

Faculty of Arts
Department of Philosophy

PHL 201 Problems in Philosophy
Winter 2017

Thursdays 10 -11am, KHE 225
Fridays 10am -12pm, KHE 127

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Please use your Ryerson e-mail account and **state your course number (PHL 201)**.

Calendar Description

This course serves as an introduction to philosophy by focusing on problems and issues which have occupied thinkers down through the centuries. For example, how can we relate talk about the cause and effect relationship governing physical events with talk about people making free choices? How do mind and body relate? What do we really know about the physical world or other people's minds? Can we know whether God exists? Are moral judgements objectively true or false?

Course Details

Self-knowledge is an ancient theme in philosophy. Socrates argues that in order to lead a successful life, one needs to first of all know oneself. Christian and Islamic philosophers argue that by knowing ourselves, we know an immaterial substance. Descartes makes a new beginning in philosophy by starting from self-certainty. For Locke, the identity and persistence of a person are tied to their self-consciousness. Hume, Kant, and Nietzsche question whether and to what extent self-knowledge is possible. Heidegger's notion of "Dasein", a being that is concerned with its own being, is central to his fundamental ontology.

We will follow this thread, from Plato to Heidegger, through the history of philosophy.

Texts will be supplied on the course website, which is accessible via <http://my.ryerson.ca>.

Note on Liberal Studies

This course is designated as a lower level Liberal Studies course. Please note that certain liberal studies courses, due to their close relation to the professional fields, cannot be taken for Liberal Studies credit by students in some programs. A list of these programs and the restricted courses is provided in Table A Lower Level Restrictions and Table B Upper Level Restrictions in the Ryerson calendar.

Please note that Liberal Studies courses always have the designation (LL) or (UL) in their course description in the Ryerson Calendar. Courses not identified as either (LL) or (UL) are NOT Liberal Studies courses and will not be used towards the fulfillment of a Liberal Studies Requirement for graduation purposes. Students are responsible for making appropriate course selections. Refer to

Table A (Lower Level) and Table B (Upper Level) in Ryerson's calendar for a complete list of liberal studies courses.

Tentative Schedule

1. **01/13: Introduction**
2. **01/19-20: Plato, *Alcibiades* 128a-133c** (8 pages)
Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper. Hackett 1997.
3. **01/26-27: Augustine, *On the Trinity X*** (19 pages)
Augustine, *On the Trinity Books 8-15*, tr. Stephen McKenna. Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 41-59.
4. **02/02-03: Avicenna, *Flying Man*** (4 pages)
Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Selections on Psychology from *The Cure*, "The Soul". In: *Classical Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman. Hackett 2007, p. 175-9.
5. **02/09-10: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica Ia 87,1*** (3 pages)
Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros. edition, 1947.
6. **02/16-17: Descartes, *Second Meditation*** (8 pages)
René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. In: *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, tr. Cottingham / Stoothoff / Murdoch, vol. II. Cambridge University Press 1984.
— 02/20-24: *Study Week*
7. **03/02-03: Recap**
8. **03/09-10: Locke, *Essay II,xxvii: On Identity and Diversity*** (21 pages)
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Nidditch. Oxford University Press 1975, p. 328-348.
9. **03/16-17: Hume, *Treatise I,iv,6: Of Personal Identity*** (13 pages)
David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1888, p. 251-263.
10. **03/23-24: Kant, *Prolegomena §46-49*** (5 pages)
Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to An Future Metaphysics*, tr. Hatfield. Cambridge University Press 1997, p. 85-89.
11. **03/30-31: Nietzsche, *Daybreak §115-120*** (6 pages)
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, tr. Hollingdale. Cambridge University Press 1997, p. 71-77.
12. **04/06-07: Heidegger, *Being and Time §2 and 4*** (12 pages)
Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. Macquarrie and Robinson. Harper & Row 1962, p. 24-35.
13. **04/13: Conclusion**

Evaluation

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 15 %
- Journal (10 x ca. 200 words): 5 % per entry = 50%
- Dialogue (ca. 1500 words, due 04/23) 35 %

Participation in in-class discussions will be essential for success. In many cases, the reading material is merely intended to prompt discussion, so that you will miss the important part if you only read the material. None of the things provided on the course website can replace attendance. Attendance will be taken on a random basis.

For the **Journal**, write roughly 200 words about each of the texts we read in class. Outline a key claim or argument, and connect it to previous readings. Each journal entry should reveal, in some way or other, that you have attended class. Each Journal entry is due the Sunday after the text was discussed in class, 11:59pm.

