 8

Add/Delete Date: May 11

50% Withdrawal Date: May 23

Withdrawal Date: June 7

Last Day of Class: June 14

Final Exam Date: June 15

Date of Deferred Final Exam: In consultation with instructor following approval from the student's faculty.

**Lecture Schedule & Assigned Readings:**

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings
1	May 8 - 11	Philosophy and the Value of the Examined Life	Voltaire, <a href="#">The Story of a Good Brahmin</a> (pages 55-58). Plato's <a href="#">Apology</a> .
2	May 15 – 18	Justice and Power	Plato's <a href="#">Crito</a> . Plato's <a href="#">Republic</a> , Book 1.
3	May 23-25	Political Authority	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , <a href="#">Part 1, chapters 13-14</a> ; Part 2, <a href="#">chapter 17</a> .

			Locke, <a href="#"><i>Second Treatise of Government</i></a> , Chapters 2, 8, 19.
4	May 30-June 1	Moral Theory	Aristotle, <a href="#"><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i></a> , Books 1-2.  Mill, <a href="#"><i>Utilitarianism</i></a> , Chapter 2.
5	June 5-8	Free Speech	Mill, <a href="#"><i>On Liberty</i></a> , Chapter 2.  Stanley Fish, <a href="#"><i>There's No Such Thing as Free Speech, and it's a Good Thing, Too.</i></a>
6	June 12-14	Paternalism and Coercion	Mill, <a href="#"><i>On Liberty</i></a> , Chapter 5.  Sarah Conly. <i>Against Autonomy</i> , Chapter 1.

**Components of Course Grade:**

Component	Weighting	Date
4 short writing assignments	12% (3% each)	May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9.
Paper 1	20%	May 29
Paper 2	20%	June 12
Attendance and participation	13%	Full term
Final exam	35%	June 15

**In this course:**

The percentage of each assignment represents the percentage of the final grade that each assignment is worth. You will find detailed assignment instructions and grading rubrics on eClass. **All assignments are due at 11:59pm on their respective due dates** and must be submitted online via eClass.

### **Short writing assignments (12%)**

You will have the opportunity to complete 4 short writing assignments (200-300 words) throughout the term. The assignments are meant to encourage you to think philosophically about the issues addressed in the readings and lectures and to clearly and effectively communicate philosophical ideas in writing. For each assignment, you will respond to a prompt provided by the instructor, asking you to explain and evaluate a portion of the readings for that given week. **You will find the short writing assignment prompts in the short writing assignment submission folders on eClass**, located in each weekly section. In the absence of a valid extension, **your instructor will not accept late short writing assignments**. You will receive a grade of '0' for failing to submit short writing assignments by the specified due date.

### **Papers (40%)**

You will write two argumentative papers for this course, each 900-1250 words in length. For each paper assignment, the instructor will provide several topics to choose from. These will be posted to eClass roughly two weeks in advance of the assignment deadline. You will find them in a separate file within the 'Paper Instructions and Topics' folder located under 'Assignment Instructions' at the top of the eClass site. The instructor will also provide detailed instructions in this folder about how to write a philosophy paper as well as opportunities in class to practice the skills required to write a philosophy paper.

### **Attendance and participation (13%)**

Because your participation in class lectures, activities, and discussions is integral to your learning and the success of this course, regular attendance and participation will be required. Your participation will be assessed on the basis of your class/seminar attendance and the quality of your participation in class/seminars. A more detailed grading rubric will be posted to eClass.

### **Final Exam (35%)**

The final exam will be comprehensive and will be comprised of short-answer, long-answer, and multiple-choice questions.

### **Grading:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Grade Point</b>
A+	90-100	4.0
A	85-90	4.0
A-	80-84	3.7
B+	77-79	3.3
B	73-76	3.0
B-	70-72	2.7
C+	67-69	2.3

C	63-66	2.0
C-	60-62	1.7
D+	57-59	1.3
D	50-56	1.0
F	0-49	0.0

**Past Evaluative Material:** The instructor will post sample exam questions closer to the final exam date.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance. The instructor will record your attendance each session and assess your participation on the basis of the quality of your involvement in class and your level of preparation for each class.

**Policy for Late Assignments:** Due to the condensed nature of this course, it is vital that you complete your assignments on time so as not to fall behind. Late short writing assignments **will not be accepted**. Late paper assignments will be penalized 3% per day for 1 week (7 days) including weekends and holidays, after which there will be no further deduction. So, if you scored 100% (A+) on your assignment and you submitted your assignment 7 days late, a penalization of 21% would translate to receiving a B+. If you scored 80% (A-), an assignment submitted 7 days late would receive a D+.

Your instructor will grant extensions for assignments provided that you contact your instructor in advance of the assignment deadline and your reasons for seeking an extension are valid. Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#).

**Deferred Final Examination:** For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see ["I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?"](#)

## Student Responsibilities

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) (COSB) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. Instructors are required to report suspicion of violations to the COSB where investigation and disciplinary action will follow. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

Students who want to strengthen their academic skills and learn more on topics such as plagiarism are encouraged to explore [The Academic Success Centre](#). It provides professional academic support to help students maximize their academic success and achieve their academic goals. They offer appointments, advising, group workshops, online courses, and specialized

programming year-round to students in all university programs, and at all levels of achievement and study.

Additional support is also available from [The Centre for Writers](#) (C4W) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request a consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

**Recording of Lectures:** Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

## Learning and Working Environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

If you are experiencing harassment, discrimination, fraud, theft or any other issue and would like to get confidential advice, please contact any of these campus services:

- [Office of Safe Disclosure & Human Rights](#): *A safe, neutral and confidential space to disclose concerns about how the University of Alberta policies, procedures or ethical standards are being applied. They provide strategic advice and referral on matters such as discrimination, harassment, duty to accommodate and wrong-doings. Disclosures can be made in person or online using the [Online Reporting Tool](#)*
- [University of Alberta Protective Services](#): *Peace officers dedicated to ensuring the safety and security of U of A campuses and community. Staff or students can contact UAPS to make a report if they feel unsafe, threatened, or targeted on campus or by another member of the university community*
- [Office of the Student Ombuds](#): *A confidential and free service that strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. They offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.*
- [Sexual Violence Supports](#): - It is the [policy](#) of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct.
- [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate policy](#), the Office of the Dean of Students coordinates academic accommodations for prospective and current students with documented disabilities affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, and physical or mental health. The provision of academic accommodations helps to remove structural barriers that these students encounter in academic environments in order to facilitate

equivalent learning opportunities for these students. [Academic Accommodations](#) promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally-designed environment at the University of Alberta.

## Student Resources

[The Student Service Centre](#) provides students with information and access to services to support academic, financial, mental, and physical well-being.

[First Peoples' House](#) provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

[Health and Wellness Support for Students](#) outlines available mental and physical health resources which are offered on-campus and in the community.

[The Office of the Student Ombuds](#) is a confidential service that strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. They offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.

[Need Help Now](#) webpage offers contact information for a variety of supports if you are in immediate need of mental health and wellness support. One can also call the 24-hour Distress Line: 780-482-4357 (HELP)

**Disclaimer:** Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System section of the University Calendar.

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