

# Huron University College

## Department of Philosophy

### *Introduction to Philosophy* ~ Philosophy 020E ~

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**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, from 1pm to 2pm (Huron, Room A303)

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### Course Description

In this survey course, we explore the discipline of philosophy by examining a wide range of its central questions. Our readings and discussions should help us to gain insight into ourselves, our relationship to others, and our relationship to the world around us. We will also work to improve our ability to develop, articulate, critically assess and rationally defend our own convictions concerning these fundamental questions. In the first term, we will focus our attention on ethics and the philosophy of education; in the second term, we will turn our attention to epistemology, metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. Reading are drawn from both classical and contemporary sources, and from both "Western" and "Eastern" traditions. The classes will include lectures, but also substantial discussion of the readings. Regular class attendance is crucial for success on the mid-year and final examinations.

### Required Readings

1. Plato, *Great Dialogues of Plato*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse (Signet). Available in the Bookstore)
2. Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity* (Available in the Bookstore)
3. Bhikkhu Thanissaro, tr., *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses* (e-book, free on course web site)
4. Daniel Dennett, *Elbow Room: Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*(Available in Bookstore)
5. John R. Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society: Philosophy in the Real World* (Available in Bookstore)
6. Course Pack, available at **InPrint** (downstairs in the UCC; not in the Bookstore)
7. Web-based readings available through the website: [http://geocities.com/s\\_j\\_darcy](http://geocities.com/s_j_darcy)

### Grade Components

1. **First Term Essay**  
Worth 25% of final grade; 2,000 words; due at the beginning of class on October 28
2. **Mid-Year Examination**  
Worth 25% of final grade; written as scheduled during the December examination period
3. **Second Term Essay**  
Worth 25% of final grade; 2,000 words; due at the beginning of class on February 15
4. **Final Examination**  
Worth 25% of final grade; written as scheduled during the April examination period

## A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/plagiarism.pdf>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found at: [www.huronuc.on.ca/library&computing/styleguides.htm](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/library&computing/styleguides.htm)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Plagiarism detection software may be used in this course. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form.

## Academic Counseling

Philosophy students requiring counseling about their program of study or related matters (e.g. appeals, letters of permission, special permission) should contact Dr. David Conter <[dconter@uwo.ca](mailto:dconter@uwo.ca)>, Chair of the Department of Philosophy, in Room V131.

## Course-related Resources

The following web site directs students to resources related to this course:

[http://geocities.com/s\\_j\\_darcy](http://geocities.com/s_j_darcy)

Click “[courses](#)” to find information on this course, and click “[resources](#)” to get information on philosophy web sites, documenting sources in philosophy papers, etc. A copy of the syllabus, and many of the handouts (if any) distributed in class, may be obtained from this site.

## A Note on Grades

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors, which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ (90-100%): One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
- A (80-89%): Superior work which is clearly above average
- B (70-79%): Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C (60-69%): Competent work, meeting requirements
- D (50-59%): Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F (below 50%): Fail

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## Tentative Schedule of Readings:

### First Term Schedule:

**September 9: Introduction to the course**

**September 14: A first look at the discipline of Philosophy**

↳ Readings: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 156-161

**September 16: Introducing Plato – the character Socrates; the dialogue form**

↳ Readings: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. I, pp. 125-154

**September 21: What is Justice?**

↳ Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. I, pp. 125-154

**September 23: The “ring of Gyges” story**

↳ Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. II, pp. 155-182

**September 28: The accusations against Socrates**

↳ Reading: Plato, *The Apology*, pp. 423-446

**September 30: Socrates' defense**

⇒Reading: Plato, *The Apology*, pp. 423-446

**October 5: Responding to an unjust legal decision**

⇒Readings: Plato, *The Crito*, pp. 447-459

**October 7: Should we obey an unjust law?**

⇒Readings: Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* [access via course web site]

**October 12: Two views of liberal education**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 1-14

**October 14: Socratic education: the Stoics**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 15-35

**October 19: Opposition to Socratic education**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 35-49

**October 21: The classical Greco-Roman ideal of the world citizen**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 50-67

**October 26: Educating world citizens**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 67-84

**October 28: The descriptive vices: descriptive chauvinism and romanticism**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 113-130

» **First term essay is due today, at the beginning of class** «

**November 2: The normative vices; "East" and "West" on freedom and individuality**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 130-147

**November 4: The exclusion of women**

⇒Reading: Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, pp. 186-202

**November 9: Indoctrination?; deformed preferences**

⇒Reading: 202-221

**November 11: The Buddha's life**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter one (a) through (f)

**November 16: Suffering**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter two (a)

**November 18: Craving: attachment, avoidance, delusion**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter two (b), (c)

**November 23: The phenomenology of attachment: not-self and dependent co-arising**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter two (d), (e)

**November 25: The Nibbana ideal**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter two (f)

**November 30: The eightfold path**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter three (a), (b)

**December 2: Three levels of Buddhist ethics: prudence, restraint, selfless virtue**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter four (a)

**December 7: Kamma/karma**

⇒Reading: *Selections from the Buddha's Discourses*, chapter four (b), (c)

**Second Term Schedule:**

**January 4: The 'mind/body problem'**

⇒Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 39-50

**January 6: Biological naturalism**

⇒Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 50-65

**January 11: Three mistakes about consciousness**

- ⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 67-73
- January 13: The structure of consciousness**  
⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 73-83
- January 18: The structure of intentionality: direction of fit, conditions of satisfaction**  
⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 85-104
- January 20: Intentionality and the Background**  
⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 104-109
- January 25: The building blocks of institutional reality**  
⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 111-126
- January 27: The example of money; some other examples**  
⇨Reading: Searle, *Mind, Language, and Society*, pp. 126-134
- February 1: Knowledge-validation processes**  
⇨Reading: Patricia Hill Collins, "Toward an Afro-centric Feminist Epistemology" [Course Pack]
- February 3: Knowledge as institution**  
⇨Reading: Patricia Hill Collins, "Toward an Afro-centric Feminist Epistemology" [Course Pack]
- February 8: What is sexism?**  
⇨Reading: Marilyn Frye, "Sexism" [Course Pack]
- February 10: What is gender?**  
⇨Reading: Marilyn Frye, "Sexism" [Course Pack]
- February 15: The free will problem; the 'bogeymen'**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 1-10  
» **Second term essay is due today, at the beginning of class «**
- February 17: 'Sphexishness'; intuition pumps**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 10-19
- March 1: Practical reason**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 20-34
- March 3: Causality and rationality**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 34-49
- March 8: Control and self-control**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 50-66
- March 10: Disorder and spontaneity**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 66-73
- March 15: Responsibility for oneself**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 74-92
- March 17: Luck**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 92-100
- March 22: Deliberation**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 101-122
- March 24: Inevitability**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 122-130
- March 29: Whether we could have done otherwise**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 131-144
- March 31: 'Actualism'**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 144-152
- April 5: Creeping exculpation**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 153-165
- April 7: Guilt**  
⇨Reading: Dennett, *Elbow Room*, pp. 165-172