The **Dialogue** should be written in the style of Plato's *Alcibiades*. Choose any two philosophers we have discussed (e.g. Plato and Nietzsche, or Descartes and Avicenna), and imagine a meeting between them. Provide some background that causes them to have a discussion about self-knowledge (or a closely related topic), and describe this conversation in dialogue form. The Dialogue is **due April 23rd**.

All length requirements are approximate, there will be no penalties for not meeting them. There *will* be a **late penalty of 5% per day** for all assignments.

All assignments must be submitted online. Only MS Word and Adobe pdf documents will be accepted. Further formal requirements: 12pt, double spaced, margins of about 1 inch.

All assignments will be checked for plagiarism. They will be evaluated for clarity of organization, logic, syntax, grammar, and content.

Missed Classes and/or Evaluations

Students are required to inform their instructors of any situation which arises during the semester which may have an adverse effect upon their academic performance, and must request any considerations and accommodations according to the relevant policies and well in advance. Failure to do so will jeopardize any academic appeals.

- *Medical certificates* – If a student misses the deadline for submitting an assignment, or the date of an exam or other evaluation component because of illness, he or she must submit a Ryerson Student Medical Certificate AND an Academic Consideration form within 3 working days of the missed date. Both documents are available at www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/medical.pdf. If you are a full-time or part-time degree student, then you submit your forms to your own program department or school. If you are a certificate or non-certificate student, then you submit your forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School. If you need clarification, speak to your professor.
- *Religious observance* – If a student needs accommodation because of religious observance, he or she must submit a Request for Accommodation of Student Religious, Aboriginal and Spiritual Observance AND an Academic Consideration form within the first 2 weeks of the class or, for a final examination, within 2 weeks of the posting of the examination schedule. If the required absence occurs within the first 2 weeks of classes, or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, these forms should be submitted with as much lead time as possible in advance of the required absence. Both documents are available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf>. If you are a full-time or part-time degree

student, then you submit the forms to your own program department or school. If you are a certificate or non-certificate student, then you submit the forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.

- *Students who need academic accommodation support* should register with the [Academic Accommodation Support office](#) (formerly called the Access Centre). Before the first graded work is due, registered students should inform their instructors through an “Accommodation Form for Professors” that they are registered with Academic Accommodation Support and what accommodations are required.

Student Code of Academic Conduct

Ryerson’s Policy 60 (now called the *Academic Integrity policy*) applies to all students at the University. The policy and its procedures are triggered in the event that there is a suspicion that a student has engaged in a form of academic misconduct.

Forms of academic misconduct include plagiarism, cheating, supplying false information to the University, and other acts. The most common form of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and penalties can be severe. In any academic exercise, plagiarism occurs when one offers as one’s own work the words, data, ideas, arguments, calculations, designs or productions of another without appropriate attribution or when one allows one’s work to be copied.

All academic work must be submitted using the citation style approved by the instructor. Students may refer to the Ryerson Library’s list of [Citations and Style Guides](#) for more information.

It is assumed that all examinations and work submitted for evaluation and course credit will be the product of individual effort, except in the case of group projects arranged for and approved by the course instructor. Submitting the same work to more than one course, without instructor approval, is also considered a form of plagiarism.

Students are advised that suspicions of academic misconduct may be referred to the Academic Integrity Office (AIO). Students who are found to have committed academic misconduct will have a Disciplinary Notation (DN) placed on their academic record (not on their transcript) and will be assigned one or more of the following penalties:

- A grade reduction for the work, include a grade of zero for the work.
- A grade reduction in the course greater than a zero on the work. (Note that this penalty can only be applied to course components worth 10% or less, that any additional penalty cannot exceed 10% of the final course grade, and that information explaining that such a penalty will be assigned must be included on the course outline.)
- An F in the course.
- More serious penalties up to and including expulsion from the University.

All written assignments will be checked for **plagiarism**. One of the means for doing this will be [turnitin.com](#). This is a plagiarism prevention and detection service to which Ryerson subscribes. It is a tool to assist faculty members in determining the similarity between students’ work and the work of other students who have submitted papers to the site (at any university), internet sources, and a wide range of journals and other publications. While it does not contain all possible sources, it gives faculty some assurance that students’ work is their own. No decisions are made by the service; it simply generates an “originality report,” and faculty must evaluate that report to determine if something is plagiarized.

Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements.

Important Resources Available at Ryerson

- The Library provides research workshops and individual assistance. Inquire at the Reference Desk on the second floor of the library, or go to www.ryerson.ca/library/info/workshops.html
- [Student Learning Support](#) offers group-based and individual help with writing, math, study skills and transition support, and other issues.